SOCIAL EDUCATION VICTORIA

Sociology

Victorian Certificate of Education [VCE]
Unit 3: Culture and ethnicity
Unit 4: Community, social movements
and social change

ZOYA KITIK
FIONA GONTIER
LAURA NEWMAN
MOHAMED SAYED IBRAHIM
THARA BROWN (CULTURE IS LIFE)

Sociology

VCE Units 3 and 4

ZOYA KITIK
FIONA GONTIER
LAURA NEWMAN
MOHAMED SAYED IBRAHIM
THARA BROWN (CULTURE IS LIFE)

SEV
Social Education Victoria

VCE Sociology: Units 3 and 4
1st edition

First edition published November 2023.

Social Education Victoria Inc.
ABN 49 458 215 576
A0016113Y

Writing: Zoya Kitik
Fiona Gontier
Laura Newman
Mohamed Sayed Ibrahim
Thara Brown (Culture is Life | Yorta Yorta)
Editing: Kelly Robinson
Kirstie Innes-Will
Coordination: Colin Aslin
Laura Newman
Design: Tamsin Wilson

All rights reserved. Except under conditions described in the Copyright Act 1968 of Australia and subsequent amendments, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted by any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner, associated companies and representatives throughout the world.

This textbook has been produced by Social Education Victoria, which is a registered educational not-for-profit. Every effort has been made to trace ownership of the original source material contained in this book and seek appropriate permission for it use. Where attempts have been unsuccessful, the publisher would be pleased to hear from the author/publisher to allow for any omissions to be rectified.

Reference has been made in this text to the VCE (Victorian Certificate of Education). This does not imply endorsement by the VCAA (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority).

VCE Study Design extracts reproduced by permission; © VCAA 2023. VCE is a registered trademark of the VCAA. The VCAA does not endorse or make any warranties regarding this study resource. Current VCE Study Designs, past VCE exams and related content can be accessed directly at vcaa.vic.edu.au. Teachers are also advised to access the VCAA Bulletin and the Notices to Schools for curriculum changes and updates.

Please note that this publication includes the images and words of people who have died.

eBook ISBN: 978-0-908124-02-2

Preface and acknowledgements

This text was produced and printed on the lands of the Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations in Naarm (Melbourne). We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and express our gratitude for the continuing cultures and knowledge of First Nations people and their enduring connection to Country, including lands, waters and animals. First Nations peoples were the first educators on this land, which always was, and always will be, theirs.

On behalf of Social Education Victoria (SEV), we are so pleased to share our textbook for students and teachers of VCE Sociology (Units 3 and 4) with you. Translating the often highly conceptual elements of sociological inquiry into content that is engaging and accessible for students is no mean feat – this is a challenge we have been able to take on together.

Our outstanding team of authors, editors and designers have endeavoured to make every decision regarding this text with students and teachers in mind – striking a balance between accessibility, structure, academic rigour, the study design and assessment standards.

We are especially grateful for the insightful and generous contribution of Thara Brown (Yorta Yorta) from Culture is Life as a consulting author for the first chapter of this text. We are so proud to partner with Culture is Life and to share in their drive to deepen young people's understanding of and connection to First Nations cultural knowledge and respect for community and Country. Together, we have made every effort to present this material in a way that is sensitive to the real experiences and knowledge of First Nations peoples, with a commitment to telling the truth about our shared history in this country, and with fidelity to the study design. Like our readers, we are forever learners in this space and are committed to continual improvement of our practice in these areas.

The production of any textbook is a complex task subject to very tight timeframes. We congratulate the authors, researchers, design team, editors, proofreaders and printers for their commitment, diligence, patience and deftness of skill exhibited over the course of this journey. This team also includes those who, like us, have the privilege of working within and on behalf of Social Education Victoria on an ongoing basis; their unwavering commitment to delivering this textbook (on time, no less!) has been truly incredible. We are also grateful for the support of our executive, our management committee and our textbook and resource subcommittee.

We consider that we have an ongoing commitment to you when you purchase this text. We strongly encourage you to check in regularly with the online library of supplementary resources we provide using the URL provided below.

sev.asn.au/textbook-resources/soc34

We trust that this text and its accompanying online resources will play a part in your enjoyment and understanding of this subject, and we wish you all the best with your studies.

Laura Newman

Executive Officer and co-author
Social Education Victoria

Zoya Kitik

President and lead author
Social Education Victoria

3 Culture and ethnicity

Area of study 1: Australian First Nations cultures 1

The meaning of culture and its major components 3.1.1 7
The sociological imagination as conceived by Charles Wright Mills and its connection to the study of cultures 3.1.2 17
Historical and contemporary representations of First Nations cultures that could be interpreted as ethnocentric and/or culturally relativistic representations 3.1.3 20
Public misconceptions about First Nations cultures 3.1.4 27
Historical suppression of First Nations cultures through government policies 3.1.5 32
The process of reconciliation 3.1.6 43
Changing awareness of Australian First Nations cultures 3.1.7 52
Revision questions 68
Further resources 72
References 73

Unit 3, Area of study 2: Ethnicity 75

The nature and meaning of the sociological concepts of race and ethnicity 3.2.1 80
The process of othering 3.2.2 89
The nature of the theory of ethnic hybridity, as informed by Stuart Hall, and its connection to experiences of ethnicity 3.2.3 92
Australia's ethnic diversity compared with other countries 3.2.4 97
The historical context and contemporary concept of multiculturalism 3.2.5 105
Factors that may prevent or enable a sense of belonging and inclusion in multicultural Australia 3.2.6 114
The purpose of ethical methodology with reference to voluntary participation, informed consent, privacy and the confidentiality of data 3.2.7 124
The experience of a specific ethnic group in Australia's multicultural society 3.2.8 128
Revision questions 141
Further resources 142
References 143

4 Community, social movements and social change

Unit 4, Area of study 1: Community 145

Changes to the concept of community over time 4.1.1 149
The experience of community generally 4.1.2 170
The nature of a specific community 4.1.3 184
Influences on the experience of the Keysborough CFA 4.1.4 186
Ethical methodologies 4.1.5 193
Revision questions 195
Further resources 198
References 199

Unit 4, Area of study 2: Social movements and social change 201

The concepts of social movement and social change 4.2.1 205
The nature and purpose of social movements 4.2.2 209
Case study: The Sunrise Movement 4.2.3 245
Revision questions 264
Exam preparation 266
Further resources 268
References 269

Glossary 271

Introduction

Working with skills

Each chapter of this text corresponds to one of the four areas of study in the study design, and summarises the relevant key knowledge and key skills at the start. The key knowledge list is what the study design indicates you should know; the key skills list is what you should be able to do. All key skills include a verb that describes an action – this is your ‘command term’.

Command terms used in this subject

Developing a good understanding of command terms is crucial for students' ability to apply their knowledge and answer questions correctly. An outline of the command terms referenced within the VCE Sociology Units 3 and 4 course is provided below.

The VCAA provides students with a general glossary of command terms on its website that students should familiarise themselves with (note, however, that not all command terms used in VCE Sociology are defined is this document):

vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/Pages/GlossaryofCommandTerms.aspx

Term	Explanation	Our advice for VCE Sociology
Analyse	Describe the elements or components you are going to analyse. Interpret the information, elements or components; describe what they mean. Show the relationships between them. Make a connection to their implications, or link back to the framework you are analysing.	Start by describing the relevant information. What does this information mean? How does it relate to each other? Make a brief comment that summarises the implication (impact) of your interpretation.
Apply	Use; employ in a particular situation or context.	This often means applying a theory to an example. Focus on thinking about how the theory might apply (or not apply) to the given example.
Compare	Recognise similarities and differences, as well as the significance of these similarities and differences.	Try to connect the ideas within sentences, rather than just describing the ideas one after the other.
Critically reflect	Think about the ways in which different perspectives change our understanding.	What ideas might seem natural to you that could be a result of your experiences and education? How could you challenge these ideas to include other peoples’ perspectives? The sociological imagination can be a good place to start.

Term	Explanation	Our advice for VCE Sociology
Evaluate	Ascertain the value or amount of; make a judgement using the information and/or criteria supplied, along with your own knowledge and understanding. Use these to consider a logical argument supported by evidence for and against different points, arguments, concepts, processes, opinions or other information.	Try to demonstrate your ability to think critically and apply sociological concepts, and your understanding of the relevant perspectives offered in the course that relate to the substance of the question.
Examine	Consider an argument, concept, debate, data point, trend or artefact in a way that identifies assumptions, possibilities and interrelationships. Describe the idea, object or representation. Identify assumptions, relationships and relevant details.	This is about looking at something from a variety of perspectives – in other words: • describe the thing • identify complexities • be specific.
Explain	Give a detailed account of why and/or how with reference to causes, effects, continuity, change, reasons or mechanisms; make the relationships between things evident.	Make sure you: • describe the thing • give evidence and details • compare and contrast • make an overall point.
Gather and use	Research a topic by finding and selecting appropriate sources. Learn about the topic by reading, analysing, evaluating and synthesising your source material. These command terms may not be in your final exam, but your research skills will be put to the test repeatedly when you're asked to incorporate your own knowledge in responses.	You'll want to determine the scope of your research first. What questions are you hoping to answer? Think about appropriate perspectives and sources: • Find a combination of different perspectives. • Include sources from the perspective of the group you're writing about. • Include reportage and commentary from reliable news sources. • If it exists, consider using reputable government and/or NGO research and reports (known as grey literature).
Outline	Provide an overview of the main features of something, which may be an argument, point of view, text, narrative, diagram or image.	Focus on knowing and showing the key information – it shouldn't be as detailed as 'describe' and should be efficient.

Term	Explanation	Our advice for VCE Sociology
Synthesise (we'll drill down further into synthesis in the last chapter of this text)	Combine various elements to make a whole or an overall point; do so by collecting and presenting sources, factors and/or evidence.	This builds on comparing (showing understanding of similarities and differences). There may be other relevant sources that should be brought in – 'synthesise' often uses three sources, whereas 'compare' uses usually just two. Are there parallel situations or factors that interrelate? Which sources are most relevant for each? If there are conflicting sources, how do you balance or reconcile that – are some perspectives fairer, better researched or more relevant than others? If you're summarising this synthesis as a conclusion, what is the most important reflection that should be included (your overall point)? Don't pretend things aren't complex (this will be tempting); your conclusions should be balanced and specific, rather than relying on oversimplification.

How to analyse a VCE Sociology assessment question: The KLC model

The following model can help you to interpret and plan assessment questions. It involves identifying and thinking about the following interrelated components:

Key knowledge words

Each assessment question focuses on different parts of the course material – key knowledge). For example, questions may relate to ethical methodology, or the concept of youth, or the media. When answering each question, your response needs to show that you understand the ideas, theories and concepts explored.

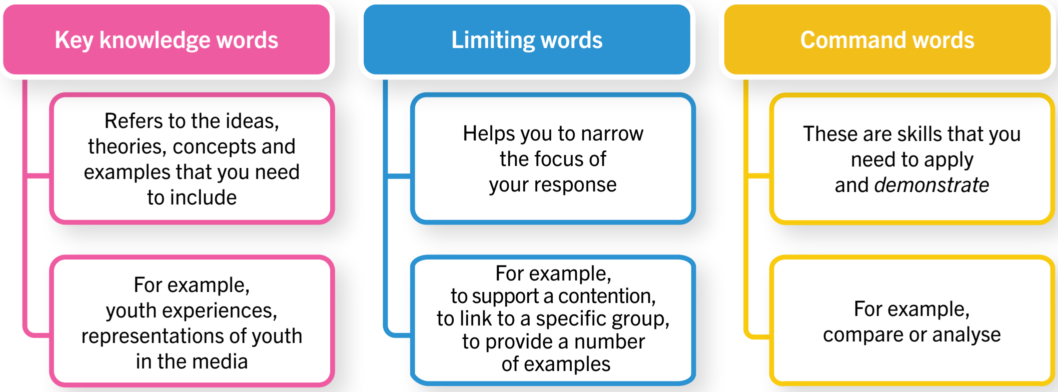
Limiting words

Limiting words help you narrow the focus of your response. They will often reference a specific sub-topic (e.g. only the *social* factors leading to differences in the experience of being young). They may also specify how many examples are required (e.g. two or positive and/or negative examples). Sometimes they might exclude examples, for instance asking for the most important example or a recent example.

Command words

A good understanding of the VCAA command terms is important when planning a response. It will ensure that you answer the question accurately. For example, there is a significant difference between a question asking you to *describe* the experiences of two groups and one asking you to *compare* the experiences.

The KLC model



Key knowledge words

Refers to the ideas, theories, concepts and examples that you need to include

For example, youth experiences, representations of youth in the media

Limiting words

Helps you to narrow the focus of your response

For example, to support a contention, to link to a specific group, to provide a number of examples

Command words

These are skills that you need to apply and *demonstrate*

For example, compare or analyse

Explain how sociologists use ethical methodology to study human behaviour. Refer to two ethical guidelines in your response.

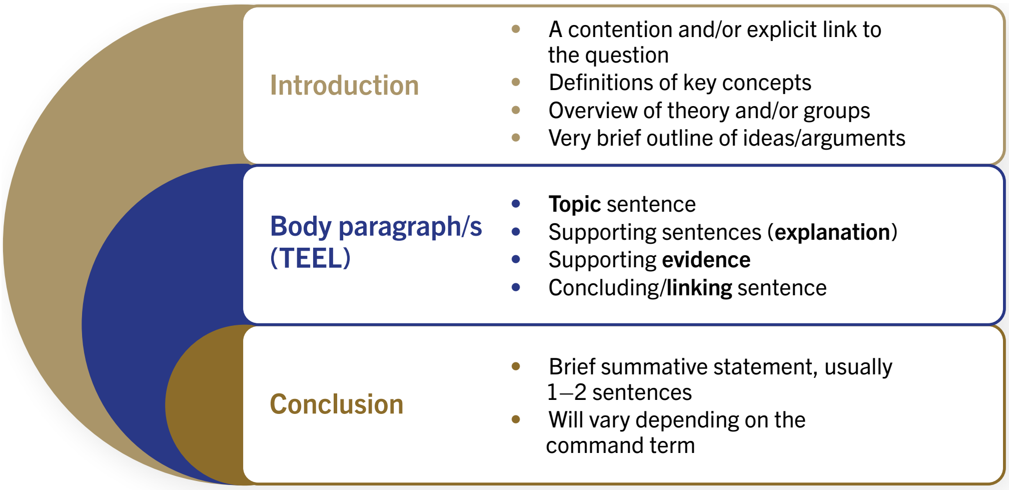
Assessing this question

- The key knowledge required for this question is the nature of ethical methodology. This includes the different types of ethical guidelines (e.g. privacy and confidentiality of data).
- This question limits the answer to two examples of ethical guidelines. Also, it is only focused on ethics, and not on analysis of data or the sociological imagination.
- The command term (word) is *explain*. For this question it means to show how ethical methodology guides human research.

How to structure a VCE Sociology response: The TEEL model

Another useful method for structuring your responses is the TEEL model (this stands for **t**opic, **ex**planation, **e**vidence, **l**ink – we'll return to this throughout the text). This helps to ensure each paragraph includes relevant components in a way that flows logically. Note – this model is only provided as a guide – as you practice your responses and develop your writing ability, you may be able to structure your responses more creatively.

The TEEL model



Introduction

- A contention and/or explicit link to the question
- Definitions of key concepts
- Overview of theory and/or groups
- Very brief outline of ideas/arguments

Body paragraph/s (TEEL)

- **Topic** sentence
- Supporting sentences (**explanation**)
- Supporting **evidence**
- Concluding/**linking** sentence

Conclusion

- Brief summative statement, usually 1–2 sentences
- Will vary depending on the command term

3.1

Unit 3,
Area of study 1:

Australian First Nations cultures

“Unit 3, Area of Study 1: Australian First Nations cultures

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse the impacts of historical suppression and evaluate the increasing public awareness of Australian Indigenous cultures.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge

1 the meaning of culture and its major components: non-material culture and material culture

2 the sociological imagination as conceived by Charles Wright Mills and its connection to the study of cultures

3 a range of historical and contemporary representations of Australian Indigenous cultures that could be interpreted as ethnocentric and/or culturally relativistic representations

4 public misconceptions about Australian Indigenous cultures concerning:
  - 4.1 past perception that Australia was land that belonged to no-one prior to European arrival
  - 4.2 the perception that Australian Indigenous people share one culture
  - 4.3 the perception that Australian Indigenous people mainly live in arid areas of Australia

5 the historical suppression of Australian Indigenous culture through government policies and Indigenous responses to this suppression

6 the process of reconciliation through symbolic and practical reconciliation

7 one issue related to changing awareness of Australian Indigenous cultures:
  - 7.1 the nature of the issue
  - 7.2 the historical and political context of this issue
  - 7.3 the relationship between this issue and awareness of Australian Indigenous cultures
  - 7.4 significant indigenous and non-indigenous people (individuals and/or groups) involved and their response(s) to the issue

Key skills

i explain and apply sociological concepts

ii explain the process of engaging the sociological imagination to study culture

iii analyse representations

iv explain public misconceptions about Australian Indigenous cultures

v analyse the impact of one example of historical suppression on Australian Indigenous cultures

vi analyse the process of reconciliation

vii evaluate how the issue supports and/or limits the public awareness and views of Australian Indigenous cultures viii gather and use a variety of relevant source materials to support observation and analysis

ix evaluate sources and critically reflect on their own and others' approaches to understanding the social world

x synthesise evidence to draw conclusions.

Preface

In this area of study, students explore the meaning of culture and the distinction between material and non-material culture.

Australian Indigenous cultures are diverse and are comprised of a range of symbols, languages, values and norms. The term 'Australian Indigenous cultures' is used in this study design to encompass this range. As students explore the meaning of culture, they consider examples from Victorian Koorie culture and wider Australian Indigenous cultures.

Students become familiar with Charles Wright Mills' (1959) concept of the sociological imagination. Mills considered the sociological imagination to be an awareness of the relationship between personal experience and wider society. Mills emphasised the importance of seeing the connections between social structures or public issues and individual experience or personal troubles. To have a sociological imagination, a person must be able to pull away from the situation and think from an alternative point of view.

The use of a sociological imagination assists students to examine representations of Australian Indigenous culture. Students analyse these representations through consideration of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism. They critically investigate historical and contemporary representations found in the media and other public forums that claim to be or could be interpreted as culturally relativist, and representations that claim to be or could be interpreted as ethnocentric. Generally, contemporary representations are those created within the last ten years. Students consider the implications of these representations for building awareness of Australian Indigenous cultures. In this area of study, the notion of awareness involves an examination of what information is known or understood about Australian Indigenous cultures; whereas public views about Australian Indigenous cultures relates to the opinions, biases and stereotypes that might exist or are being challenged about our First Nations Peoples.

In the past, the suppression of Australian Indigenous cultures was widespread. This occurred through the implementation of past policies and practices. Some of these policies and practices included the interrelated protection and segregation policies, the policy of assimilation, the integration policy and, more recently, the Northern Territory National Emergency Response (NTER), also known as The Intervention. Nevertheless, Australian Indigenous people have worked to protect and ensure the survival of their cultures. Students consider a range of significant examples that highlight this suppression and Australian Indigenous responses to it.

Students explain the process of reconciliation through examples of both symbolic reconciliation such as speeches, truth telling and campaigns, and practical reconciliation, such as government funding for the Closing the Gap policy.

> Students consider a range of factors that have influenced and are influencing public awareness of Australian Indigenous cultures. As students explore these factors they consider both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and/or groups who have been or are active in these areas. Students also study an issue supporting and/or limiting awareness of Australian Indigenous cultures, using publicly accessible material produced in the last ten years.”
>
> Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), 2023.
> ‘VCE Sociology Study Design, 2024–2028’.
> vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/vce/sociology/2024SociologySD.docx

Australian First Nations cultures

Learning safely

Teachers and students should be aware that this text includes the names and images of people who have died. It also includes information about colonisation, child removal, the Northern Territory Emergency Response ('The Intervention') and other government policies, as well as insensitive depictions of First Nations peoples that continue to cause pain and suffering today. We encourage you to go gently into this content. We have only included images with express permission.

Moving with care and hope into the future requires all Australians to understand our shared history, and to be aware of the heroic work that First Nations peoples are doing to survive and thrive. This content may make you feel uncomfortable, so if you feel it having an impact on your mental health, we encourage you to talk to your teacher or your family members, and/or access your school's wellbeing support services. Otherwise, you can access additional supports through:

- (for First Nations peoples) '13 Yarn': 13 72 96
- headspace: headspace.org.au
- Lifeline: 13 11 14
- Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800.

We also encourage teachers to explore the following resources before embarking on this area of study:

- 'Teaching First Nations knowledges and perspectives'. Culture is Life, 2022. cultureislife.org/education/resources/teaching-first-nations-knowledges-perspectives
- 'First Nations cultures and histories – notes from the SEV office'. Social Education Victoria, 2023. sev.asn.au/blog/have-you-read-this

A note on language

It is always best to use the labels that First Nations people request when describing them. This is often the name of the specific nation or cultural group that the person is a part of – for example, 'Sophie is a proud Yorta Yorta and Wiradjuri woman'. Often, the best thing to do is to ask people directly how they would like to be described or addressed.

This text uses the terms 'First Nations people(s)' and 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people(s)' interchangeably. While the term used in the VCE Sociology Study Design is 'Indigenous', our advice is that this term isn't preferred. Therefore, although Unit 3 Area of Study 1 in the study design is 'Australian Indigenous cultures', we have opted for the more fitting title of 'Australian First Nations cultures' for this chapter. This text uses the term 'non-Indigenous' to refer to people who are not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Internationally, 'First Nations' is used to refer to First Nations peoples from all places, so in an international context this term would usually include 'Australian' at the beginning (e.g. 'Australian First Nations peoples'). We use the qualifier 'Australian' sparingly and only when necessary for clarity, in recognition of the fact that some First Nations peoples and groups object to the use of a non-Indigenous language term to describe these lands, and do not recognise the sovereignty claims of the Australian Government. The non-Indigenous term ‘Australian’ is seen as being in contradiction with First Nations peoples’ enduring and unceded sovereignty over this continent, for reasons that we explore in part in this chapter.

‘Koorie’ (or ‘Koori’) is a term generally understood to describe Aboriginal people from the south-eastern region of Australia, including Victoria and parts of southern New South Wales. In this text, we’ve tried to use the names of specific nations and cultural groups rather than Koorie, which is a term that is happily used and claimed by many people.

We ask that you do not use ‘ATSI’ or other acronyms to describe First Nations peoples (except in instances where this forms part of the abbreviated title of an organisation, such as AIATSIS). You may also see ‘Aborigine’ and other historical terms used to describe First Nations people in historical representations used in the text. These are provided only to help you learn our shared history; such labels are considered highly offensive and should only be used when quoting directly from primary sources.

The labels that First Nations peoples choose to describe themselves are changing; we encourage you to keep yourself updated on this. Here are some resources to help:

- ‘Australia’s First Peoples’. Australian Institute of Australian and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AITSIS). aiatsis.gov.au/explore/australias-first-peoples
- Luke Pearson, 2021. ‘Appropriate terminology for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People – it’s complicated’. IndigenousX. indigenousx.com.au/appropriate-terminology-for-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-people-its-complicated
- ‘Preferences in terminology when referring to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples’. ACT Council of Social Service, 2016. actcoss.org.au/publication/gulanga-good-practice-guides

Whose lands are you on?

You will have heard of an Acknowledgement of Country (or a Welcome to Country if a Traditional Owner is delivering it), or seen signs acknowledging which First Nations lands you are on. There are various maps of nations, cultural groups and languages – these can be really helpful in communicating the diversity of cultures that exists among First Nations peoples. That said, it’s important to remember that sovereignty and custodianship of land has different specific meanings – some land was cared for and known deeply by a number of different cultural groups who often followed strict protocols of when and how they lived, travelled, participated in events, traded and cared for Country. This complexity cannot be captured by a distinct line drawn on a map.

Birrarung Marr, on the banks of the Yarra River.
Credit: w.wiki/6pTb

The banks of the Yarra River are a site where the five different tribes that makes up the Kulin Nation (the Boonwurrung, Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung, Wathaurung and Woiwurrung/Wurundjeri) would meet for ceremony, to celebrate at the end of the eel season and to trade together. Lore around visiting, passing through and sometimes using each other’s Country was an important part of First Nations understanding of land ownership.

The Tanderrum ceremony continues today around the Birrarung, including people of the Eastern Kulin Nation. You can learn more by exploring the following link:

- ‘Tanderrum – Melbourne International Arts Festival’. Fed Square.
  fedsquare.com/events/tanderrum-melbourne-international-arts-festival

Explore some of the following maps relating to First Nations peoples:

- ‘Local Nations: Language groups’. Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR) Victoria.
  antarvictoria.org.au/local-nations
- ‘Map of Indigenous Australia’, AIATSIS (includes links to a hardcopy for you school!)
  aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia
- ‘Victoria’s current Registered Aboriginal Parties’, Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council.
  aboriginalheritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/victorias-current-registered-aboriginal-parties

The meaning of culture and its major components 3.1.1

Where does your **culture** end and your individual identity start? How can you communicate the complexity of culture to another person without diminishing it or making it simplistic? How can we learn about culture without reducing it to ‘food, festivals and fun’? Culture is complex, made up of elements that we can touch and see and also parts that are complex, invisible and sometimes secret. Sometimes we can take our culture for granted or see it as ‘natural’ or neutral – this chapter is about questioning what makes up culture and exploring First Nations cultures.

Culture refers to the way of life of a particular group or society and is comprised of symbols, languages, values and norms. These are learnt by members and passed on to following generations. Culture can include material or non-material components.

Material culture

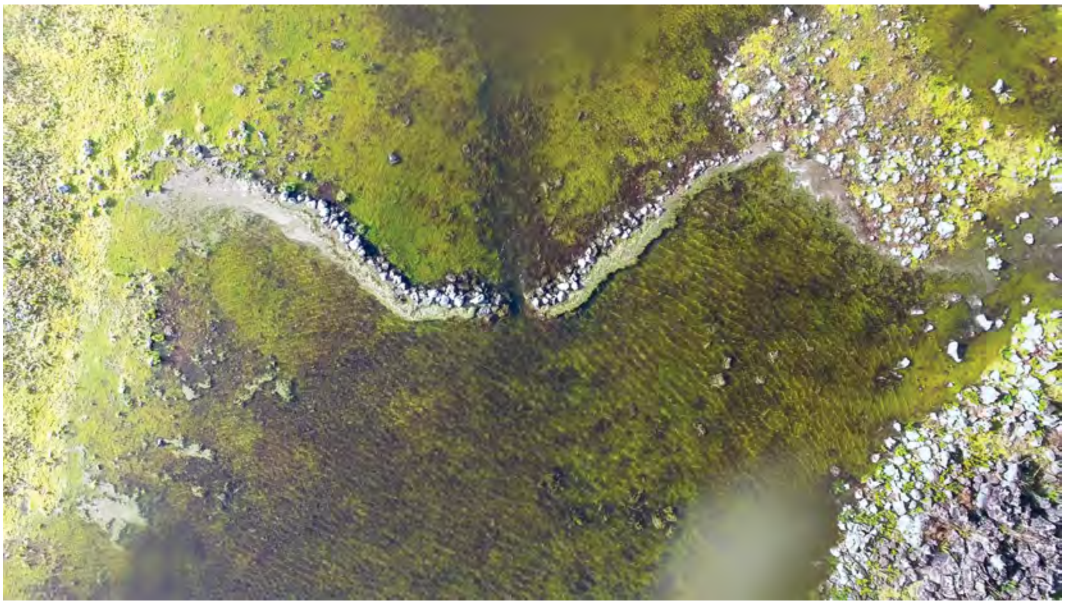
Material culture is anything that you can see or touch. Artefacts, food, clothing, buildings and toys are all examples of material culture. Exploring these objects can teach us so much about a culture but, without a deep understanding of the non-material elements of culture, much of the meaning of examples of material culture will be missing. For example, a book is an item of material culture but a book isn’t very interesting it if you don’t understand its language, norms or symbols to be able to read it.

Material culture refers to tangible aspects of culture; things that we can see and touch, including objects, places and living things that have meaning for a group. This can include tools, land, clothing, food and animals that have meaning for a particular culture.

All objects have some meaning or significance. You can have an example of non-material culture that has no material manifestation, but you cannot have an item of material culture that doesn’t connect with non-material culture because non-material culture creates its meaning.

Material culture can be important in educating us about non-material culture. Later in this chapter we will explore how First Nations cultures were suppressed by policy as part of a process of colonisation. This means that cultural heritage objects and places, such as the Budj Bim cultural landscape shown overleaf, are priceless in helping First Nations people connect to their culture and share it with the wider Australian community.

Credit: Muhammad Ribkhan
bit.ly/3Jaejyp



Drone image of one of the weirs built and maintained by the Gunditjmara people over the course of millennia. Credit: Tyson Lovett-Murray, 2017. Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation. whc.unesco.org/en/documents/167829

> “The Budj Bim Cultural Landscape, located in the traditional Country of the Gunditjmara people in south-eastern Australia is one of the world’s most extensive and oldest aquaculture systems. The Budj Bim lava flows provide the basis for the complex system of channels, weirs and dams developed by the Gunditjmara in order to trap, store and harvest kooyang (short-finned eel – *Anguilla australis*). The highly productive aquaculture system provided an economic and social base for Gunditjmara society for six millennia.”
>
> UNESCO, 2019. ‘Budj Bim Cultural Site’.

Material culture has often been described as items that are created by people practising a culture. However, in the case of First Nations peoples in Australia, Country, the waters, the skies and the lands can also be understood to be elements of material culture because of the significance of the natural environment in First Nations peoples’ non-material culture. Over many thousands of years, First Nations peoples have moulded and changed Country, as well as watched over significant geographic changes such as the creation of the Great Barrier Reef.

Animals, plants, birds, fish and insects also form a significant part of First Nations material culture, with different clan and language groups holding different animals sacred or significant. Many First Nations clans and families have totem animals that hold special importance in their cultures, so this fauna can be said to be examples of material culture as well.

In Naarm, Melbourne, among the Kulin Nations, and in many parts of south-eastern Australia, First Nations peoples see the wedge-tailed eagle, *Bunjil* in Woiwurrung language, as a creator spirit. The crow, *Gaa* or *Waa*, represents order and lore in this story.

A wedge-tailed eagle.
Credit: Flagstaffotos, 2007. w.wiki/6qCo

Non-material culture

Non-material culture refers to the intangible parts of culture that we cannot see, including language, values, norms and symbols.

If material culture refers to ‘things’, then **non-material culture** can be thought of as ‘ideas’. These are the intangible concepts and ways of being that contribute to culture. All items of material culture possess elements of non-material culture to give them meaning. If we go back to the book example, the symbols and language within the book are what communicates its meaning. Over the years, sociologists have defined non-material culture in different ways, but here we are going to look at non-material culture as symbols, language, values and norms.

Non-material component	Explanation	Example
Symbols	Any gesture, artefact, sign or concept that ‘stands in for’ or represents something else. Symbols need to have a shared meaning.	In central desert artwork, a series of concentric circles represents a gathering of people.
Language	A system of communicating using words or signs. Knowledge, norms and values are often transmitted through language.	Woiwurrung, English and Farsi are all examples of languages.
Values	Beliefs about what is right and good. Values guide norms.	‘Caring for Country is important’ is a value.
Norms	The rules that guide behaviour. Expectations for appropriate behaviour.	Structures such as kinship, totems, skin and lore are norms for many First Nations peoples; as are Acknowledgments of Country for many First Nations and non-Indigenous people.

Activity A – Welcome to culture

1 Explain the concept of culture.

2 Describe the four elements of non-material culture.

3 Compare material and non-material culture.

4 a Use the AIATSIS map of Aboriginal Australia, or the SBS resource linked below, to discover or confirm whose Traditional Country you are on.

‘Five ways to know whose Traditional Country you are on’. SBS, 2022. sbs.com.au/language/english/en/article/five-ways-to-know-whose-traditional-country-you-are-on/wtklpq2sm

b Which First Nations languages are spoken by people who live on this Country?

5 Search for and explore Traditional Owner-created resources such as your local land council website, the Koorie Heritage Trust, or Bunjilaka (Melbourne Museum First Nations collection) to find out about the material and non-material culture where you are right now.

Here are some suggestions for areas you might like to research:

- creation stories
- oral history traditions
- traditional and contemporary art, dance and clothing
- spirituality, lore and customs

  - relationship to Country such as sacred places, waterways, plants, animals or caring for Country
  - significant First Nations people from your local area
  - contemporary ways of practising culture.

6 Work with your teacher to invite a local Elder or Traditional Owner to visit your class. What relationship does your school have with First Nations people in your area? Contacting your local land council can be a great first step.

7 Visit the following pages on the Victorian Collections website and use them to help develop your understanding of Koorie cultures. Select one type of art or an artefact from those listed, and use it answer the questions that follow.

   - Welcome to Country: ‘Koorie art and artefacts’, 2014. victoriancollections.net.au/stories/koorie-art-and-artefacts
   - Message sticks: ‘Ceremonial object – Message sticks, Dja Dja Wurrung’, 2022. victoriancollections.net.au/items/60e799213f60538185db7725
   - Sacred trees: ‘Yingabeal: Indigenous geography at Heide’, 2017. victoriancollections.net.au/stories/yingabeal-indigenous-geography-at-heide
   - Woomeras: ‘Woomeras’, 2014. victoriancollections.net.au/stories/koorie-art-and-artefacts/woomeras
   - Shields: ‘Gunnai/Kurnai shields’, 2014. victoriancollections.net.au/stories/koorie-art-and-artefacts/gunnaikurnai-shields

   a Describe how your chosen art or artefact could constitute both material and non-material culture.

   b How do these components of culture inform the way these societies live – their shared values, norms and everyday practices?

8 Read the entry about the Aboriginal flag on the AIATSIS website.

   - ‘The Aboriginal flag’. AIATSIS, 2022. aiatsis.gov.au/explore/aboriginal-flag

   a Describe the flag and its symbolism.

   b How might the flag be composed of both material and non-material culture?

   c How do these components of culture inform the way this society lives – its shared values, norms and everyday practices?

Key elements of First Nations cultures

Language

In the 2021 Census conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), First Nations peoples around Australia reported speaking 150 different languages, with 9.5 per cent reporting speaking a language other than English at home. Among these people, the most commonly spoken language was Yumplatok (Torres Strait Creole). Language is a crucial part of culture, key to understanding ways of thinking. Excitingly, there are increasing efforts to preserve, record and revitalise First Nations languages.

Connection to Country

While First Nations cultures vary, a deep spiritual connection to Country – including lands, waterways, skies, plants and animals – is shared. This connection to Country can be seen as interactive, as it influences and guides lore, customs, creation stories and spirituality. Country includes all living creatures as well as lands, waters and skies. First Nations culture is indivisible from spirituality.

The following quote from Nyoongar woman Tiana Culbong highlights how connection to Country is central to her identity as a First Nations person:

> “Connection to Country keeps me grounded in my identity and culture, it allows me to recharge my spirit and takes care of my wellbeing. This connection is a cyclical relationship that connects me to my ancestry and provides unwavering knowledge. I always know when I’m feeling I’m homesick, it’s really Country calling my spirit home.”
>
> Tiana Culbong, quoted in Gemma Pol, 2020. ‘Diverse First Nations identities’. Common Ground. commonground.org.au/article/diverse-first-nations-identities

Dreaming, oral histories and songlines

You might have heard the phrase ‘oldest continuous culture in the world’ in relation to First Nations peoples of this continent. This means that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been practising their cultures and living in societies on this land for at least 70 000 years – a timeframe difficult to fathom when we consider that the pyramids in Egypt are around 5000 years old. There is so much that we are still learning from archaeological analysis and from First Nations histories; at the time of writing, a site being investigated at Moyjil/Point Ritchie on Gunditjmara Country near Warrnambool could provide evidence that people have occupied that area for 115 000 years.

Dreaming and lore

Dreaming is one of the terms used to encompass lore, spirituality, creation stories and oral histories. There is no equivalent phrase in English to describe Dreaming, so in this text we’ve tried to be specific about histories, lore, creation stories and other elements of non-material culture, rather than grouping it all into ‘Dreaming’.

You can learn more about why we don’t use the term ‘Dreamtime’ here:

Entry for ‘Dreaming/Dreamtime’. ‘AT Language and Terminology Guide’. Australians Together, 2020. australianstogether.org.au/assets/Uploads/General/AT-Language-and-Terminology-Guide-2020.pdf

Lardill stories from Queensland, along with other oral histories from around Australia, tell the story of the oceans rising 10 000 years ago. This sea level rise created the Great Barrier Reef. Credit: Lukem99, 2013. w.wiki/6qDY

Songlines are another element of First Nations culture that integrates material and non-material culture, being both songs and physical tracks across land, often mimicked by modern-day roads. Learn more by visiting the resource linked below.

'Songlines'. Deadly Story, 2023. deadlystory.com/page/culture/life_lore/songlines

The Jatbula Trail, a six-day hike through Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory, follows an ancestral songline of the Jawoyn people. Credit: Charlotte Brady, 2023.

> "And what exactly are songlines? Well I can't tell you exactly what they are, but they aren't lines from songs. They're songs that detail the creation of this land and all that's upon it. Songs that are interconnected, creating lines across this continent. Some only run a few kilometres, others run for several hundred. And while some refer to them as Dreaming tracks and we are dreaming up new possibilities through mob that are recording and laying down tracks, I think this quote from Margo Neale details why songlines [aren't just] important to Aboriginal people but [also] to this nation if we are ever going to meet in the middle:
>
> 'The songlines shouldn't just be an anthropological footnote, but a part of Australian history as it is taught in schools. To tell the real story of this continent you've got to have both histories. They're held in different ways, told in different ways, but are essentially complementary. To really belong to this place you've got to embrace the songlines. They are the story of this land.'"
>
> Poet and performer Steven Oliver (Kuku-yalanji, Gangalidda, Waanyi, Woppaburra, Bundjalung and Biripi Nations) quoting Margo Neale (Senior Indigenous Curator and Head of the Centre for Indigenous Knowledges at the National Museum of Australia), as featured in the film *Looky Looky Here Comes Cooky*, 2020.

Kinship and moiety

Kinship is a term that is used to describe how people relate to one another in different cultures. In First Nations cultures, the concept of kinship is complex, and has wide implications for daily life and social structure.

Kinship determines how everyone relates to one another, as well as their roles, responsibilities and obligations regarding one another, the environment and ceremony.

There are three primary foundations of kinship: **moiety**, **totems** and **skin names**.

For more information about kinship systems, explore this link:

'Kinship Systems'. Welcome to Country, 2019. experience.welcometocountry.com/blogs/learning/kinship-systems

> "Bundjil the eagle (or eaglehawk) is a creator deity, cultural hero and ancestral being.
>
> Bundjil has two wives and a son, Binbeal the rainbow. His brother is Pailian the bat. He is assisted by six wirmums or shamans who represent the clans of the Eaglehawk moiety: Djurt-djurt the Nankeen Kestrel, Thara the quail hawk, Yukope the parakeet, Dantum the parrot, Tadjeri the brushtail possum and Turnong the gliding possum.
>
> After creating the mountains, rivers, flora, fauna, and laws for humans to live by, Bundjil gathered his wives and sons then asked Crow, who had charge of the winds, to open his bags and let out some wind. Crow opened a bag in which he kept his whirlwinds and created a cyclone which uprooted trees. Bundjil asked for a stronger wind.

> Crow complied, and Bundjil and his people were blown upwards into the sky. Bundjil himself became the star Altair, and his two wives, the black swans, became stars on either side. ”
>
> From ‘Creation stories’. Taungurung Land and Waters Council, 2021. Story shared with permission. taungurung.com.au/creation-stories

Activity B – Share our Pride

Explore the Share our Pride web page linked below, which provides an excellent overview of many of the key components shared by First Nations cultures, and answer the questions that follow.

‘Our culture’. Share our Pride, 2023. shareourpride.org.au/sections/our-culture

1 How important is language to culture and identity? Use examples to support your response.

2 What language does Djapirri speak?

3 a What is meant by the term ‘Country’?
  b What is the significance of Country to First Nations cultural practices and identity?
  c How is Country linked to other aspects of First Nations culture?

4 a What is customary law?
  b What cultural practices does it inform?

5 a What kinds of items were traded?
  b What aspects of material and non-material culture did trade facilitate and foster?

6 a Provide an explanation of the kinship system and how it functions. Use examples.
  b How is the kinship system different to the western idea of family?
  c Explain how kinship foundations of moiety, totems and skin names contribute to non-material culture.

Thinking critically about culture

The way that sociologists define and understand culture is different to First Nations concepts of culture.

Sociologists often frame culture around a society’s language, norms, symbols and values, but most First Nations descriptions of culture emphasise the interconnectedness of all aspects of life, including spirituality, language, customs, Country and community. For many First Nations peoples, culture is a living, dynamic entity that evolves over time and is deeply connected to the land and the natural environment. Culture is also rooted in a long history of storytelling, oral traditions, song and dance.

In sociology, there is a desire to categorise and separate elements of culture, which conflicts with the holistic and relational approach of First Nations cultures. For sociologists, culture is a set of symbolic systems that are learnt, shaping how people view the world and interact with each other. They are interested in how culture influences people’s behaviour, shapes institutions, and affects society as a whole.

Consider the following questions in order to think critically about culture:

- Why might sociologists seek to define and understand cultures using frameworks different from those that the people within those cultures themselves use?
- What parts of First Nations cultures might be difficult to make sense of, from a sociological perspective?

Activity C – Deepening knowledge about culture

1 Using what you have learnt so far, including information from the link in Activity B, respond to the following questions.

   a Describe the Dreaming in your own words.

   b What kinds of things does the Dreaming prescribe?

   c Describe how the Dreaming is an example of non-material culture, making reference to its four components.

   d Explain how the Dreaming maintains culture.

2 Research a Dreaming story from the Country you are on and write a short summary of it. How is it similar or different to the Dreaming explored on Share our Pride's website?

3 Use the following map to find out what language is spoken near you (and perhaps try to learn a few words).

   'Gambay: A map of Australia's first languages'. ABC Indigenous, 2023.
   abc.net.au/indigenous/gambay-languages-map

4 Go to the Japingka Aboriginal Art Gallery website and read about the role of songlines in Aboriginal art.

   japingkaaboriginalart.com/articles/songlines-important-aboriginal-art

   a What are songlines?

   b Outline their place and use in First Nations culture.

   c Why are songlines important in First Nations art?

   d How do songlines connect to other components of culture? Use examples to support your response.

   e Describe how songlines inform the way a society lives – its shared values, norms and everyday practices?

5 On the Japingka Aboriginal Art Gallery website, read about the Rainbow Serpent story.

   japingkaaboriginalart.com/articles/rainbow-serpent

   a Outline the Rainbow Serpent story of the people of the desert.

   b Describe how the story of the Rainbow Serpent relates to the concepts of material and non-material culture. Use examples to illustrate your response.

   c Describe how the Rainbow Serpent story informs the way this society lives – its shared values, norms and everyday practices.

6 Go to the State Library of Queensland website to gain an understanding of Torres Strait Islander cultures.

   'ReTold', 2023. slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi/contemporary-stories/retold

   Select any of the stories listed on the website and then answer the following questions. Use the diagram to guide you with your responses.

   a Define culture, including its two components.

   b Describe how your chosen story is composed of both material and non-material culture.

   c How do these components of culture inform the way this society lives – their shared values, norms and everyday practices?

7 Extend your learning:

   - Watch a Dreaming story from Common Ground:

   'First Nations Bedtime Stories'. Common Ground, 2022. commonground.org.au/bedtime-stories

   - Listen to the episode 'How do you wake a sleeping language?' from ABC podcast The Few Who Do:

   podchaser.com/podcasts/the-few-who-do-841370/episodes/how-do-you-wake-a-sleeping-lan-41603926

- Watch the following video (22 min) from ABC's 'Behind the News':

  'Connection to Country Special'. ABC Behind the News, 2019.
  www.abc.net.au/btn/specials/connection-to-country-special/13467922

- Investigate Wilimee Mooring, also known as Mount William, a site where stone hatchet-heads could be mined and were traded with people hundreds of kilometres away:

  dcceew.gov.au/parks-heritage/heritage/places/national/mount-william
  aboriginalhistoryofyarra.com.au/national-heritage-mt-william.pdf

- Explore another Rainbow Serpent story from Victorian Yorta Yorta culture:

  'Yorta Yorta: Ina Yillian – the creation of the Dungala, translated by Aunty Zeta Thomson'. Wala Connections, 2020.
  www.walaconnections.com/post/yorta-yorta-ina-yillian-the-creation-of-the-dungala-translated-by-aunty-zeta-thomson

KISAY
DHANGAL

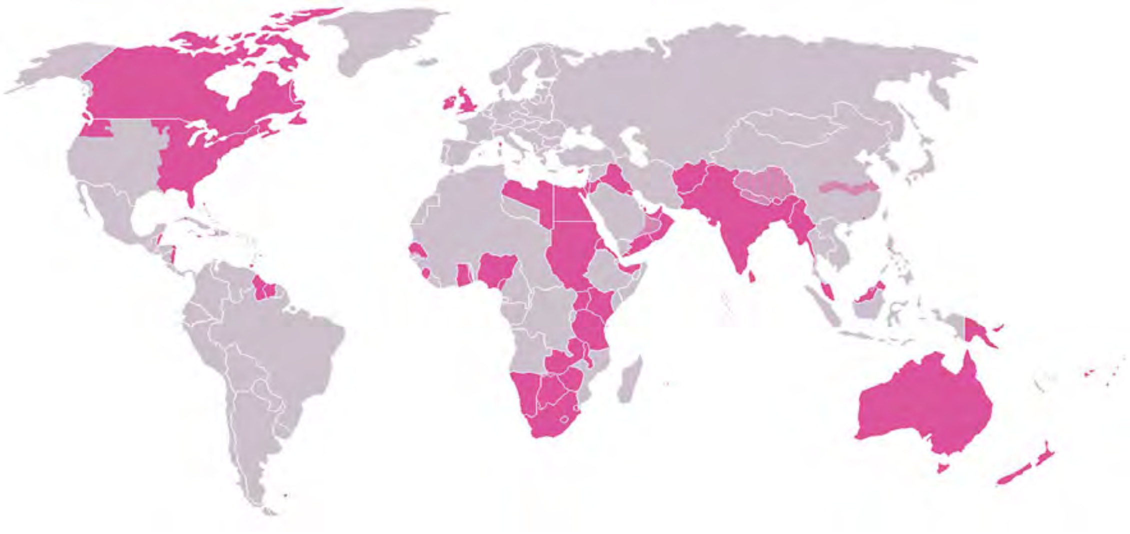
Torres Strait Islander performers at the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco, 2016.
Credit: Michel Dagnino.
abc.net.au/news/2016-03-27/monaco-museum-to-showcase-aboriginal-artwork/7277870

In case you missed it – colonisation in Australia

It is impossible to understand this area of study without having some knowledge of how **colonisation** occurred as a process in Australia. From the 16th to early 20th centuries European powers such as Britain, France, Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands (then Holland) were intent on growing their empires and trading interests, so they seized control of many countries throughout the world. At its largest, the British Empire controlled 24 per cent of the world's landmass.

Colonisation is the action or processing of establishing control over, and often settling among, the First Nations people of an area, usually by force and invasion.

The British first arrived in Australia in 1770 and shortly after this colonies were established throughout the country. The British expansion into First Nations lands from the late 1700s was characterised by frontier violence. This violent repression resulted in more than 270 massacres (defined as the killing of six or more unarmed people) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Sometimes called the 'Frontier Wars' or 'Australian Wars', these acts of violence did not end until the 1930s – less than 100 years ago. Against the backdrop of this violence came successive government policies to control First Nations peoples.



This map depicts areas taken and held by the British over the Empire's long history
('areas of influence' are shown shaded in pink, other invasions and occupations not shown).

A snapshot of some experiences of colonisation on First Nations peoples is provided in the Australian Human Rights Commission's *Bringing Them Home* (1997) report, which describes how the removal of children to intentionally disrupt First Nations cultures was an element of colonisation from the early days of the colonies (the colonies based in each state and territory were administered separately until Federation in 1901). This disruption led to a loss of culture because communities couldn't pass culture on to their children.

> “Indigenous children have been forcibly separated from their families and communities since the very first days of the European occupation of Australia. Violent battles over rights to land, food and water sources characterised race relations in the nineteenth century. Throughout this conflict Indigenous children were kidnapped and exploited for their labour. Indigenous children were still being 'run down' by Europeans in the northern areas of Australia in the early twentieth century.”
>
> *Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families*. Australian Human Rights Commission, 1997. humanrights.gov.au/our-work/bringing-them-home-report-1997

Activity D – Colonisation

1. Describe the process of colonisation.
2. Before reading the section above, what did you know about invasion or the Frontier Wars?
3. How do you think colonisation might have affected First Nations peoples and cultures?
4. How does colonisation, including invasion and the Frontier Wars, impact First Nations peoples today?

The sociological imagination as conceived by Charles Wright Mills and its connection to the study of cultures 3.1.2

Have you ever faced a challenge and felt like you were alone or like it was a personal failing? When something happens to lots of people, is it the individuals that are to blame or is it a failing of society as a whole?

These were some of the questions that sociologist Charles Wright Mills began asking in the 1950s that led to the development of the **sociological imagination**, a critical thinking tool that allows sociologists to see personal problems as public issues.

Sociological imagination is an awareness of the relationship between personal experience and wider society.

> “Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both.”
>
> Charles Wright Mills, 1959. *The Sociological Imagination*.

Mills invites us to see ourselves and others as interacting with society, being affected by society and being shaped by historical context. When using the sociological imagination to explore phenomena in society, we are looking at the reasons why a phenomenon occurs through the lens of the experience of individuals and the different competing pressures that affect those individuals. We are trying to be aware of our own biases and to explore topics with curiosity and nuance. The sociological imagination is a tool through which we can examine society to learn more about it, rather than to judge it.

Charles Wright Mills (1916–1962)

Mills himself defined the sociological imagination as ‘the vivid awareness of the relationship between experience and the wider society’ (1959). It isn’t possible to be totally objective, but the goal of the sociological imagination is to build a real awareness of the way in which our biases, values and presumptions impact our thinking. Engaging with our own biases and interrogating them is the most challenging part of using the sociological imagination, and requires continuous reflection.

When engaging in our sociological imagination, we examine social phenomena through four distinct lenses to help uncover how wider society may be influencing the individual.

Factor	Explanation
Historical	How have past events influenced the present?
Cultural	What influence do tradition, cultural values and belief systems have on our behaviour and social interactions? In what ways has cultural change occurred? What subcultures exist? How does our own cultural background influence our sociological gaze?
Structural	How do various forms of social organisation and social institutions affect our lives? How do these vary over time and between countries and regions?
Critical	Why are things as they are? How could they be otherwise? Who benefits from and who is disadvantaged by the status quo? What 'alternative futures' are possible? How do sociological insights relate to our life experiences?

Adapted from Haydn Aarons and Evan Willis, 2011. *The Sociological Quest: An Introduction to the Study of Social Life.* London: Routledge.

Social structures and public issues

A social structure can include institutions such as the family, education or government – these are the organised groups in society that we might work for, use as a service or otherwise interact with. When we discuss public issues, we are looking at topics that are seen as important by society, that might appear frequently in media and social media coverage, or that otherwise impact a lot of people. Sometimes issues are negatively framed or relate to moral panics, which you might remember from Unit 2.

The connection between the sociological imagination and culture

The sociological imagination is particularly useful for understanding how cultural factors influence individual behaviour and experience. By examining the broader social, historical and cultural contexts in which individuals live, sociologists can better understand how culture shapes the ways in which people think, feel and behave.

By using the sociological imagination, we can start to see that nothing is 'natural'; rather, society has been shaped by cultural, historical, critical and structural factors. So the things we take for granted as normal or natural within one particular culture at any point in time may not be seen this way at all times or in other places.

The sociological imagination can help to uncover the underlying social and cultural structures that give rise to particular cultural beliefs and practices, and it can shed light on the ways in which these cultural factors influence individual behaviour and experience.

**Why has Australia Day become increasingly controversial?
How can we better understand this?**

Structural
- The British brought with them a system of governing and rules that enabled colonisation.
- The Australian Government set the agenda for Australia Day – it's an important day because the government placed importance on it.
- Democracy privileged majority voices – non-Indigenous ones. This was supported by other structures such as the media and education; e.g. the way in which Australia Day is taught in schools as the founding day.
- More recently, an increase of Indigenous voices in the media has led to improved awareness of Indigenous perspectives.

Cultural
- British ethnocentrism led to First Nations peoples being seen as inferior.
- This led to a cultural view of First Nations cultures and peoples not being valid, thus nothing to acknowledge or celebrate.
- More recently, for some people celebrating Australia Day shows patriotism; for others it is a day for protest.

Critical
- The 'change the date' movement and other perspectives signal a possible future where there can be a celebration for all.
- Changing the date will lead to a more inclusive celebration.
- Changing the date may signal a shift in government policy towards self-determination.

Historical
- On 26 January 1788, the First Fleet arrived and Arthur Phillip raised the Union flag.
- Colonisation/settlement/invasion have had ongoing effects; e.g. for First Nations communities this day is a reminder of genocide and a loss of civil rights.
- The date wasn't always 26 January.
- It wasn't always called Australia Day.
- Not all states celebrated this day.
- First Nations peoples have gained rights over time and therefore have a more prominent voice now.
- On 26 January 1938, Aboriginal people called for a day of mourning.

Thinking critically about sociological concepts

In this area of study we are exploring First Nations culture through the lens of sociology, which is in essence a European or 'western' framework. Therefore, when engaging in this work through the study of the sociological imagination, remember that although it is attempting to reduce bias, we are working from a perspective that is not neutral.

What does sociology look like from a First Nations perspective? Associate Professor Kathleen Butler from the University of Newcastle argues that the way sociology is practised and studied centres the perspective of theorists in the European tradition and therefore ignores issues of racial justice. Read more about this perspective in the article below.

'Indigenous Sociology for Social Impact'. Zuleyka Zevallos, 2018.
Othersociologist.com/2018/01/06/indigenous-sociology-for-social-impact

How to use your sociological imagination

The study design requires that students 'critically reflect on their own and others' approaches to understanding the social world'.

The sociological imagination is the core concept that helps us to understand the ways in which perspectives are constructed and why this matters. Our experiences are just ours, and are not the same as those of other people. The perspectives that you bring to a situation are based on your history, the structures around you, your culture and your experiences.

To critically reflect on our own perspectives, we need to be aware of the ways in which we might experience barriers or enablers, sometimes called 'disadvantage' and 'privilege'. When we critically reflect, we can also think about the limits of our knowledge – our gaps in understanding – because each person's background and experiences make their understanding of the world very different to that of another person.

For example, people who experience racism are forced to be alert and aware of potential dangers in situations that might feel safe and comfortable for white people. This is exhausting and requires 'work' that is often unacknowledged.

Activity E – The sociological imagination

1. Describe Charles Wright Mills' concept of the sociological imagination.
2. How does the sociological imagination relate to the study of cultures?
3. What is the importance of seeing the connections between social structures ('public issues') and individuals' own experiences ('personal troubles')?
4. Use the four parts or 'lenses' of the sociological imagination listed below to develop your own 'sociological autobiography' and explore the factors that have shaped you as a person.
    a. Historical – how have your family's background, events and experiences shaped the person you are today?
    b. Cultural – what roles have your cultural background, traditions and belief systems played in shaping your opinions and influencing the way you think and behave?
    c. Structural – how have various social institutions you've interacted with, such as school, family, work or religious organisations, influenced you?
    d. Critical – in what ways have your values, beliefs and opinions changed over time?

Historical and contemporary representations of First Nations cultures that could be interpreted as ethnocentric and/or culturally relativistic representations 3.1.3

A **representation** is a portrayal of a person, group, place, idea or thing. It is created through a combination of different elements that we can call symbols, and its meaning is created through interpretation.

Meaning is created by the media or by individuals through **representations**. A representation can be privately communicated, such as a letter or a photograph privately shared, or it can be more widely communicated, such as an article or photograph published in a newspaper or online. When we analyse representations we need to be able to describe what we are seeing or hearing and then interpret its meaning. We can remember that while we have our own individual interpretation, representations are often created to be interpreted in a particular way – that is, they are socially constructed. The different parts of a representation contribute to a specific reading or interpretation.

Historical or contemporary?

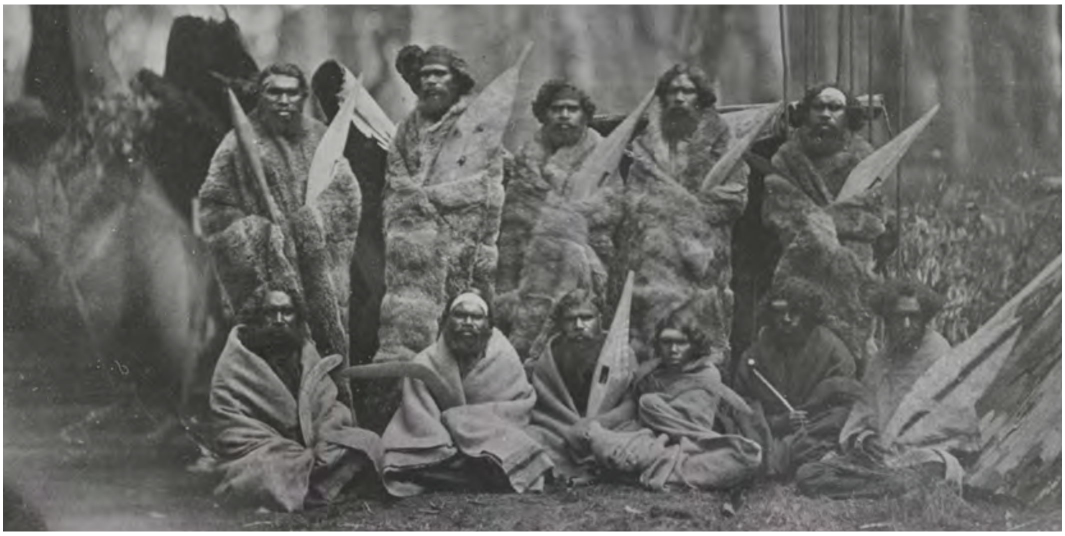
In VCE Sociology, contemporary representations are those created within the last 10 years, while historical representations are those older than 10 years.

Representations:

- can be within (or include) images, text, moving pictures or music
- can be interpreted differently at different times by different people
- can be thought of as 'constructions' of reality, typically reflecting the perspective of the creator
- help to create and add to our impression of the world around us
- by their very nature are constructed through a process of selection and omission (in other words, creators make decisions to include some elements and leave out others).

Description	Analysis
What can you see, read or hear?	What do these signs mean?
What text is featured, and how is it arranged?	What prior knowledge or associations does this representation connect to (for example, is it encouraging me to think of a genre, stereotype or other elements)?
What colours, imagery or symbols are used?	How does this representation make me feel?
What sounds, spoken words, music and/or audio effects are present?	What does it confirm or challenge?

Photographs such as this one, taken in 1858, are *historical* representations. The photographers, two European men, intended to document what they might have seen as a 'primitive' culture. This sort of representation might be understood as ethnocentric because of the power that the dominant culture (embodied by the photographers, not pictured) may exert over First Nations cultures (embodied by



A group of Aboriginal men (possibly Gunaikurnai) pose for a photograph taken by Antoine Fauchery and Richard Daintree, circa 1858. Credit: State Library Victoria. victoriancollections.net.au/stories/early-photographs-indigenous-victorians those pictured (don't worry – we're going to unpack these concepts in the next section!). On the other hand, this representation could alternatively be interpreted as culturally relative; the men are standing proudly together, which indicates dignity and respect. They are surrounded by objects of their material culture, including cloaks and weapons. Images such as this can, nonetheless, also have significant value as historical artefacts because they document traditional cultural items, such as the possum cloaks and weapons depicted in this example.

Activity F – Analysing representations

Watch this video, which explains the concept of media representation, and answer the questions that follow.

‘Stuart Hall’s Representation Theory Explained’. The Media Insider, 2019.
youtu.be/yJr0gO_-w_Q

1 Outline what is meant by representation.

2 Explain what you need to do to analyse a representation.

Ethnocentrism and cultural relativism

The way we interpret representations is culturally determined. What this means is that we bring our knowledge, assumptions and experiences into our interpretation of representations.

Imagine that your friend invites you over to watch a scary movie. Imagine what might be in this movie. Would there be suspenseful music? Would it include sound effects such as heartbeats or droning noises? What would the setting be? A carnival? A school building at night? Would there be a creepy villain? What would the story be about? Without having seen this film, you are already going into viewing it with a series of expectations and understandings about this genre of film.

You bring prior knowledge, expectations, values and assumptions with you when you interpret media, and this section is about building awareness of this in relation to representations of First Nations peoples and cultures. We are using two concepts to help us interpret representation: **ethnocentrism** and **cultural relativism**. They are both about being able to interpret the beliefs and values that underpin representations.

Ethnocentrism is a term used to describe attitudes that judge other cultures using the evaluator’s own culture as the measure of what is superior.

Cultural relativism is a method where different societies or cultures are analysed without using the values of one culture to judge the worth of another.

Ethnocentrism is largely used to describe the way that minority cultures are evaluated against a dominant culture; for example, First Nations cultures being judged as inferior because they are different to European or white Australian culture.

The term ‘ethnocentrism’ is sometimes used interchangeably with ‘Anglocentrism’ (judging by English values and culture) or ‘Eurocentrism’ (judging by European values and culture). While we may describe racist representations as ethnocentric, ‘racism’ and ‘ethnocentrism’ are not interchangeable terms. It is important to remember that positive representations can still be ethnocentric if they prioritise western values over First Nations values, or they do not challenge assumed mainstream values.

Meaning is made in the way things are interpreted

Remember that when you are interpreting something you are bringing your own culture, values, beliefs and prior knowledge into the mix. We do this automatically, so you can’t really avoid it, but you can certainly build awareness about it. To what extent do you share the values held by the dominant, white culture of Australia? Do you have insider knowledge and experience of other cultures, communities or countries? What values do you bring when you interpret a representation?

Some degree of cultural understanding is required for a representation to be interpreted as culturally relativistic. Sometimes, this understanding is shown through an awareness of what is sacred or sensitive. For some First Nations people, naming or showing images of people who have died must follow tribal guidelines or lore. You might have heard or seen this warning:

Warning: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander viewers are warned that the following program may contain the images or voices of deceased persons.

Any attempt to understand what is culturally appropriate should consider:

- naming protocols
- what to do when visiting different Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander lands
- ‘Welcomes to Country’ or ‘Acknowledgments of Country’ and smoking protocols
- kinship protocols, such as who should and shouldn’t speak
- cultural authority to share stories or give permission for actions
- protocols for sacred sites
- rites relating to men’s and women’s places
- ceremonies
- roles and responsibilities.

Learn more about First Nations cultural protocols for media creators here:

‘Indigenous cultural protocols: what the media needs to do when depicting deceased persons’. NITV/SBS, 2017. sbs.com.au/nitv/article/indigenous-cultural-protocols-what-the-media-needs-to-do-when-depicting-deceased-persons/97xq2otnt

Determining whether a representation is culturally relativist or ethnocentric

When interpreting representations we must first describe what is there, then interpret what it means. In order to determine whether a representation is culturally relativist or ethnocentric we should take a few things into account.

- Does the creator of this representation have deep or insider knowledge of First Nations cultures and, if so, how is this shown?
- What are the values represented? Are they ethnocentric? (For instance, in mainstream or 'Anglo' Australian culture, an ethnocentric value might be that sporting prowess is important.)
- Remember that First Nations peoples are also often socialised to some extent in mainstream Australian culture, so just because a speaker or creator might be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, this doesn't necessarily mean that a representation they create will not be ethnocentric.
- It can be very difficult for non-Indigenous people to have a sufficient degree of knowledge of First Nations cultures to be able to make judgements about the values that are being represented.
- Positive representations of First Nations people may still be ethnocentric.
- A viewpoint that supports alternative (as opposed to mainstream) values, or otherwise challenges ethnocentric values, and is portrayed fairly, may also be characterised as culturally relative.

Thinking critically about the VCE Sociology course

Let's consider a representation we're (hopefully) becoming quite familiar with – the study design for VCE Sociology.

- What insider knowledge about First Nations culture is demonstrated by the wording used in the study design?
- Whose knowledge and ways of thinking are prioritised?
- What theorists are used – are western thinkers given more importance that First Nations sociologists?
- Does it feel as though the audience of the study design is First Nations people?
- When we say 'public misconceptions', are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples included in that public, or do we just mean 'white people'?
- Is the curriculum itself ethnocentric, culturally relativistic or a bit of both?

Activity G – Ethnocentrism and cultural relativism

1 Check your understanding of key concepts in this part of the course by completing these tasks.
   a Define ethnocentrism.
   b Define cultural relativism.
   c Explain the difference between ethnocentrism and cultural relativism.
   d What does it mean to think critically about representations of First Nations peoples and cultures?
   e How do we understand the meaning of 'contemporary' in VCE Sociology?
   f How can using our sociological imagination assist us when examining representations of First Nations cultures?

2 Read this article about ethnocentrism and answer the questions that follow.

‘Australia is racist – but not in the way you think’. Natalie Cromb, 2017.
sbs.com.au/nitv/article/australia-is-racist-but-not-in-the-way-you-think/j0rgdl6ay

a Summarise in your own words the argument being made by the author.

b How does the author define ethnocentrism?

c What historical evidence does the author use to support their observations about ethnocentrism?

d What contemporary evidence does the author use?

e What is your reaction to the article? Does it confirm or challenge your perspective, and why? Does it generate an emotional response in you and, if so, why do you think that might be?

3 Read the quote from First Nations author Luke Pearson and answer the questions that follow.

> “Deficit discourse is not just the individual stories we tell, it is the cumulative world-building effect on the sum total of all such stories, it is what we tell readers about the nature of the world where these stories take place.
>
> Is it a world where success is measured slowly, through the lens of effective assimilation?
>
> Or is it a world where one person’s success is proof that the meritocracy is real, and therefore racism doesn’t exist and all other Indigenous people just need to be more like this one?
>
> Is it a world where the real story of Indigenous success is the white people who helped them along the way?
>
> Is it a world where Indigenous people are the passive victims of the inexhaustible march of colonisation; sad but inevitable, and with no real agency or solutions worth exploring?
>
> Is it a world where police are heroes so therefore cannot possibly do wrong? Where Indigenous people are criminals and, well, don’t do the crime if you can’t do the time!
>
> Deficit discourse in media is the inherent othering in choosing to label some people more than others and in different circumstances.”
>
> Luke Pearson, 2021. ‘Addressing deficit reporting is more than just telling positive stories’. IndigenousX.
> indigenousx.com.au/addressing-deficit-reporting-is-more-than-just-telling-positive-stories

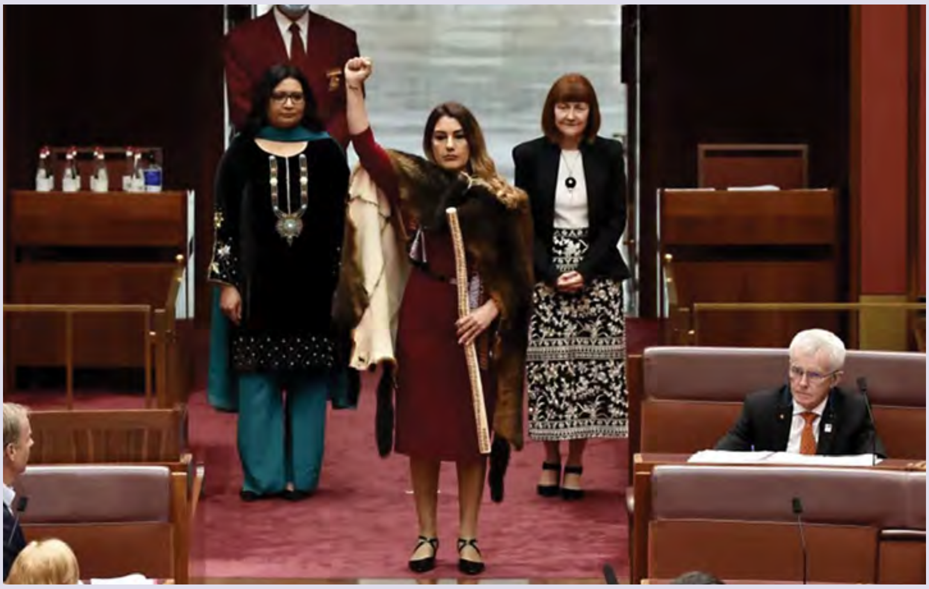
a Why is Pearson suspicious of so-called positive reporting?

b What values does Pearson identify?

c Identify three of the common media narratives invoked by Pearson. Have you seen these before in other contexts?

d Is this representation culturally relativistic, or is it critical of ethnocentric representations? Can it be both?

Analysing representations



This photograph features Gunnai Gunditjmara Senator Lydia Thorpe entering the Senate chamber for the first time in a possum-fur cloak, following her election in 2019.

Let's try an example. Follow these steps to analyse the representation (image) provided above.

1 Look at the way the image is framed.
2 Who is in it? What clothing, furniture, colours or contrast are present?
3 Does it remind you of something? Does it connect to your prior knowledge?
4 How does it make you feel? Why is that?
5 How could it be interpreted as culturally relativistic or ethnocentric?

Using what you've noted, analyse this contemporary representation as being ethnocentric or culturally relativistic. A sample response is provided below.

This representation is a photograph. The setting is the Commonwealth Senate chamber, a place typically occupied by non-Indigenous people to make laws, although this is changing as more First Nations people enter parliament. It could be interpreted as either ethnocentric or culturally relativistic.

Surrounded by the old-fashioned furniture and people in suits, Thorpe is alone in wearing clothing that represents First Nations culture. Being isolated in this way among a large group of people shows her difference and means she appears out of place to the viewer. In this way she may seem less powerful as she is literally outnumbered – it reinforces how many barriers prevent First Nations peoples and cultures from being represented in this institution. An ethnocentric interpretation might conclude that she doesn't 'belong' because of this difference.

On the other hand, she stands proudly, raising her arm in a black power salute. She went on to describe herself as 'sovereign' in her oath, which emphasises the sense that she is prioritising the sovereignty and dignity of her people, which can be interpreted as culturally relativistic. Cultural relativism requires a deep insider knowledge of the culture being represented, and while I don't know a lot about Gunnai and Gunditjmara culture, I do know that possum-skin cloaks can be a symbol of power and dignity, and the cloak is an important element in this image. Depicting power alongside First Nations cultural symbols, along with an emphasis on sovereignty in opposition to a colonial institution clearly challenges ethnocentric values, so in this way the image can be interpreted as a culturally relativistic representation.

Public misconceptions about First Nations cultures 3.1.4

A ‘misconception’ is when an inaccurate or misleading piece of information is held as truth. Since initial contact, many misconceptions have proliferated about First Nations peoples among European colonists. For such significant, and in many cases for First Nations peoples, *dangerous* misconceptions to proliferate, a number of factors were required. Foundational to this was the belief in the innate racial, moral, intellectual and/or physical superiority of Europeans. The next chapter of this text explores this in more detail in reference to ethnicity. Building on this, the misconceptions served the purpose of enabling continued dispossession with stereotypical media representations and ‘the great Australian silence’ ensuring their longevity.

> “… (Our) results show that around 75 per cent of Australian participants hold an implicit bias against Indigenous Australians, with a third of Australians holding what might be considered a strong implicit bias.”
>
> From Siddharth Shirodkar, 2019. ‘Bias against Indigenous Australians: Implicit Association Test results for Australia’. *Journal of Australian Indigenous Issues*, vol. 22, no. 3–4. search.informit.org/doi/pdf/10.3316/informit.150032703197478

Many would argue that it is essential for negative stories about First Nations peoples to be told and propagated in order for colonial Australia to occur in the first place, because it serves to justify the dispossession. In the case of First Nations peoples in Australia, *many* misconceptions, beliefs and stereotypes exist that have served to marginalise, discredit, label or otherwise misrepresent First Nations peoples.

Public misconceptions: what we need to be able to do

- Describe the misconception.
- Explain the causes of the misconception.
- Explain the reality, using evidence.

The connection between awareness and attitudes

> “Unfortunately, race relations are still suffering in Australia. We can (and should) acknowledge the progress made, but it is just as important to talk about the challenges we still face. Historically, mainstream Australia has excluded and ignored First Nations people. And the white gaze that justified this exclusion is still present today. For race relations to truly improve, attitude change must occur. Racial harmony cannot be achieved without first improving public understanding between First Nations peoples and non-Indigenous Australians. At the same time, white ignorance about First Nations cultures must be addressed and better education is key.”
>
> The Common Ground Team, 2019. ‘Race relations.’ commonground.org.au/article/race-relations

The VCE Sociology study design asks that we explore the following three misconceptions:

- the past perception that Australia was land that belonged to no-one prior to European arrival
- that First Nations peoples share one culture
- that First Nations peoples mainly live in arid areas.

Noting that these are the three misconceptions about which you may be assessed, it is crucial for your overall understanding (for other parts of this area of study) that you be aware that, as colonised people, First Nations peoples have been and continue to be subject to many misrepresentations and myths beyond just these three.

For instance, there are misconceptions that:

- dispossession was inevitable, and therefore justified
- there were no alternatives to colonisation (such as peaceful trade and cultural exchanges)
- First Nations peoples faced with incursions didn't fight for their land
- First Nations cultures have (or will) disappear
- the only authentic First Nations cultures are those that conform with particular markers of tradition.

These examples and many others continue to impact First Nations peoples, and limit not only **awareness** of First Nations cultures among the wider Australian community but also the capacity for all inhabitants of this continent to live productively and harmoniously.

Awareness involves an examination of what information is known or understood about a topic.

The 'Great Australian Silence'

When studying the myths and misconceptions that the white Australian public have held over the last 250 years, we should be aware that this isn't 'by accident' – often they have been steered by intentional decisions made by interests that benefit them.

Prominent Australian anthropologist W.E.H. Stanner used the phrase 'cult of forgetfulness' to describe how Australians choose to ignore past atrocities to the point of forgetting them. The implication of this silence is that white Australia has benefited from ignoring the shared history of contact, colonial violence, suppression and resistance. As noted in the resource linked below, which discusses this topic, 'listening to and learning from First Nations peoples about their cultures and histories can allow avenues for us to start to remember differently, in ways that heal instead of harm'.

'The great Australian silence'. The Australian Museum.
australian.museum/learn/first-nations/unsettled/healing-nations/the-great-australian-silence

The past perception that Australia was land that belonged to no-one prior to European arrival 3.1.4.1

Terra nullius is sometimes used as a catch-all term to explain the colonisation of Australia. The conventional understanding of history is that in the 18th century European ideas about race meant the British didn't see First Nations peoples as fully human, and so didn't recognise their ownership of the land as legitimate. The colonists' ethnocentric thinking did not recognise First Nations land use practices – including stone fish traps and complex burning schedules – as agriculture. They prioritised capitalistic ideas of land ownership over the connection to Country, stewardship and shared land use practised by First Nations peoples.

Terra nullius

- The term *terra nullius* means 'empty' or 'unsettled' land in Latin.
- The term was used to retrospectively justify claiming First Nations land for the British Crown without treaty. In many ways this was unusual – for example, the British began negotiating treaties with Canada's First Peoples in 1725 in so-called 'Peace and Friendship' treaties, many decades before their arrival in Australia; not dissimilar from how they would later opt to engage with Māori peoples in New Zealand.
- It became established as a legal doctrine in the colonies in 1835 with a proclamation by New South Wales governor Richard Bourke in 1835 – 47 years after the arrival of the First Fleet.
- It was finally overturned with the landmark Mabo decision in 1992.

The reality

There was no legal precedent to support then Lieutenant (later Captain) James Cook's decision to claim the east coast of Australia for Britain, and so *terra nullius* emerged afterwards. Cook, under orders from the British Crown, chose to claim the land against the advice of the Royal Society, who had commissioned and paid for the voyage, but in line with secret instructions from the Crown.

> “They [First Nations peoples] are the natural, and in the strictest sense of the word, the legal possessors of the several Regions they inhabit.
>
> No European Nation has a right to occupy any part of their country, or settle among them without their voluntary consent. Conquest over such people can give no just title; because they could never be the Aggressors.”
>
> Advice addressed to Captain James Cook by James Douglas, the 14th Earl of Morton, President of the Royal Society.
> nla.gov.au/digital-classroom/senior-secondary/cook-and-pacific/indigenous-responses-cook-and-his-voyage/hints

First Nations peoples lived throughout mainland Australia, Tasmania and the Torres Strait Islands with complex land stewardship and ownership law, as well as cultural and agricultural practices. Ethnocentric values regarding culture, as well as the process of dispossession, meant that core parts of this myth – such as that First Nations peoples didn't use agriculture, or that they are all nomadic – have been taught in schools until fairly recently. In addition, a focus on *terra nullius* as a legal doctrine has made people think that it was law at the time that the British actually invaded, which it was not.

Terra nullius endured in Australian law for almost two centuries and was only overturned with the Mabo decision in 1992, which recognised traditional connections and held that native title existed for First Nations peoples. The aftermath of this misconception is felt keenly by First Nations peoples today.

The misconception that First Nations peoples share one culture 3.1.4.2

The misconception that First Nation’s peoples share one culture is largely a result of the British not recognising or learning about different cultures, as well as the destruction of culture through colonisation. This misconception is one that serves to validate assumptions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are simplistic or ‘primitive’ (note: this word has very ethnocentric connotations). Recognising that Australia had a large population (estimated at between 700 000 and 800 000 people) across many nations and language groups – with trading routes, civic processes, land management techniques and jurisdictions as well as unique and intersecting dreaming stories, histories and artistic practices – means recognising First Nations cultures as sophisticated. A snapshot of the incredible diversity and variance across First Nations cultures is provided in the first section of this chapter.

The misconception that First Nations peoples mainly live in arid areas 3.1.4.3

Stereotypical representations, ethnocentric and racist ideas, as well as government policies that limit the social visibility of Aboriginal people, have meant that First Nations people have been portrayed in the past as primarily living in arid areas.

The reality of British policies of violence and settlement have meant that coastal areas, along with those with temperate climates and sufficient rainfall to support intensive agriculture, meaning that First Nations people make up a smaller proportion of the population in these areas, even though in absolute terms they represent the majority of First Nations people in Australia. Arid areas – that is, areas with insufficient rainfall to support significant vegetation (think the Northern Territory, ‘the Outback’ or the ‘Red Centre’) consequently have had much less intense settlement by Europeans, which in turn has meant that a much higher proportion of the population in those areas are First Nations, even though in absolute terms their numbers are much lower.

Estimated and projected Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population(a), Remoteness areas, 2006–2031

	2006	2016	2031 (series A)		2031 (series B)		2031 (series C)	
Remoteness area	no.	no.	no.	Growth rate (%)(b)	no.	Growth rate (%)(b)	no.	Growth rate (%)(b)
Major cities	242 987	298 430	440 670	2.6	429 256	2.5	421 163	2.3
Inner and outer regional	280 477	351 206	485 049	2.2	472 490	2.0	463 768	1.9
Remote and very remote	116 572	148 729	167 289	0.8	163 490	0.6	161 062	0.5
Australia(c)	640 036	798 365	1 093 008	2.1	1 065 236	1.9	1 045 993	1.8

(a) Estimates and projections based on the 2016 Census

(b) Average annual growth rate for the period 2016 to 2031

(c) Includes other territories

Adapted from ‘Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians’. ABS, 2019. abs.gov.au/statistics/people/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples/estimates-and-projections-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-australians/latest-release

This misconception serves to discredit and ostracise First Nations peoples as being less ‘authentic’ or real if they don’t live in the outback. A way in which this misconception is particularly harmful is that successive government policies, as well as frontier violence, moved First Nations peoples away from their ancestral homelands and contributed to the migration of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to urban areas. Related misconceptions about ‘authenticity’ then discount their experience by assuming they are not ‘real First Nations people’ if they live in the city.

In explaining misconceptions it is important to recognise that there was a purpose and largely a consensus in creating and maintaining these myths to justify dispossession and continued discrimination against First Nations peoples.

Explain, or challenge?

Our study design asks us to explain these three misconceptions, but what about challenging them? These misconceptions have survived at least in part because they haven’t been sufficiently ‘debunked’ or challenged by the education system, by the media, or by historians, politicians or regular people. Consider our responsibility to challenge these misconceptions when we see them, and/or the stereotypes that are closely connected to them.

Activity H – Explaining misconceptions

1. Why do you think public misconceptions about First Nations peoples have been so popular throughout Australia’s history?
2. How do representations influence public awareness of Australian First Nations cultures?
3. Define misconception.
4. What three misconceptions about First Nations peoples did you study?
5. Read this article from The Conversation about how First Nations history has been taught in the past, and the sorts of misconceptions these have enabled and/or driven.
   - Robyn Moore, 2020. ‘Secondary school textbooks teach our kids the myth that Aboriginal Australians were nomadic hunter-gatherers’. theconversation.com/secondary-school-textbooks-teach-our-kids-the-myth-that-aboriginal-australians-were-nomadic-hunter-gatherers-133066

   a. What misconceptions are outlined in this article?

   b. Explain how these misconceptions have been communicated through textbooks.
6. Watch the ‘Indigenous’ episode of *You Can’t Ask That* (21 min) and answer the question that follows.

   iview.abc.net.au/video/LE1517H008S00

   What was surprising about this episode? Were there myths that you believed?
7. Explore one myth from the following Creative Spirits article, then discuss how this misconception can be challenged.

   creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/people/busting-myths-about-aboriginal-culture-in-australia

Historical suppression of First Nations cultures through government policies 3.1.5

In this area of study, we explore a series of government policies that suppressed First Nations cultures and resistance to these policies as First Nations peoples fought to save their cultures. You are required to know some, but not all, of these policies in detail.

Suppressing First Nations cultures was both the goal and the strategy of government policies across the colonies of Australia. It is important to be aware that while this section will focus on specific examples of policies, there were different nuances to the wording and implementation of policies between states and territories. As well as analysing historical examples, we will explore more recent policies such as the Northern Territory National Emergency Response (NTER). Throughout all periods in Australia's colonial history, First Nations peoples have resisted, survived and worked to renew their cultures despite attempts to suppress them.

This section discusses certain acts of resistance by First Nations peoples against cultural **suppression** policies that also have relevance to the process of reconciliation discussed in the next section – these topics are heavily interrelated. We cannot cover *all* acts of resistance in this text, so we strongly encourage you to undertake your own research to further develop your understanding.

Suppression is the domination of another through the use of power. In this case it involves restrictive legislation and/or force to 'put down' identity, culture, autonomy and survival.

While policies are often best understood as being tied to specific periods, you'll note that many of the periods actually overlap. States and territories were administered separately, particularly before federation in 1901, and it wasn't unusual for 'protection' policies to continue throughout the 20th century alongside policies of assimilation:

- The Frontier Wars and policies of violence – 1770–1930s
- Segregation and 'protection' – 1840s–1910s
- Assimilation – 1930s–1960s
- The Intervention – 2007–2022.

REMEMBER THE LA
KULALUK. DARWI
LAND RIGHTS CLAIM
KULALUK FOR LARRAKIA
WE WUZ ROBBE
S AND BELONG TO WE, LARR
ND RIGHTS NO
ABORIGINAL
EMBASSY
BOM
WHITE INVADERS
YOU ARE LIVING ON
STOLEN
LAND
IF YOU CANT
LET ME LIVE
ABORIGINAL
WAY I PREACH

The Aboriginal Tent Embassy in 1974. Credit: National Archives of Australia.

Child removal

We know that a key element of culture is intergenerational communication: the act of passing things down to children, nieces, nephews and all members of the younger generations. From the first days of the colonies, First Nations children were stolen to act as servants for white settlers (Australian Human Rights Commission, 1997). Removal of First Nations children to prevent them practising their culture and to force them to adopt colonial language and norms was a core element of successive government policies that disrupted culture as well as causing almost incomprehensible trauma and loss. This element was a feature of policies from the protection and segregation periods as well as from the assimilation periods, and broadly spans the years from 1869 to the 1970s. However, many First Nations children were removed from their families before and after this time.

More information on child removal policies is available at these links:

- 'Face the facts'. Australian Human Rights Commission, 2012.
  humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/racial_discrimination/face_facts/ftf_2012_web.pdf
- 'To remove and protect'. AIATSIS,
  aiatsis.gov.au/collection/featured-collections/remove-and-protect

The Frontier Wars 1770–1930s: policies of violence

For early colonists, violence was a key strategy used to expand into First Nations lands and continued violence at the hands of police and settlers was tacitly supported and rarely punished. Against this backdrop came laws and policies enacted to control Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These conflicts are sometimes collectively referred to as the Australian Wars or Frontier Wars.

As we explore government policies that suppressed First Nations cultures it is important to keep in mind that many of these were happening against a backdrop of frontier violence. Killing people suppresses culture.

Note: the policies listed in the table below are provided for historical context – they are not assessable under the study design.

Policy marker	Key ideas from the policy
1820s–1832 The Tasmanian War (sometimes called the 'Black Line')	Violent conflict Declaration of martial law In 1830, ordering armed settlers and soldiers to form a line or cordon to walk across hundreds of kilometres of Tasmania to drive First Nations peoples from their ancestral homelands “The community being called upon to act en masse on the 7th October next, for the purpose of capturing those hostile tribes of the natives which are daily committing renewed atrocities upon the settlers.” Then governor of Van Diemen's Land George Arthur, 1830
1848–1915 Native Police Corps (first established in 1837 in what was then the Port Phillip District of New South Wales, retained on separation of Victoria in 1851)	Aboriginal militias to be commanded by British officers were sent into lands away from their own Country to advance the interests of colonial authorities, often against other First Nations peoples defending their lands on the frontier of colonial expansion. Read more here: 'Native Police Corps established'. Deadly Story. deadlystory.com/page/culture/history/Native_Police_Corps_established

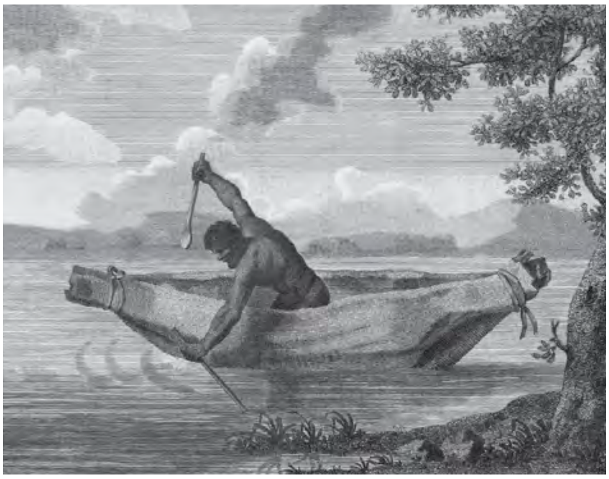
How did these policies suppress culture?

- violence and death
- disconnection from Country
- destruction of material culture
- disruption of language
- disruption of spirituality
- disruption of ceremony
- destruction of languages
- disruption of caring for Country.

First Nations responses to policies of violence

Pemulwuy and the Bidjigal

Within two years of the First Fleet's arrival in 1788, there were violent clashes between warriors led by Pemulwuy of the Bidjigal people against the British authorities. In response to devastation caused by disease, as well as the invasion of Bidjigal land around Botany Bay, there were many violent clashes. The largest was the Battle of Parramatta, which occurred in March 1797, with 100 warriors marching on Parramatta. Pemulwuy ultimately died from gunshot injuries in 1802.



Resistance fighter and Bidjigal man, Pemulwuy.
Engraving by Samuel John Neele, 1804.
w.wiki/6sN5

There were many other examples of armed responses, as well as the massacres of unarmed First Nations peoples around Australia.

You can learn more about this part of our history with *The Australian Wars* documentary series and associated resources:

- sbs.com.au/ondemand/tv-series/the-australian-wars
- cultureislife.org/education/resources/the-australian-wars

Each of the sections that follow include a policy example from Victoria, along with one from another state or territory.

Policies of 'protection' and segregation 1840s–1910s

By the 1840s, the leaders of the Australian colonies were directed by the British Government to take action regarding the terrible living conditions experienced by First Nations peoples. These policies aimed to keep First Nations peoples separate from white populations and made First Nations peoples 'wards of the state', often with a 'Chief Protector', a government minister, as their legal guardian. This meant that the government had control over almost every aspect of First Nations peoples' lives. These policies continued in many parts of Australia into the 1950s.

This table provides a brief overview of one policy from Victoria and one from interstate – these policies existed throughout Australia.

Policy marker	Key ideas and quotes from the policy
1869 *Aborigines Protection Act 1869* (Victoria)	Established direct control over residence, employment, marriage and social life. A further Act in 1886 forced 'half-caste' people off reserves, separating families and leaving people isolated and hurt. Child removal: From 1899, for the better care, custody and education of the child. Quote from the policy: 'It shall be lawful for the Governor [to prescribe…] the place where any aboriginal (sic) or any tribe of aborigines (sic) shall reside.' See the document here: foundingdocs.gov.au/resources/transcripts/vic7i_doc_1869.pdf
1911 *Aboriginals Ordinance 1911* (Commonwealth: Northern Territory)	Child removal: stated reason: being 'Aboriginal or half-caste', if the Chief Protector believed it was necessary or desirable. Any police officer or justice officer could take any First Nations person into custody at any time. First Nations peoples were forced to live on reserves that non-Indigenous people were not allowed to enter without the 'protector's' permission. Quote from the policy: 'The Chief Protector may by writing authorize any police officer to take into his custody any aboriginal or half-caste (sic).' See the document here: naa.gov.au/students-and-teachers/learning-resources/learning-resource-themes/first-australians/history/aboriginals-ordinance-act-1911

How did these policies suppress culture?

- disconnection from Country
- destruction of material culture
- disruption of language (i.e. forced to speak English)
- disruption of spirituality (forced to follow Christian traditions)
- disruption of ceremony
- disruption of caring for Country.

First Nations responses to protection and segregation policies

The creation of missions and reserves was a key part of protection and segregation policies and these reserves were the site of many acts of resistance. In Victoria, activism by the people of Coranderrk Station and the Cummeragunja walk-off are just two key examples of First Nations responses.

At Coranderrk, First Nations people had requested ownership of the land, which was not provided, but an 'Aboriginal station' was created where Kulin Nations people lived. When living conditions deteriorated at Coranderrk, First Nations activists created a bark petition and marched 67 kilometres to deliver the petition to Melbourne.

Learn more here:

'Defining moments: Coranderrk'. National Museum of Australia.
nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/coranderrk

Segregation was still widespread across Australia a century later when Charles Perkins led the Australian Freedom Ride in 1965 against segregation and racism in regional communities. This was inspired in part by the actions of black campaigners in the United States.

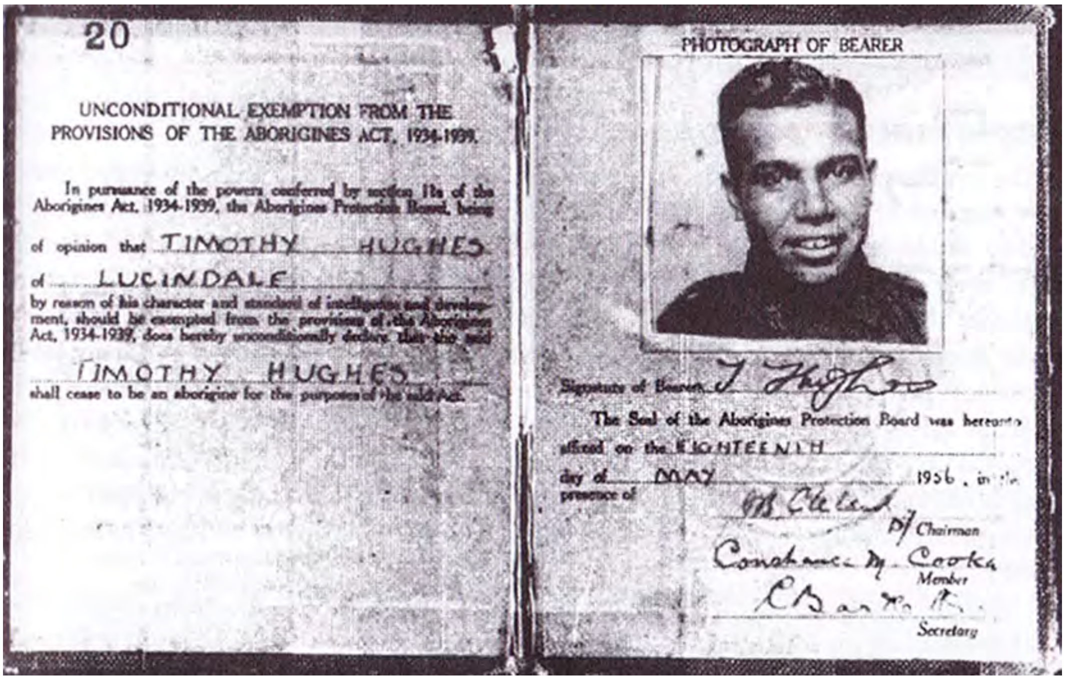
You can learn more about the experiences of the Freedom Riders here:

- ‘1965 Freedom Ride’. AITSIS. aiatsis.gov.au/explore/1965-freedom-ride

Policies of assimilation: 1930s–1960s

> “Assimilation relied on the well-established and widely-accepted view that we were inferior to white Australians, that our way of life, our culture and our languages were substantial … Embedded within the policy of assimilation was a clear expectation of the cultural extinction of Indigenous peoples.”
>
> Mick Dodson, 1996. ‘Assimilation versus self-determination: No contest’. humanrights.gov.au/about/news/speeches/assimilation-versus-self-determination-no-contest-dodson-1996

From the 1930s to the 1950s, assimilation became the dominant rationale behind policy, as opinions shifted away from segregation and more towards an expectation that First Nations peoples should be absorbed into mainstream (white) Australian culture. In 1961, assimilation became official government policy, with the Native Welfare Conference of federal and state ministers in 1961 proclaiming that Indigenous peoples ‘be expected to attain the same manner of living as other Australians, and to live as members of a single Australian community, enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same customs and influenced by the same beliefs as other Australians’. While these policies did come with the extension of certain political and economic rights, their stated goal of improving people’s welfare came hand in hand with a determination to erase traditional ways of life.



20

UNCONDITIONAL EXEMPTION FROM THE PROVISIONS OF THE ABORIGINES ACT, 1934-1939.

In pursuance of the powers conferred by section 11a of the Aborigines Act, 1934-1939, the Aborigines Protection Board, being of opinion that TIMOTHY HUGHES of LUCINDALE by reason of his character and standard of intelligence and development, should be exempted from the provisions of the Aborigines Act, 1934-1939, does hereby unconditionally declare that the said TIMOTHY HUGHES shall cease to be an aborigine for the purposes of the said Act.

PHOTOGRAPH OF BEARER

Signature of Bearer T Hughes

The Seal of the Aborigines Protection Board was hereunto affixed on the EIGHTEENTH day of MAY 1956, in the presence of

D/ Chairman

Constance M. Cooke
Member

Secretary

An exemption certificate issued to the holder, one Timothy Hughes, by the Aborigines Protection Board of South Australia in 1956. It reads, in part ‘[b]y reason of his character … [he] should be exempted from the provisions of the Aborigines Act … [he] shall cease to be an aborigine [sic] for the purposes of said Act’. Credit: courtesy of Professor Paul Hughes.

In order for First Nations peoples to be allowed to live outside of the oppressive conditions applied to them, and to access towns for employment opportunities or basic services, they were required to apply for 'exemption certificates', in which they would promise to reject their culture.

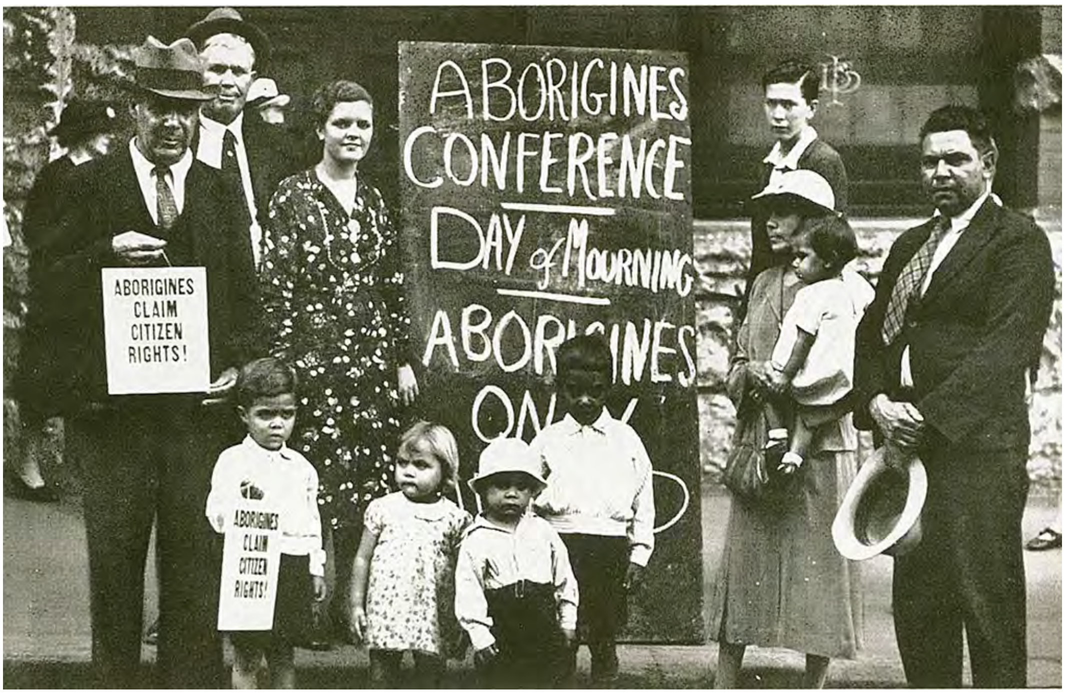
STUDENT ACTION FOR ABORIGINES

Students from the University of Sydney boarded a bus along with Aboriginal rights campaigner Charles Perkins in 1965, embarking on a campaign through regional New South Wales against segregation – the 'Freedom Ride'.
Credit: Wendy Watson-Ekatein/Ann Curthoys, University of Sydney.

Policy marker	Key ideas and quotes from policy
1937 Statements made by Commonwealth and state ministers at the Native Welfare Conference, 1937	These policies marked an intensification of the removal of children from their families. Quotes from the policy: "[T]his conference believes that the destiny of the natives of aboriginal (sic) origin, but not of the full blood, lies in their ultimate absorption by the people of the Commonwealth, and it therefore recommends that all efforts be directed to that end. All persons of Aboriginal blood or mixed blood in Australia will live like white Australians do." See the document here: aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/catalogue_resources/20663.pdf
1961 Decisions made by Commonwealth and state ministers at the Native Welfare Conference, 1961	This conference affirmed previous policies, in which First Nations peoples would be pressured by various means to behave like white Australians, and be prevented from practising their cultures. Quote from the policy: "[A]ll Aborigines and part-Aborigines are expected to attain the same manner of living as other Australians . . . accepting the same customs and influenced by the same beliefs as other Australians.'" See the document here: alrc.gov.au/publication/recognition-of-aboriginal-customary-laws-alrc-report-31/3-aboriginal-societies-the-experience-of-contact/changing-policies-towards-aboriginal-people

How did these policies suppress culture?

- disconnection from Country
- disruption and loss of language
- disruption of spiritual connection
- disruption of ceremonial practice
- destruction of entire languages
- disruption of caring for Country.


ABORIGINES CONFERENCE DAY of MOURNING ABORIGINES ONLY
ABORIGINES CLAIM CITIZEN RIGHTS!
ABORIGINES CLAIM CITIZEN RIGHTS!

'Aborigines' Day of Mourning, 26 January 1938'. Credit: State Library of New South Wales. sl.nsw.gov.au/collection-items/aborigines-day-mourning-26-january-1938

First Nations responses to assimilation policies

First Nations peoples' responses to assimilation took a range of forms, including the establishment of organisations and alliances with sympathetic groups, activism, protests and legal challenges.

Responses sought to build resilience and preserve First Nations cultural identities in the face of attempted erasure, to challenge discriminatory practices and to build campaigns that would lead to important advancements in the recognition of the rights of First Nations peoples.

Activity I – First Nations responses to assimilation

Select one of the following campaigns:

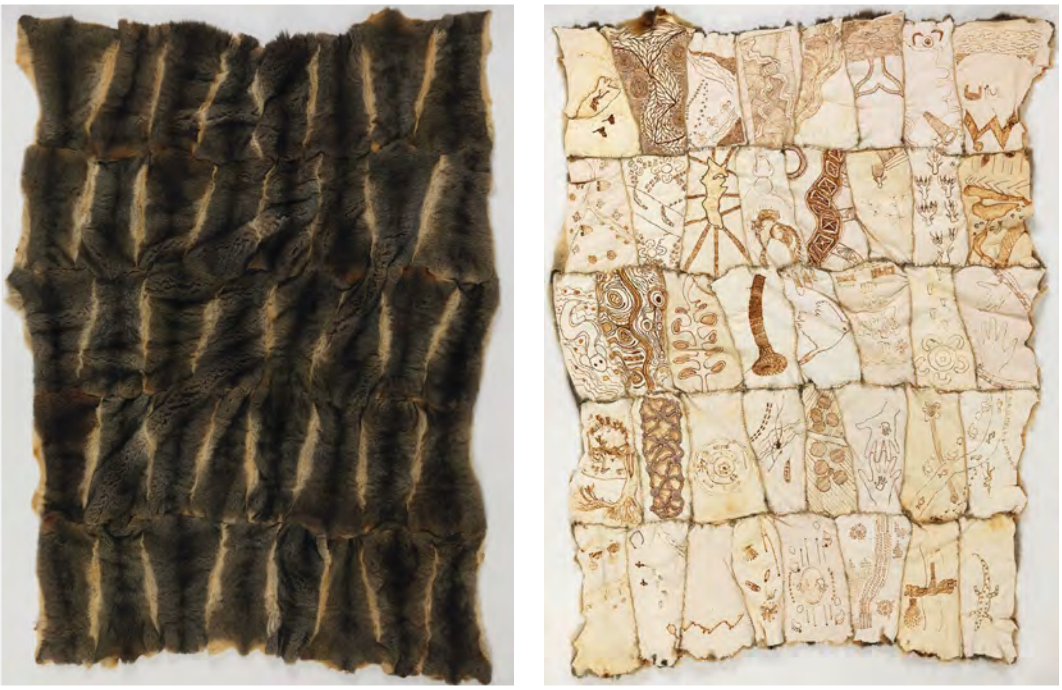
- Aborigines' Day of Mourning
- Cummeragunja walk-off
- Wave Hill strike and walk-off

For your chosen campaign, investigate the following questions.

1. What action was taken by First Nations people?
2. What were they resisting or protesting?
3. Who were the people involved?
4. How did this respond to cultural suppression policies?

Contemporary responses: revival of culture

A key contemporary response to historical suppression of culture, particularly policies that sought to assimilate First Nations cultures, is the revival and rejuvenation of traditional cultures. Recording and (re)learning languages is a key part of cultural revival.



A contemporary Gunditjmara cloak, made in 2019, fur side (left) and skin side (right).
Credit: Museums Victoria. museumsvictoria.com.au/article/
the-timeless-and-living-art-of-possum-skin-cloaks

For many language groups in the south-east of the continent, including Yorta Yorta and Gunditjmara people, the value of possum-skin cloaks is symbolic and spiritual, as well as a demonstration of technical skill. Koorie children would receive a single possum skin when they were born, and as they grew they would be taught to add more skins, to stretch and scrape the pelts, stitch them (often with kangaroo tendon), and then stain and etch designs – often maps of Country – onto the inside of the pelt, with fat or ochre. The end result was a possum-skin cloak. The revival of possum-skin cloak making techniques by Koorie artists is an example of contemporary responses to suppression policies, and represents a significant movement of cultural revival and strength.

The Intervention

The Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER), commonly known as ‘The Intervention’, was a package of Federal Government initiatives implemented in 2007 and presented in response to issues of child abuse and neglect in First Nations communities in the Northern Territory (NT). The release of the *Little Children are Sacred* report (Northern Territory Government, 2007) had exposed the widespread abuse of children in remote NT First Nations communities. The Intervention was not the response recommended by the report itself, and commenced with no consultation with First Nations communities.

The Intervention was controversial and received widespread criticism from First Nations communities, human rights groups and some politicians, who argued that it was a discriminatory and heavy-handed approach that failed to address the root causes of the issues it was designed to address. Despite the controversy, many of the Intervention measures were later extended and made permanent. The legacy of the Intervention remains contentious, with ongoing debates around its effectiveness and impact on First Nations communities.

Policy markers	What was it?
2007 *Northern Territory National Emergency Response Act 2007* – amended four times then repealed in 2012 **2012** *Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Act 2012* – lapsed in 2022	Included the suspension of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* from 2007 to 2010. Banned the sale and consumption of alcohol in prescribed areas Banned the possession and supply of pornographic material in prescribed areas The Commonwealth Government compulsorily acquired five-year leases over declared First Nations land, First Nations 'community living areas' and town camps Denial of compensation equivalent to that to which another landholder in the NT would be entitled for compulsory acquisition The exclusion of customary law and cultural practice as a factor relevant to sentencing and bail decisions The application of income management to residents of prescribed (and other declared) areas The denial of review by the Social Security Appeals Tribunal of income management decisions Modifications to the permit system to allow greater access (for non-Indigenous people) to First Nations land

How did these policies suppress culture?

- disconnection from Country
- disruption of language
- disruption of spirituality
- disruption of ceremony
- removal of children
- disruption of caring for Country.

Elements of NTER drawn from 'The Suspension and Reinstatement of the RDA and Special Measures in the NTER'. The Australian Human Rights Commission. humanrights.gov.au/our-work/projects/suspension-and-reinstatement-rda-and-nter-special-measures

Part of the pain inflicted by the Intervention is due to how it compounds and reinforces previous experiences and intergenerational trauma. Many have identified the similarities between the Intervention and elements of historical repressive policies.

> “The Intervention was already recognised in 2007 as a critical moment in Indigenous affairs. The Howard government brought an end to the longstanding Commonwealth government approach of supporting Indigenous self-determination, valuing Indigenous cultural difference, and diversity of choice. It replaced it with a new paternalism, or guardianship, where 'government knows best' and Indigenous difference is understood as a negative, or a deficit which must be reformed.”
>
> Diana Perche, 2017. 'Ten years on, it's time we learned the lessons from the failed Northern Territory Intervention'. theconversation.com/ten-years-on-its-time-we-learned-the-lessons-from-the-failed-northern-territory-intervention-79198

Cultural suppression and the Intervention

There is a large evidence base to support the perspective that self-determination and a focus on cultural strength are critical success factors for First Nations peoples' health and wellbeing. The NT Intervention has been cited by many as an example of what happens when policy-makers ignore these factors. The suspending of the Racial Discrimination Act has also been a point of serious concern from a human rights perspective.

We recommend that you read the following articles, which unpack some of these concerns in greater detail:

- 'A new inquiry into Indigenous policy must address the root causes of failure'. The Conversation, 2019. theconversation.com/a-new-inquiry-into-indigenous-policy-must-address-the-root-causes-of-failure-122389
- 'Northern Territory intervention violates international law, Gillian Triggs says'. The Guardian, 2017. theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/sep/02/northern-territory-intervention-violates-international-law-gillian-triggs-says

Compulsory leases of First Nations-owned land and the abolishment of the permit system, which gave First Nations people some autonomy over their land, have the potential impact of disrupting connection to Country and practising of culture. In addition to this, the Intervention was accompanied by an increase in police and Australian Defence Force presence in communities, which has contributed to over-policing, and a dramatic increase in the number of First Nations children involved in the justice system. Critics of the Intervention also argue that the child-safety focus of the Intervention prioritises child removal over resourcing services that would enable children to stay in their communities. The large number of young people in youth justice as well as child removals make it difficult for children and young people to have the opportunity to learn about culture. This heavy policing also involved the exclusion of customary law in sentencing decisions, further suppressing cultural practices.

> “These kids are from the Intervention, if you zoom out further they're the grandchildren of many Stolen Generations members and people, they're the great grandchildren of those that were also institutionalised and rounded up onto missions and they're the great-grandchildren also of those who were massacred, and a lot of that analysis has been missing in the coverage. And perhaps on top of that, to round that out, many of these kids have also been removed from their families and are growing up in what is called to be out of home care so dispossession and displacement lives within each of these young people.
>
> Now these kids are adolescents . . . a lot of them were born at the time of the Intervention when the Racial Discrimination Act was suspended and the army and police swarmed these communities. They were born into an environment where their communities' ability to self-govern themselves and stay connected to the things that sustain them was stripped. They've grown up in a point of time where their parents have been shamed out of parenting them, particularly Aboriginal men, knowing how visceral the campaign was laying the foundations into the Intervention.”
>
> Gunaikurnai/Wotjobaluk writer Ben Abbatangelo.
> 'What's really happening in Alice Springs?'. 7am podcast, 2023.
> thesaturdaypaper.com.au/podcast/whats-really-happening-alice-springs

Activity J – Young peoples' experiences of the Intervention

Conduct a representation analysis of the quote from Ben Abbatangelo provided, which describes young peoples' experiences of the Northern Territory Intervention. Ensure you use and refer to the sociological imagination in your analysis.

First Nations responses to the Intervention

The key response from First Nations communities has been to oppose the absence of consultation and self-determination inherent in the Intervention, and the current continuation of these policies. Support for culture is a critical success factor for First Nations peoples' wellbeing and this work needs to be led by communities.

The end of some Intervention measures have resulted in increases in violence in some communities in the Northern Territory.

> “If this intervention was so good for us, why did you remove the Racial Discrimination Act?
>
> We are human beings, and we also have our own culture, which we're not about to roll over and hand over ... Now I want you to answer and tell these men, and these women and myself, why we are being punished by the Federal Government and by the Northern Territory Government ... You gonna babysit us, you going to hand feed us? We're capable people. We are capable of looking at future directions for ourselves ... You heard it loud and clear ... Future directions of the Australian Aboriginal persons will come at our pace. We'll own that journey. We'll not be dictated to from edicts coming down like bullets from Canberra.
>
> Our authority has been usurped. We, on this place here, have always controlled alcohol coming into this place. If there are any of our young people come back here, we, we discipline them. We say, 'You do not drink, where there's children, women, and older people like, like myself.' We have a good community here. But there has not been any investment, financially or otherwise, into our lives here.”
>
> Rosalie Kunoth-Monks, President of Urapuntja Council, Barkly Shire President and resident of Arlparra in the Utopia homelands. Quoted in 'The NT Intervention and Human Rights'. Amnesty International, 2021.
> amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/SEC010032010ENGLISH.pdf

if sorry is what you mean
don't intervene

Rallies against the Intervention took place after Labor's 2007 election victory.
Credit: AAP/Simon Mossman, 2007.
abc.net.au/news/2022-07-24/nt-intervention-reflections-15-years-on/101238592

Delving deeper

First Nations peoples have been resisting colonisation and fighting for their land, culture and peoples since the arrival of the British. In this textbook,we only have space for a precious few examples of the many creative and nuanced responses of First Nations peoples to the historical suppression of their cultures. We encourage you to explore these in more detail – the Aboriginal Changemakers resource developed by Dr Lois Peery linked below is a great place to start.

'Aboriginal Change Makers'. new.parliament.vic.gov.au/aboriginal-change-makers

Activity K – Policies of suppression and First Nations responses

1 Using the headings provided below, create your own timeline of policies suppressing First Nations peoples in Australia.

Policy name and date	Policy details (incl. how it suppressed cultures)	Responses to this policy (incl. names and dates)	Details of response

2 Select a policy and describe the ways that it suppressed cultures in detail. Remember to include a specific example relating to material and non-material culture.

3 Explain how the suppression of Australian Indigenous cultures was widespread in the past.

4 Using examples, how have Australian First Nations peoples worked to protect and ensure the survival of their cultures?

5 Using the resources below, identify some significant examples that highlight the suppression of this continent's First Nations cultures, and their responses to each.

'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Timeline of Resistance'. Original Power. originalpower.org.au/resistance_timeline

'Aboriginal Change Makers'. Worowa Aboriginal College/Parliament of Victoria, 2021. new.parliament.vic.gov.au/aboriginal-change-makers

6 Read the SBS article and answer the questions that follow.

Paddy Gibson, 2017. '10 impacts of the NT Intervention'. sbs.com.au/nitv/article/10-impacts-of-the-nt-intervention/vzia753tx

a What impacts of the Intervention did you know about before reading this article?

b What is 'new' to you?

c The stated goal of the Intervention was to protect children. Based on this article and what you've learnt so far, to what extent do you think the policy has been a success?

The process of reconciliation 3.1.6

> "What Aboriginal people ask is that the modern world now makes the sacrifices necessary to give us a real future. To relax its grip on us. To let us breathe, to let us be free of the determined control exerted on us to make us like you . . . Let us be who we are – Aboriginal people in a modern world – and be proud of us. Acknowledge that we have survived the worst that the past has thrown at us, and we are here with our songs, our ceremonies, our land, our language and our people – our full identity. What a gift this is that we can give you, if you choose to accept us in a meaningful way."
>
> Yolngu elder Dr Galarrwuy Yunupingu, 2016. 'Rom Watangu: An Indigenous leader reflects on a lifetime following the law of the land'. The Monthly. themonthly.com.au/issue/2016/july/1467295200/galarrwuy-yunupingu/rom-watangu

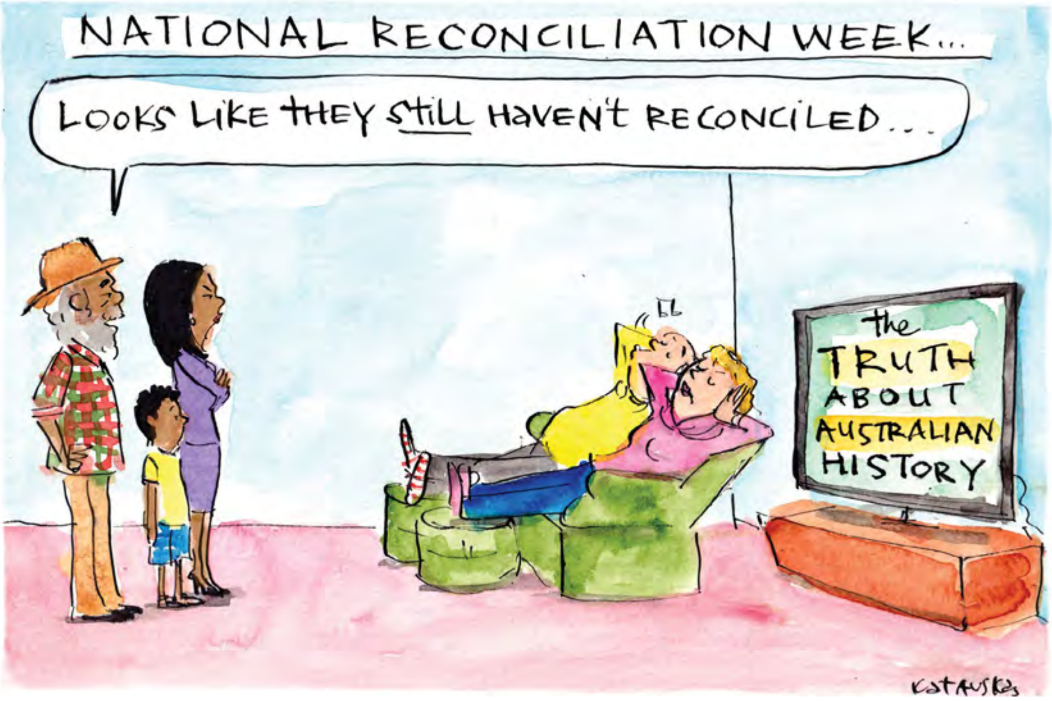
Reconciliation is gradual process – it isn't a straight line from being apart to coming together. There are actions being taken towards and away from reconciliation – and also those who act outside of that framework altogether. Reconciliation is itself a concept – a way of describing and interpreting actions.

Reconciliation describes, in this context, efforts to repair or improve the relationships between colonised and colonising peoples.

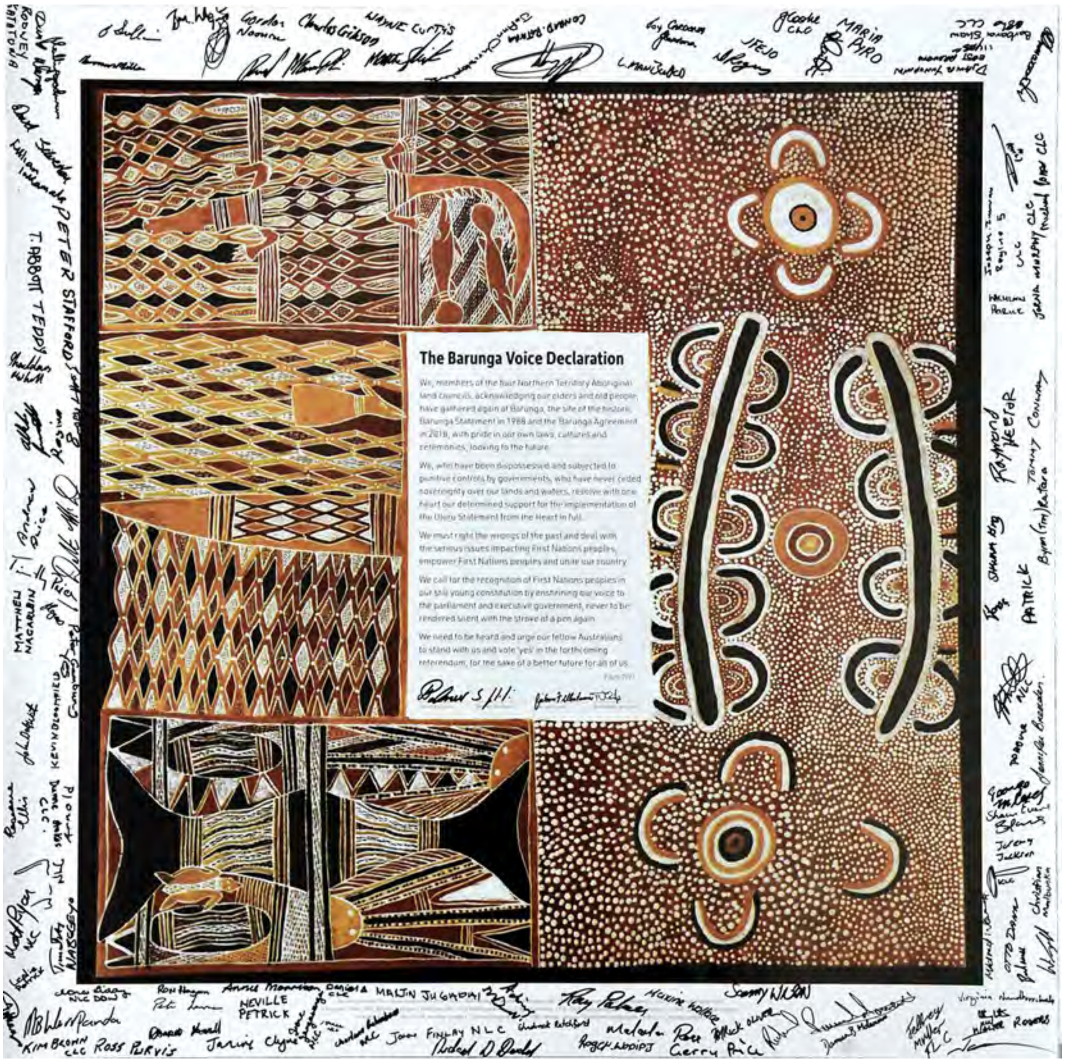
When did reconciliation start?

There is no clear 'line' between the strong history of First Nations resistance to colonial suppression, and the actions that are included in the modern movement for reconciliation. There are many historical instances of First Nations peoples and settlers coming together in small and large acts of collaboration and kindness. The modern Australian reconciliation movement might be considered as having begun with the 1988 Barunga statement, presented to then prime minister Bob Hawke in that same year, which demanded self-determination, a treaty, compensation and an end to discrimination. Yothu Yindi wrote their iconic anthem 'Treaty' in response to the Barunga statement. Not long afterwards, in 1991, the first federal reconciliation policy was introduced by then prime minister Paul Keating.

> “We, the Indigenous owners and occupiers of Australia, call on the Australian Government and people to recognise our rights.”
>
> The Barunga statement, 1988.
> commonground.org.au/article/the-barunga-statement-and-agreement


NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK...
LOOKS LIKE THEY STILL HAVEN'T RECONCILED...
the TRUTH ABOUT AUSTRALIAN HISTORY
Katauskas

'Reconciliation', 2021. With thanks to Fiona Katauskas.
fionakatauskas.com/political-cartoons/2021-2



The Barunga Voice Declaration

We, members of the four Northern Territory Aboriginal land councils, acknowledging our elders and old people, have gathered again at Barunga, the site of the historic Barunga Statement in 1988 and the Barunga Agreement in 2018, with pride in our own laws, cultures and ceremonies, looking to the future.

We, who have been dispossessed and subjected to punitive controls by governments, who have never ceded sovereignty over our lands and waters, resolve with one heart our determined support for the implementation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full.

We must right the wrongs of the past and deal with the serious issues impacting First Nations peoples, empower First Nations peoples and unite our country.

We call for the recognition of First Nations peoples in our still young constitution by enshrining our voice to the parliament and executive government, never to be rendered silent with the stroke of a pen again.

We need to be heard and urge our fellow Australians to stand with us and vote 'yes' in the forthcoming referendum, for the sake of a better future for all of us.

The Barunga Statement as presented to then prime minister Bob Hawke by the Central and Northern Land Councils in 1988, now held in the Parliament House Art Collection. Credit: aph.gov.au/visit_parliament/art/stories_and_histories/online_gallery

Different perspectives on reconciliation

> “At its heart, reconciliation is about strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples, for the benefit of all Australians … In a just, equitable and reconciled Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children will have the same life chances and choices as non-Indigenous children, and the length and quality of a person’s life will not be determined by their racial background.”
>
> Reconciliation Australia, 2023. ‘What is reconciliation?’
> reconciliation.org.au/reconciliation/what-is-reconciliation

Many First Nations peoples reject the way that reconciliation is discussed in Australia because it can be seen to ignore racism in favour of focusing only on positive experiences. It also avoids engagement with the systematic change that is required for First Nations peoples to be able to live safe and prosperous lives. The concept of reconciliation, in the sense that it encourages First Nations peoples to be 'reconciled' to their dispossession, has been criticised as ethnocentric.

> “Maybe instead of working out how we can all get along by pretending that we already do all get along, we can focus on systemic changes that might facilitate such relationships in future being built on equal power dynamics. And no, I don't mean RAPs [Reconciliation Action Plans].
>
> I mean Treaties, and Sovereignty, and an Indigenous economy, and Land and Water Rights, and political power, and representation, and accountability for people in positions of authority who abuse or mistreat Indigenous peoples, be they police or politicians or anyone in between.”
>
> Luke Pearson, 2019. 'Wake me when reconciliation week is over'. IndigenousX. indigenousx.com.au/wake-me-when-reconciliation-week-is-over

You can take a deeper look into the concept of reconciliation from a global perspective by reading the following overview from an 'open debate' held by the United Nations Security Council in 2019:

'Reconciliation must evolve to reflect growing complexity of today's conflicts, participants stress during day-long Security Council open debate'. United Nations, 2019. press.un.org/en/2019/sc14024.doc.htm

Symbolic versus practical reconciliation

When you read quotes from First Nations leaders about ways forward for First Nations peoples, you will not see them discussing this in terms of practical or symbolic reconciliation. It is important to note that First Nations peoples and Reconciliation Australia do not split actions into 'practical' and 'symbolic' categories. The challenges that impact First Nations peoples today require actions that have both practical and symbolic elements.

> “Reconciliation will not work if it puts a higher value on symbolic gestures and overblown promises rather than the practical needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in areas like health, housing, education and employment.
>
> It will not work if it is premised solely on a sense of national guilt and shame. Rather we should acknowledge past injustices and focus our energies on addressing the root causes of current and future disadvantage among our Indigenous people.”
>
> Then prime minister John Howard's opening address to the Australian Reconciliation Convention in Melbourne, 1997. pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-10361

Ten years after Howard delivered the words above, he went on to initiate the Northern Territory Intervention discussed earlier in this chapter. His sentiment rejecting symbolism can be read in contrast to the following quote from the then governor-general.

> “It should, I think, be apparent to all well-meaning people that true reconciliation between the Australian nation and its Indigenous peoples is not achievable in the absence of acknowledgement by the nation of the wrongfulness of the past dispossession, oppression and degradation of the Aboriginal peoples. That is not to say that individual Australians who had no part in what was done in the past should feel or acknowledge personal guilt. It is simply to assert our identity as a nation and the basic fact that national shame, as well as national pride, can and should exist in relation to past acts and omissions, at least when done or made in the name of the community or with the authority of government.”
>
> Then governor-general Sir William Deane, 1996. ‘Some signposts from Daguragu’, the inaugural ‘Vincent Lingiari Memorial Lecture’ given in Darwin. cdu.edu.au/about-cdu/news-and-events/vincent-lingiari-memorial-lecture

> “It was here that Howard brought us the term ‘practical reconciliation’, which Pat Dodson insisted was ‘the most virulent kind’. Howard juxtaposed it with ‘symbolic reconciliation’ creating a false binary, that suggested, among other things, that the recognition of our rights had no practical purpose. But Howard was the master of dog whistle politics, effectively weaponising reconciliation against us.
>
> In his speech, he spoke in his words ‘frankly’ about what he considered to be ‘true reconciliation’. Here he insisted that the brutality of colonisation was nothing more than a blemish of our past, that historical truth telling should focus on the positives, so as to not inspire guilt and shame for non-Indigenous people, and that we should centre our efforts on the current disadvantage experienced by Indigenous peoples rather than historical oppression (with no sense of irony that the two are inextricably linked).”
>
> Dr Chelsea Bond, 2019. ‘The uncomfortable truth about reconciliation’. SBS. sbs.com.au/nitv/article/the-uncomfortable-truth-about-reconciliation/bg1z5zfgc

Examples of symbolic reconciliation

Acts of symbolic reconciliation are about recognition of the past and encouraging people to be able to imagine a shared future. Significant moments of symbolic reconciliation have involved artists, musicians and sportspeople, as well as speeches by Australian politicians. Acts of symbolic recognition can have profound effects if there is authentic reflection, reckoning and a commitment to act. Without these, symbolic actions risk being tokenistic. An example of this would be a corporation holding a morning tea for Reconciliation Week, but not acting on racism within the workplace.

The Warumpi Band’s song *Blackfella/Whitefella* went on to become a sort of informal anthem for the reconciliation and First Nations movements after its release in 1987. You can watch the video here:

‘Blackfella/Whitefella’. Warumpi Band, 1987 (5 min). youtu.be/M_DHwp5vYBI

> “Isn’t it reasonable to say that if we can build a prosperous and remarkably harmonious multicultural society in Australia, surely we can find just solutions to the problems which beset the first Australians – the people to whom the most injustice has been done.

And, as I say, the starting point might be to recognise that the problems start with us non-Aboriginal Australians.

It begins, I think, with an act of recognition. Recognition that it was us who did the dispossessing. We took the traditional lands and smashed the traditional way of life. We brought the diseases, the alcohol. We committed the murders. We took the children from their mothers. We practiced discrimination and exclusion. It was our ignorance and our prejudice. And our failure to imagine these things being done to us. ”

SOUTH SYDNEY CITY COUNCIL

Paul Keating delivering the speech in Redfern Park, NSW.
Credit: John Paolini, 1992

Excerpt from then prime minister Paul Keating's 'Redfern speech', 1992.
pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/original/00008765.pdf

> “To me, [the Redfern Speech] had contained the recognition that I needed: that the leader of our country saw a place in the Australian narrative for me and my community that was, at last, positive, forward-looking and inclusive. ”

Eualeyai Kamillaroi woman Larissa Behrendt, Professor of Law at the University of Technology, Sydney. 'Why Paul Keating's Redfern Speech still matters'. NITV/SBS, 2022. sbs.com.au/nitv/article/paul-keatings-redfern-speech/pv2n4jg0v

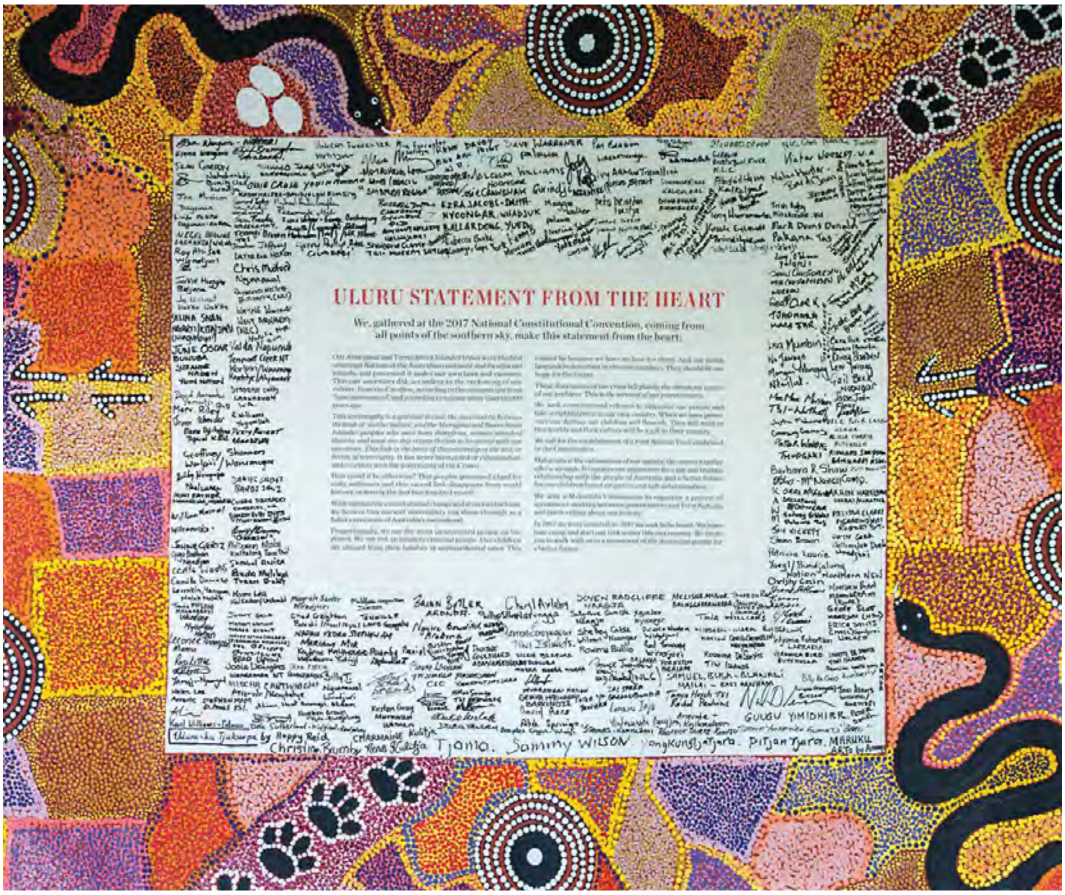
The Apology to the Stolen Generations

The Australian Human Rights Commission's *Bringing Them Home* (1997) report, which detailed the forced removal of First Nations children from their families throughout the 20th century, was hugely influential when it was released in 1997. Over a decade later, alongside a lot of advocacy and activism from First Nations peoples, then prime minister Kevin Rudd delivered a speech apologising to the Stolen Generations on behalf of the Australian Government and Australian people.

> “I move:
>
> That today we honour the Indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing cultures in human history.
>
> We reflect on their past mistreatment.
>
> We reflect in particular on the mistreatment of those who were Stolen Generations – this blemished chapter in our nation's history.
>
> The time has now come for the nation to turn a new page in Australia's history by righting the wrongs of the past and so moving forward with confidence to the future.
>
> We apologise for the laws and policies of successive parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians.
>
> We apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country.
>
> For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry.

> To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry.
>
> And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry. ”
>
> Then prime minister Kevin Rudd, ‘Apology to Australia’s Indigenous Peoples’ in the Commonwealth Parliament, 2008.
>
> indigenous.gov.au/reconciliation/apology-australias-indigenous-peoples

A prominent idea in the recent discourse around the possibility of reconciliation is that there can be no reconciliation without truth-telling. Civil wars, conflict, genocides and colonialism are inherently traumatic and violent. The rifts take time and action to heal. Internationally, truth and reconciliation commissions have emerged as a key way to heal after conflict. The first Truth and Reconciliation Commission formed in South Africa in 1995 to deeply understand and mend relationships after Apartheid. A truth-telling process, called *Makarrata*, which is a Yolngu word for ‘coming together after a struggle’, is the ‘truth’ part of the Uluru Statement from the Heart’s pillars of ‘Voice, Treaty and Truth’. In 2021, the Victorian First Peoples Assembly began their formal truth-telling process through the Yoorrook Justice Commission.



ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART

We, gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, coming from all points of the southern sky, make this statement from the heart:

Uluru Statement from the Heart, 2017.
nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/uluru-statement-heart

Examples of practical reconciliation

‘Practical reconciliation’ involves tangible actions that can improve people’s lives. This could include funding for education, health and housing; implementation of recommendations from Royal Commission reports (such as *Bringing Them Home* and the 1987 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody); legislation around land and water rights; or protections against mining pollution. At the time of writing, the constitutional recognition of First Nations peoples and the formation of the Voice to Parliament could deliver practical improvements in the way that policy is made.

Closing the Gap

The Closing the Gap policy was introduced in 2008 after several years of reports that identified key ‘gaps’ between First Nations peoples and non-Indigenous Australians in terms of health, mortality and education. Six targets were initially introduced:

- to close the life expectancy gap within a generation
- to halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five within a decade
- to ensure access to early childhood education for all Indigenous four-year-olds in remote communities within five years
- to have the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for children within a decade
- to halve the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 attainment rates by 2020
- to halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade.

While the policy created momentum, and an accompanying health campaign that has become First Nations-led in recent years, the initial goals of the Closing the Gap policy have not been realised, with some indicators slipping backwards in the years since the policy was introduced. In addition to this, the policy language and approach has been criticised for its deficit model, which positions First Nations peoples as being helpless and passive. The policy was also designed without the meaningful contribution of First Nations people, an exclusion that wasn’t rectified until 2020.

In 2023, the Federal Government acknowledged its failures in its attempts to close the gap between First Nations peoples and non-Indigenous Australians, and pledged more funding with a Closing the Gap Implementation Plan.

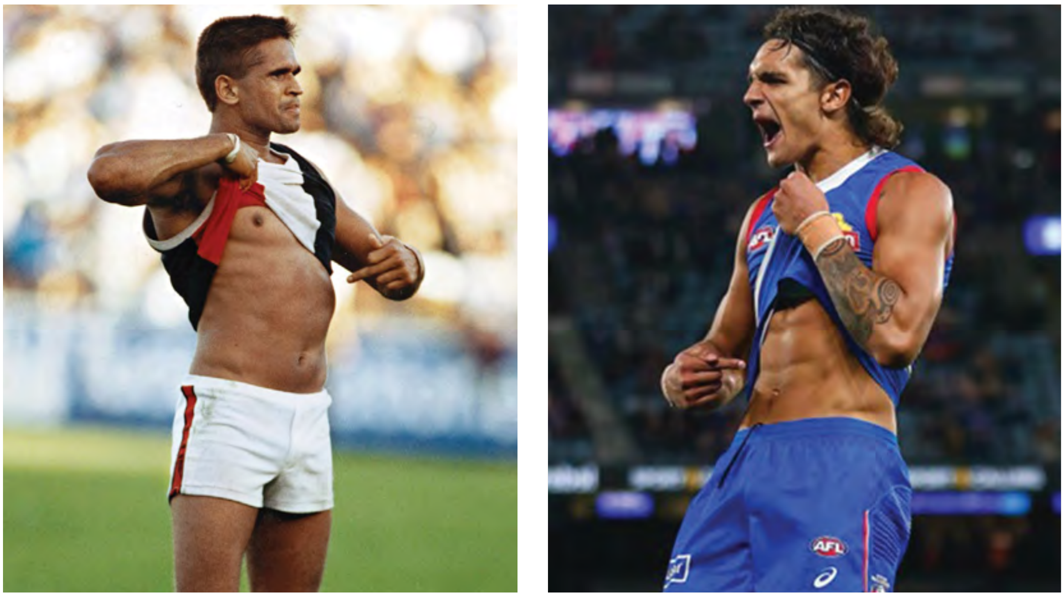
Read about it here:

‘On the 15th anniversary of the apology to the Stolen Generations, federal government unveils $424 million Closing the Gap plan’. ABC News, 2023.
abc.net.au/news/2023-02-13/closing-the-gap-plan-unveiled-424-million/101963816

The five dimensions of reconciliation

Race relations
Equality and equity
Institutional integrity
Historical acceptance
Unity

Adapted from Reconciliation Australia, 2023. reconciliation.org.au/about-us/what-we-do



Nicky Winmar's (left) defiant stand at Victoria Park in 1993, later channelled by Jamarra Ugle-Hagan (right) in 2023. Credit: Wayne Ludbey/ St Kilda Football Club; Daniel Pockett/Getty Images.

Reconciliation then and now

Although often invoked as a criticism, thoughtful acts of symbolic reconciliation, particularly in the recognition of historical wrongdoings, can have profound effects. In the face of racist taunts from the crowd during an AFL football match in 1993, St Kilda player Nicky Winmar pulled up his shirt to proudly point at his brown skin in a show of defiance. Thirty years later, Western Bulldogs player Jamarra Ugle-Hagan channelled the same energy in response to the continued racism experienced by First Nations players.

More information about racism in sport can be found in Culture Is Life's 'The Australian Dream' resources:

cultureislife.org/education/resources/the-australian-dream

Activity L – Reconciliation

1 Describe the process of reconciliation.

2 Outline three examples of symbolic reconciliation.

3 Read and reflect on the secondary resources at the link below.

Culture Is Life. 'Archie Roach Stolen Generations':
cultureislife.org/education/resources/archie-roach-stolen-generations

Explain how art can help with healing trauma from historic wrongs such as the Stolen Generations.

4 Describe some of the impacts of Kevin Rudd's 2008 Apology to the Stolen Generations.

5 Outline three examples of practical reconciliation.

6 Navigate to the Reconciliation Australia website, which identifies five elements of reconciliation.

reconciliation.org.au/reconciliation/what-is-reconciliation/

a Read through the descriptions of each element.

b What are some practical and symbolic actions for each of these areas? Using the headings provided, create a table and use it to arrange your notes.

	Practical actions	Symbolic actions
Race relations		
Equality and equity		
Institutional integrity		
Historical acceptance		
Unity		

7 Conduct your own research into Gunditjmara native title and answer the questions that follow. Some suggested resources are provided below.

- 'The Gunditjmara Land Justice Story'. Jessica Weir, 2009. AIATSIS. aiatsis.gov.au/publication/35418
- 'Gunditjmara Native Title Win'. Deadly Story. deadlystory.com/page/culture/articles/Gunditjmara_Native_Title_Win
- 'Native Title Report 2000: Summary'. Dr William Jonas AM. Australian Human Rights Commission. humanrights.gov.au/our-work/native-title-report-2000-summary

a Describe native title.

b How does the history of Gunditjmara land demonstrate First Nations peoples' responses to cultural suppression?

c How does the native title decision help support Gunditjmara culture to be strong?

d Can reconciliation exist without native title? Why, or why not? Explain using evidence from your research.

Changing awareness of Australian First Nations cultures 3.1.7

Issue investigation

This part of the study designs asks us to investigate an issue that relates to changing public awareness of First Nations cultures. An 'issue' in this context is a topic of significance where there are multiple perspectives. This section will provide an overview of how to research your issue, provide you with some issue suggestions, and then provide an example case study that examines the removal and return of cultural heritage items.

As we explore our issue, we need to examine:

- the nature of the issue (the who, what, when, where, why and how)
- the historical and political context of the issue
- the relationship between this the issue and awareness (i.e. knowledge) of First Nations cultures
- the relationship between the issue and public views (i.e. attitudes) about First Nations cultures
- the involvement of significant First Nations and non-Indigenous actors (be they groups or individuals) involved in the issue
- the responses of each of these actors regarding the issue.

The study design also asks that our investigation demonstrates that we can:

- evaluate how the issue supports and/or limits the public awareness and views of First Nations cultures
- gather and use a variety of relevant source materials to support observation and analysis
- synthesise evidence to draw conclusions.

Significant issues for investigation

Change the Date

Is Australia Day (26 January) a day on which to celebrate or mourn? Should the date be kept the same or moved, or should Australia Day be abolished altogether? How does the desire to celebrate nationhood embodied by Australia Day conflict with the fact that it marks the beginning of dispossession for First Nations peoples?

Voices, treaties and truth-telling

The Uluru Statement from the Heart has driven a push for change at a state and national level. How does Victoria's voice and treaty process compare to the path plotted by the Albanese Government federally, including the referendum for the Voice to Parliament? How will a truth-telling process impact public awareness?

Racism in sport

For many years, sport has been one of the few avenues through which First Nations peoples could participate and excel in Australian public life. Nonetheless, it has also been (and continues to be) a forum for racism. Explore the ways in which First Nations sportspeople have shown strength in opposing racism across codes and sports. Make sure you explore the systemic factors at play in this issue, rather than examine it through the lens of just one incident.

Reclamation of Indigenous languages

In 1788 there were more than 250 languages spoken in Australia. Since then, while many are still used in communities, their survival is precarious. First Nations and non-Indigenous people are working to record, revitalise and teach First Nations languages, so this important part of these cultures can be strengthened.

First Nations representation in media

While media has played a key role in educating the broader community about First Nations peoples, this has often been delivered via non-Indigenous people speaking *on behalf of* First Nations peoples, rather than creating space and support for them to tell their own stories. Students should investigate and explore media representations of, and by, First Nations peoples.

Factors that can support or limit public awareness and views

Learning together

It is important to be aware that the decision to ignore, omit or erase First Nations content from education and wider social discourse has been an unfortunate characteristic of Australian society for many decades. Many of your teachers will not have been exposed to a lot of First Nations perspectives, history and cultures while they were at school. In this way, education itself has been an important factor that has supported, limited and shaped public awareness of First Nations cultures.

Many factors can support or limit public awareness, and influence public views. The chart provided includes some suggestions.

historical

violence
colonialism
emphasis on particular events or narratives
ideologies such as paternalism, eugenics and social Darwinism
suppression policies
education

critical

the 'cult of forgetfulness'
white supremacy
guilt

cultural

media representations
feelings of discomfort
socialisation
education

structural

government institutions and policies
lack of accountability
resources available to First Nations peoples
the education system
class

Creating your report

This section provides some guiding questions, tips, tricks and suggestions for how to structure and present your research and findings about your selected issue. (You can also download this as a template from our online resource library.)

Section	Guiding questions, tips and tricks
1 Nature of the issue	Can you summarise this issue in one sentence? Who does it impact, and who are the main perspectives that you are presenting? Where is it taking place? When did the main events that illustrate this issue occur? Why is this a contested area? What is happening?
2 Historical context	What factors (originating more than 10 years ago) have influenced this issue? How is this issue affected by: • First Nations culture and history? • colonisation? • the Frontier Wars? • suppression policies? • the civil rights movement and First Nations resistance in Australia? • events connected to reconciliation? • significant government reports?
3 Political context	What do different sides of politics say about this issue? Who has power in relation to this issue? Are there more progressive or conservative perspectives on this issue? Why is this issue controversial, interesting or divisive? Are there political actions – such as votes, reports, legislation, protests, or petitions – occurring in relation to this issue?
4 Changing awareness of First Nations cultures	What has media coverage of this issue shown? Does this issue increase or limit broader awareness of First Nations cultures?
5 Changing views	Have public views changed in response to this issue? How do we know?

Section	Guiding questions, tips and tricks
6 Significant person/ group’s responses to issue Remember – you’ll need to use a range of perspectives. We recommend including a minimum of two different First Nations perspectives, as well as two different non-Indigenous perspectives.	Who is this person or group? What is their connection to the issue and perspective on it? What is their level of knowledge and understanding about this issue? What do they do or say in regards to the issue? Does their perspective limit/increase awareness of First Nations cultures? Does this perspective show awareness and understanding of others’ perspectives? How does this perspective relate to others? Does it support or oppose other perspectives?
Critically reflecting on your own perspective	How does this issue make me feel? What is my reaction to the issue? How have my personal experiences influenced my reaction to this issue? Where are my ‘blind spots’ or areas of ignorance on this issue?
Evaluation	Does this issue support and/or limit awareness of First Nations cultures? Does it do both to some degree? What historical and political context was most relevant to the issue? What makes you think this? What evidence can you use to support it?
Synthesis	What is the relationship between these different perspectives? Whose perspectives did you find most persuasive? How do you predict this issue will continue to unfold? Can you summarise the key ideas of this issue?

We’ll now explore two selected issues – the removal and return of cultural heritage items.

Issue study: Cultural heritage items – removal and return

How would you feel if someone stole something that was important to you?

In this section, we'll be undertaking a 'deep dive' into First Nations peoples' fight for the return of cultural artefacts held in private collections in England, Europe and Australia, and – most significantly – in the British Museum in London. This issue explores how First Nations people, historians, collection curators, politicians and the wider public have responded to the historical theft and removal of cultural heritage items.

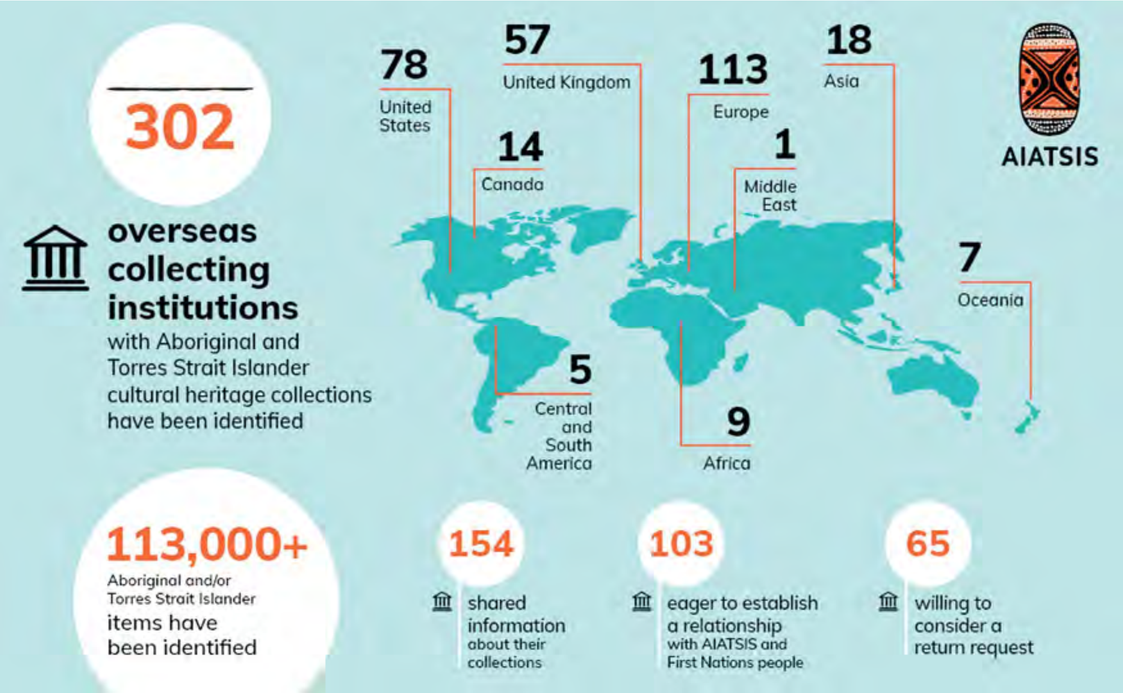
The nature of the issue 3.1.7.1

What

Over the last 250 years, objects (material culture) and human remains were taken from First Nations people and added to museum collections overseas, mainly in the United Kingdom. The Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) estimates that overseas collections currently have more than 100 000 Australian First Nations cultural heritage items. Now First Nations people, alongside many historians, want these items returned.

When

1770	The captain and crew of the *Endeavour* steal shields and spears from the Gweagal people, as well as other artefacts from the east coast of Australia.
1770–1950s	More than 100 000 items including human remains, sacred and ceremonial items, weapons and artworks are taken from First Nations peoples across Australia. Some are traded or sold but many are stolen or looted.
1970s	Since the 1970s, the remains of more than 5000 ancestors have been repatriated from museums and collections in Australia and overseas.
2004	Dja Dja Wurrung (Yung Balug clan) members claim ownership of bark etchings on loan to Museum Victoria from the British Museum. The federal court ruled in favour of the museums.
2007	The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples includes demands for the return of cultural heritage items.
2015	The 'Encounters: Revealing Stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Objects from the British Museum' exhibition brings First Nations items held in the British Museum back to Australia for the first time 'on lend', which many First Nations peoples find insulting.
2016	Rodney Kelly finds Gweagal shield and spears at the Berlin Ethnographic Museum.
2020	The Australian Government funds the Return of Cultural Heritage (RoCH) project, led by AIATSIS, to mark the 250th anniversary of James Cook's first voyage to the east coast of Australia.


302
overseas collecting institutions
with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage collections have been identified
78
United States
57
United Kingdom
14
Canada
113
Europe
1
Middle East
18
Asia
AIATSIS
7
Oceania
5
Central and South America
9
Africa
113,000+
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander items have been identified
154
shared information about their collections
103
eager to establish a relationship with AIATSIS and First Nations people
65
willing to consider a return request

Geographical distribution of collecting institutions approached by AIATSIS. From Lyndall Ley, 'Return of Cultural Heritage Project'. AIATSIS, 2020. aiatsis.gov.au/blog/return-cultural-heritage-project

Historical and political context 3.1.7.2

> "We've always known that during the process of colonisation, which is continuing today in various respects, that our cultural heritage items were removed from us, were stolen from us and taken from us. With these specific items, I can say with authority that they were taken without permission."
>
> Gangalidda man Mangubadijarri Yanner, quoted in 'Manchester museum returns stolen sacred artefacts to Indigenous Australians'. The Guardian, 2019. theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/nov/20/manchester-museum-returns-stolen-sacred-artefacts-to-australians

The removal of valuable, useful or culturally significant items has been a part of the practice of invasion and conquest throughout history. During the many hundreds of years of its world-spanning colonial project, the British Empire was no exception. The values of the **Enlightenment** (17th–18th century) informed a focus on scientific research among Europeans, who were interested in collecting, categorising, studying and displaying samples of all sorts of things, including plants, animals, fossils and objects. The objects and items collected could only be understood as the 'property' of the people whose countries the British had invaded (to use the terms that the European elites of the period might have best understood). For example, during the 1770s voyage of the HMS *Endeavour* to Australia, the crew included a naturalist named Joseph Banks, who undertook to research Australian plants and animals and took thousands of samples with him back to England. Alongside these samples were items stolen from First Nations peoples, including shields and spears. Due to frontier violence, disruption of culture and the removal of people from their ancestral homelands – as well as other policies

Enlightenment refers to a period in the late 17th and 18th centuries that favoured individualism, science and logic over religion.

A picture from inside Queensland's first natural history museum in 1872; First Nations artefacts and images are shown on the back wall. From the State Library of Queensland, as reproduced in 'The violent collectors who gathered Indigenous artefacts for the Queensland Museum', Gemmia Burden, 2018. The Conversation. theconversation.com/the-violent-collectors-who-gathered-indigenous-artefacts-for-the-queensland-museum-96119

enacted by colonial governments – an unfathomable number of artefacts representative of First Nations material culture were destroyed. In many cases, the items held in museums and galleries overseas were, ironically, often the only examples of such items that survived.

Importantly, alongside cultural heritage items, the remains of many First Nations people were also taken, often as a result of grave-robbing. These ancestral remains were then displayed in scientific galleries, and often employed by European curators as props in support of assertions of then-fashionable theories of racial hierarchy and white supremacy.

While this section seeks to focus on cultural items rather than ancestral remains, the issues are closely interrelated. From the point of first contact to the second half of the 20th century, the practice of robbing graves and stealing the remains of First Nations people to hold in medical museums was widespread, as evidenced by the fact that, since 1990, the remains of more than 1600 ancestors have been returned from collections overseas. In July 2022, the remains of 25 ancestors from across Australia were returned after being held by the Smithsonian Institute in the United States. Attitudes have shifted to the extent that it has become unacceptable to display human remains in this way, which has meant that many collections have been willing to return them. This has not always been the case with cultural heritage items, however, despite the fact that, like ancestral remains, they can also have deep spiritual connections to Country and to First Nations peoples.

All cultures have special ceremonies and practices (i.e. 'norms', which are important components of non-material culture) that relate to the burial and mourning of the dead. In Australian First Nations cultures, human remains, and often the stories, names and images of Elders, are held to be sacred. This has meant that the removal of remains, which would be seen as disrespectful by most cultures, has had a particularly grievous effect.

'Stuff the British Stole'

First Nations peoples of this continent are by no means alone in demanding the return of cultural heritage items taken during the age of colonial expansion. Each episode of ABC Podcast 'Stuff the British Stole' focuses on a different case example of this – notable episodes focus on the Elgin Marbles taken from the Parthenon in Athens, the Benin Bronzes taken from what is now Nigeria, and the complex case of the Gweagal Shield, explored in detail later in the coming pages.

'Stuff the British Stole'. ABC Radio National.
abc.net.au/radionational/programs/stuff-the-british-stole

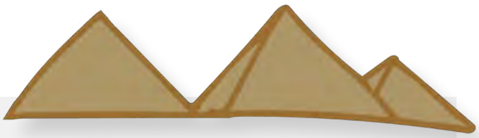
Relationship with awareness of First Nations cultures 3.1.7.3

In this chapter, we have discussed how European values and beliefs around race, and particularly racial hierarchy, had a strong influence over many decisions made by colonial institutions, not least of which was the decision to take possession of the entire continent by force. Such ethnocentric ideas also served to motivate the campaign of dispossessing First Nations peoples of cultural artefacts and presenting them in 'natural history museums' in a similar manner to how those same institutions would present samples of flora and fauna. These actions served to dehumanise and otherwise position First Nations peoples as 'less than' European people, and contributed to widespread misconceptions about the complexity and value of their cultures, and their status as proud and sovereign peoples.

The ways in which museum collections share information about items in their collection is instrumental in how people can learn about them. The return of cultural heritage items enables First Nations peoples to reclaim agency over the way in which their own stories are told to share cultural knowledge with their own communities, and to educate the wider community about their cultures and histories on their own terms. This represents a crucial part of self-determination.

Remember – **awareness relates to knowledge**, so when you're preparing your own issue study, it can be helpful to add '(knowledge)' in brackets when discussing awareness, to keep you focused.

Changing attitudes to European collections holding artefacts taken from colonised peoples can be seen in media coverage of items such as the Benin Bronzes and the Elgin Marbles – and in contemporary humour, as shown below.



> Why are the pyramids in Egypt?
>
> Because they're too big to fit in the British Museum.
>
> A joke found on Twitter, circa 2021

Why is the return of cultural heritage items so important?

The first reason that the return of cultural heritage items is so important is because the Traditional Owners want them back – and have been advocating for this for decades. It is seen as a small but nonetheless crucial element in healing past wrongs, a key part of reconciliation.

AIATSIS has led the way in supporting First Nations groups in their demands for the return of their artefacts. In their 'Return of Cultural Heritage Project 2018–2020' report, AIATSIS cites the following impacts resulting from the return of items:

- Returning cultural heritage material supports intergenerational transference of knowledge, cultural maintenance, restoration and revitalisation.
- Returning cultural heritage material is an important mechanism for reconciliation, healing and truth-telling.

Many First Nations people perceive cultural heritage items as part of Country, and so their return is essential to Country's ability to heal. Sometimes the items removed are particularly sacred, and so there are significant spiritual elements at play in regards to their return.

Theft has been a particularly traumatic shared element of colonisation and genocide experienced by First Nations peoples – the theft of land, of human life and of cultural heritage items, and the theft of children, in the case of the Stolen Generations. For many of these different 'types' of theft, it is impossible to return what was taken – in some ways this lends greater emphasis to the fate of cultural items that can, but have not, been returned.

> “The trustees of the British Museum have become the world's largest receivers of stolen property, and the great majority of their loot is not even on public display.”
>
> Human rights barrister Geoffrey Robertson KC, quoted in 'British Museum is world's largest receiver of stolen goods, says QC'. Dalya Alberge, 2019. The Guardian. theguardian.com/world/2019/nov/04/british-museum-is-worlds-largest-receiver-of-stolen-goods-says-qc

Significant First Nations and non-Indigenous people (individuals and/or groups) involved and their response(s) to the issue 3.1.7.4

Various significant individuals and groups connected with this issue, as well as their responses, are explored below. Remember – in this context we want to consider individuals or groups that are significant *when it comes to the issue* – we don't need to select people who might be considered 'significant' in a more general sense.

Traditional Owners

First Nations or non-Indigenous? First Nations

Response: Advocating for the return of their items so they can be used to rejuvenate culture and educate the wider community about culture

The return of cultural heritage items is often the result of decades of advocacy and activism by Traditional Owners and their supporters. As with any group of people, views regarding the return of objects are not always the same, but in the debate around the return of ancestral remains and cultural heritage items there are few dissenting voices from within First Nations communities. The impact of the removal and return of items differs between and within Traditional Owner groups as the spiritual, historical and cultural significance of objects differs.

For example, in some cases media coverage of the return can include people proudly displaying their ancestors' artwork; whereas, in other cases, such as in that of the return of secret sacred items from the Manchester Museum, the items are not photographed due to adherence to cultural protocol and lore.

You can explore significant individual responses from Gary Murray and Rodney Kelly in the information about the Dja Dja Wurrung barks and the Gweagal Shield on the following pages.

> “Bringing these sacred cultural heritage items back to country is important and necessary for the purpose of cultural revitalisation, because within these items is our lore, our histories, our traditions and our stories.”
>
> Nathan Newland, Njamal People's Trust Project Consultant

> “We cannot fix the past, only the future, so this is the start of closing those small gaps of what has been taken from us. So we the Aboriginal people can heal and build that trust to work together to educate ourselves to build a better future as one.”
>
> Mangubadijarri Yanner, representative for the Gangalidda
> and Garawa Native Title Aboriginal Corporation
>
> Both quotes from Lyndall Ley, 2020. ‘Return of Cultural Heritage Project’. AIATSIS.
> aiatsis.gov.au/blog/return-cultural-heritage-project

The United Nations

First Nations or non-Indigenous? Non-Indigenous but with considerable input from First Nations peoples around the world

Response: The UN has taken contributions from around the world to create the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which states ancestral remains and cultural heritage items need to be returned.

> “Article 11:
>
> 2. States shall provide redress through effective mechanisms, which may include restitution, developed in conjunction with indigenous [sic] peoples, with respect to their cultural, intellectual, religious and spiritual property taken without their free, prior and informed consent or in violation of their laws, traditions and customs.
>
> Article 12:
>
> 1. Indigenous peoples have the right to manifest, practise, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites; the right to the use and control of their ceremonial objects; and the right to the repatriation of their human remains.
> 2. States shall seek to enable the access and/or repatriation of ceremonial objects and human remains in their possession through fair, transparent and effective mechanisms developed in conjunction with indigenous (sic) peoples concerned.”
>
> Excerpts from The United Nations’ Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007.
> humanrights.gov.au/our-work/un-declaration-rights-indigenous-peoples-1

For more information about the UNDRIP, visit the link below.

humanrights.gov.au/our-work/un-declaration-rights-indigenous-peoples-1

Museums, galleries and collection owners

First Nations or non-Indigenous? Some collections employ First Nations historians or consultants, but the leaders of most galleries and museums, as well as most curators, are non-Indigenous.

Response: Responses from museums are varied. Some collections, such as Manchester Museum, are very supportive of returning cultural heritage items, whereas others, such as the British Museum, oppose the return.

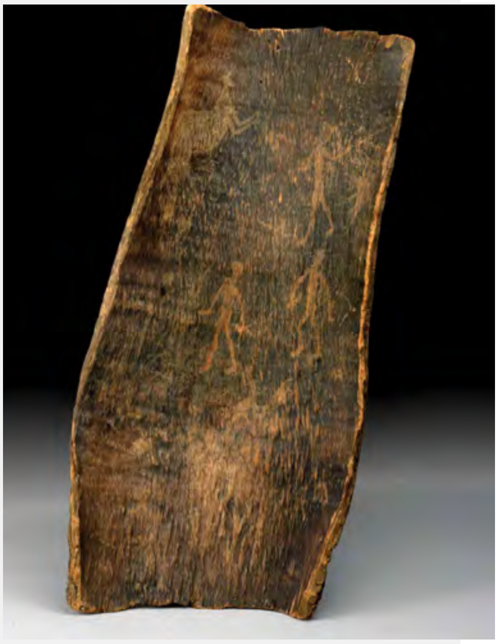
You can watch a video of Stephen Welsh, Curator of Living Cultures from Manchester Museum along with other key stakeholders here (scroll to the bottom of the page, then use the directional arrows to move ‘right’ three times – you should see Stephen’s name and face appear):

Stephen Welsh, ‘Return of Cultural Heritage’. AIATSIS (1½ min).
aiatsis.gov.au/about/what-we-do/return-cultural-heritage

The Dja Dja Wurrung barks

While bark artworks are often associated with northern Australia, some of Australia's most prominent and controversial artworks are from Victoria. Taken by Scottish-born squatter John Kerr and first displayed in Bendigo in 1854, the Dja Dja Wurrung barks are in the British Museum and have been the subject of many years of negotiations – and even a federal court case.

> “The Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation's 2014–2034 Country Plan outlined their goals for celebrating and safeguarding their cultural heritage, including:
>
> - secur[ing] the right and means to effectively protect and manage cultural landscapes and sites
> - ensur[ing] Dja Dja Wurrung ancestral remains, cultural objects and collections are returned to Country, and protected.
>
> The cultural centre movement provides opportunities to rebuild the national narratives that were enabled by trade and sharing cultural practice. Major institutions can provide some context, but communities such as the Dja Dja Wurrung have the ability to fit new pieces into the jigsaw of Australian history.
>
> To do so, however, this material needs to be available for Dja Dja Wurrung Elders and scholars. Research practice needs to reflect the ways in which Aboriginal knowledge in cultural production has been shared for millennia. The issue is not therefore about ownership, but about who can best extend the knowledge these barks represent, and where can this best happen. On this criteria the British Museum seems an unlikely choice.”



This Dja Dja Wurrung eucalyptus bark etching features a depiction of kangaroo and a man throwing spear, along with other male figures.
Credit: britishmuseum.org/collection/object/E_Oc-1827

Robyn Sloggett, 2016. ‘Dja Dja Wurrung barks are Australian art: the British Museum should return them’. The Conversation.
theconversation.com/dja-dja-wurrung-barks-are-australian-art-the-british-museum-should-return-them-54640

> “Bark art is usually synonymous with Indigenous people from northern Australia and the three Dja Dja Wurrung pieces from the comparative far south are believed to be the only ones of their period in existence. They may be precious to the British Museum but they are sacred to the custodians of the land around Boort from which they were taken.
>
> Of the potential short-term return of any of the barks to Australia, multi-clan activist and advocate Gary Murray says:
>
> > ‘It's a positive thing that a few of my people might get to see them again for a very short period. But it taunts us spiritually. We just get to see them for a fleeting moment and they are taken back again to the British Museum where they'll be held in the archives downstairs for another decade. It's not right.’

Henrietta Fourmile Marrie is an adviser to the National Museum of Australia and descendant of Ye-i-nie – a chief of the Yidindji people of north Queensland in the late 19th century. She describes the 2013 legislation and the intransigence of the British Museum in returning objects belonging to her people as consistent with the 'institutional racism' she insists is still extant in some collecting institutions.

She says:

> 'My people had no idea where these items would be taken to just in the same way that skeletal remains were dug up or our people shot for the basis of taking their remains overseas to these museums. And here we have today in the 21st century the Australian government of the day making laws to continue to protect those institutions that have continued to be the beneficiaries of our culture, our knowledge and our peoples' history. It is a real insult.'

Gaye Sculthorpe, an Indigenous Tasmanian, is curating the London exhibition for the British Museum. At the launch in London, Sculthorpe expressed hope the British exhibition would educate European audiences about the diversity of Indigenous culture while not resiling from the dark past of the Australian frontier.

> 'Parts of Australian history are difficult and I think in Australia today people are trying to acknowledge that. If you acknowledge that, then you can move on. It's not a simple story. There are nuances across the country at different times and I'm hoping this exhibition will convey that.' ”

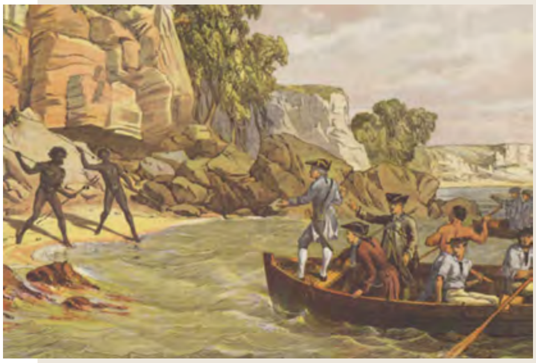
Quotes and excerpts from Paul Daley, 2015. 'Indigenous leaders fight for return of relics featuring in major new exhibition'. The Guardian. theguardian.com/australia-news/postcolonial-blog/2015/feb/14/it-taunts-us-spiritually-the-fight-for-indigenous-relics-spirited-off-to-the-uk

The Gweagal Shield

The following 2019 article from the ABC discusses Rodney Kelly's campaign to have the 'Gweagal Shield', believed to be a significant artefact from Captain Cook's arrival in Australia, returned from the British Museum.

The battle at the British Museum for a 'stolen' shield that could tell the story of Captain Cook's landing

Adapted from 'The battle at the British Museum for a 'stolen' shield that could tell the story of Captain Cook's landing'. Bridget Brennan, 2019. ABC News. abc.net.au/news/2019-05-11/british-museum-battle-for-stolen-indigenous-gweagal-shield/11085534



An artist's impression of Captain Cook's landing at Kurnell in 1770

Inside the back rooms of the British Museum in London, Rodney Kelly felt the weight of his people's history as he picked up a sacred shield once held by his ancestors. It was a bittersweet moment for Mr Kelly, who would dearly like the wooden shield to come home.

'It was really emotional,' he told the ABC. 'But that proud moment and happy moment just turned to sadness and sorrow because I knew the shield was going back into its case.' Encased behind glass in the British Museum, the Gweagal Shield is a priceless artefact that many believe tells the story of

The 'Gweagal Shield', with its noticeable hole at the centre, sits encased behind glass at the British Museum

Captain James Cook's arrival in Australia, and the resistance of Aboriginal tribes on the frontier. Mr Kelly said the shield was owned by his ancestor Cooman, who confronted Cook during his first encounter with Aboriginal people at Botany Bay.

With a pierced hole near the centre of the shield, the museum states that it 'has been suggested but not confirmed' that this is the shield held by Cooman when he was shot at by Cook's landing party.

Mr Kelly was invited to inspect the artefact at the museum in London this month – a significant step in his long-running campaign to have the shield returned.

Mr Kelly, a Dharawal and Yuin man from the south coast of New South Wales, has travelled to London several times in the past four years, pressing the museum to repatriate the 'stolen' shield. 'They can see that I'm not going to quit, I think that the best thing they could do was to pull the shield out from the case and let me hold it,' he said. 'I'm just going to keep coming.'

A 'museum of the world'

The British Museum is one of the key institutions at the centre of a debate in Europe over the repatriation of remains and sacred artefacts taken without permission from their countries of origin. The museum is prevented by law from returning antiquities and artworks, spokeswoman Hannah Boulton said. But as one of the UK's largest attractions, the British Museum also sees itself as a 'museum of the world, for the world', with millions of objects held in its vast collection. 'The museum's position has always been clear: we feel that the benefit of the collection like the museum's is its strength and breadth, we are here to represent all cultures,' Ms Boulton said.

'We want to make sure we retain the collection as an entity. Having said that, we're always happy to think about ways we can share the collection more widely, through loans or through working together to collaborate to understand and interpret the collections better.' Mr Kelly, though, doesn't want the shield sent on loan – it was last sent to Australia for the National Museum of Australia's 'Encounters' exhibition. His vision is for it to be repatriated and displayed at Kurnell, south of Sydney, Cook's first landing place. 'Back home there's a real need for true history to be told,' he said. 'The significance to our culture far outweighs any visitors who come here and just stroll past the shield without really knowing the history of it.'

Dharawal and Yuin man Rodney Kelly smiles while holding the shield.

The push for 'decolonisation'

Last month, Greek president Prokopis Pavlopoulos called on the UK to return the Parthenon marbles from the 'murky prison' of the British Museum, and hundreds of protestors have demonstrated inside the British Museum this year, calling for the return of items to Greece, Iraq, the Palestinian Territories and Australia.

'We see ourselves as a place for debate, we obviously have collections that inspire a lot of discussion,' Ms Boulton said. 'We've always been very clear that anyone can come to the museum and make their voices heard and see the objects.'

Dr Chris Garrard, co-director of Culture Unstained, said there was a 'growing conversation about decolonisation' in the UK. 'We're kind of moving away from this idea that large museums, like the ones we see in London, are neutral spaces – 'they're not.'

Mr Kelly said his journey had been 'a struggle'. 'It's been so hard, and hard for my family back home … but it's not about me, it's about my people back home, and other Indigenous people around the world,' he said. 'I have to put my hardships aside to make sure repatriations are more talked about.'

To complicate matters further, since this article was published in 2019 the British Museum has subsequently determined that the shield may have been misidentified as the one taken from the Gweagal people on Cook's 1770 voyage. This determination is in part due to the fact that the type of wood from which it was made (red mangrove) is not native to Gweagal Country in southern Sydney, but rather further up the coast towards Queensland. Nonetheless, Rodney and others point out that either the wood or the shield could have been traded across that distance. Regardless of its origin, the shield undoubtedly remains an important cultural item.

You can read (or listen to) further discussion about the shield here:

- Marc Fennell and Nick Wiggins, 2021. 'A shield, some spears, and the symbolism people find in the stuff the British stole'. ABC News. abc.net.au/news/2021-01-25/gweagal-shield-and-captain-cook-origins-questions/12941610
- 'Shots fired'. Stuff the British Stole, 2020. ABC RN (32 min). abc.net.au/radionational/programs/stuff-the-british-stole/shots-fired/12868096

Activity M – Focus on the Gweagal Shield

Read the case study about the Gweagal Shield and answer these questions.

1. Identify the different people who are interviewed.
2. Create and complete a table for each perspective represented, using the headings provided below.
   - Name of person
   - Are they representing an organisation or institution?
   - Are they non-Indigenous? If not, what Country are they from?
   - What did they say?
3. Whose perspectives did you most agree with, and why?
4. What new information did this article add to your understanding of the broader issue of the loss and/or return of First Nations cultural artefacts?
5. When Dr Chris Gerrard said 'we're … moving away from this idea that large museums … are neutral spaces – they're not', what do you think he meant by this? Do you agree? How might this connect to changing public awareness (knowledge) or views (perspectives)?
6. Why did Rodney Kelly believe the Gweagal Shield should be returned?
7. Why was the shield not returned?

Sample report

A sample of a student report relating to the removal and return of First Nations cultural artefacts is provided below (note – a *report* is quite different to an *exam response*).

The historical removal and recent demands for the return of cultural heritage items can increase the complexity of public awareness of Australian First Nations cultures by educating the public about the significance of cultural items and also encouraging people to reflect on First Nations experiences of dispossession and loss.

From the Endeavour*'s first landing on Australian shores, items have been taken from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. On the first visit a shield and spears were taken from the Gweagal people. As well as many other items, many of these have ended up in private and public collections. The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATIS) found that there were more than 100 000 artefacts in overseas institutions, and the Institute has a project running to negotiate their return.*

The historical context is that during colonisation it was very common to steal Aboriginal artefacts. Sometimes the theft was carried out by private citizens and sometimes by government representatives. There are also examples where items were traded or sold. As reconciliation and civil rights movements grew, so did calls from some academics and many First Nations peoples across the world for artefacts and ancestral remains to be returned.

Artefacts such as the Dja Dja Wurrung bark artworks have become famous due to the British Museum's refusal to return these at the request of Traditional Owners like Gary Murray. Cultural heritage items such as these are highly significant because they have spiritual importance, are considered part of Country, and are important for the rejuvenation of culture so First Nations peoples can learn more and teach about their cultures.

The conversations around the removal and return of these artefacts increase public awareness (knowledge) in a few ways, as well as changing some views regarding First Nations cultures.

The controversy around these items helps to educate the public about the historical theft of these items, and often the removal of ancestral remains and their addition to collections overseas – this can increase knowledge regarding the violence of Australia's colonisation. In addition, the respect given to First Nations peoples as the rightful owners of these items by many institutions (for example, Manchester Museum or Berlin Ethnological Museum) can help the wider community understand that many experts in the area think that returning these items is the right thing to do.

The most important way in which the return of cultural heritage items can increase public awareness and change views of First Nations cultures is through the process of cultural rejuvenation. Due to historical suppression, there are many artforms that are unable to be practised, and so it is valuable for First Nations peoples to be able to use and learn from their own peoples' artwork and skills.

Ultimately, the return of cultural heritage items enables increased public awareness of First Nations cultures by supporting people to tell their own stories and to (re)learn and rejuvenate culture. The return should be encouraged, and resources provided by governments and institutions in Australia so that Traditional Owners can make decisions about how to display and study these important items.

Revision questions

Short-answer questions

1. Define material and non-material culture and give an example of each.
2. Explain what is meant by the sociological imagination and provide an example.
3. Explain the process of engaging the sociological imagination to study culture.
4. Choose an image or quote from this chapter that you haven't already analysed, then analyse this representation and discuss how it can be interpreted as ethnocentric or culturally relative.
5. Explain why there is a public misconception that all First Nations peoples of this continent share one culture. In your response, refer to material that you have studied this year.
6. Describe one example of the historical suppression of First Nations cultures.
7. Outline a First Nations response to suppression of cultures.
8. Analyse the impact of one example of historical suppression on First Nations cultures.
9. Discuss how the issue you studied supports and/or limits the public awareness of First Nations cultures.

Extended response questions

1. Analyse the process of reconciliation using practical and symbolic examples.
2. Evaluate how the process of reconciliation has influenced public awareness of First Nations cultures on this continent.
3. Evaluate the implications of one issue for shaping public views of First Nations cultures on this continent.
4. Critically reflect on your own approach to understanding the social world.
   - a How does your perspective influence your understanding of the issue you studied in class?
   - b How is your perspective different to other ways of thinking about this issue?
   - c How can you connect your perspective to structures that influence the sociological imagination (i.e. historical, critical, structural and cultural factors)?
5. With reference to one issue relating to changing awareness of First Nations cultures, discuss the implications of the responses of one First Nations person or group, and one non-Indigenous person or group, for shaping public awareness.

Representation analysis

The following provides you with some guidance, and a framework, for how you can break down and craft a response to a 10-mark extended response question using the KLC framework for this area of study, which we'll revisit throughout the text.

Our first question is below, and is followed by *just* an example of how to break down a question using KLC.

1 **Analyse this representation and discuss how it could be interpreted as ethnocentric or culturally relativist.**

You could break down this question as follows.

Key knowledge words	Use evidence from the representation, as well as show knowledge of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism.
Limiting words	Refer to only this representation. You can make a judgement about whether it is ethnocentric or culturally relativistic, or both.
Command terms/words	The question requires analysis and discussion.

The second question is below. It includes a representation you can read through, along with a sample extended response. You can apply the KLC framework to the question yourself, and cross-check this against the sample response provided.

As you read through the representation, think about words, titles, images and other elements that have been included. Remember – an extended response can be up to 500 words and you won't have more than about 20 minutes to write each of your responses in the exam, so it shouldn't be any longer than this.

Once you've finished, you might like to use the first question as the basis for crafting your own response – you'll just have to select a representation to use with it!

2 **Analyse how ethnocentric and culturally relativist representations can impact on the awareness of Australian Indigenous cultures.**

Refer to the representation provided. You may refer to other examples studied this year.

What's in a name: K'gari sheds colonial legacy

Adapted from 'What's in a name: K'gari sheds colonial legacy'. SBS News, 2023.
sbs.com.au/news/article/whats-in-a-name-kgari-sheds-colonial-legacy/6n500f4gq

K'gari has officially shed the name Fraser Island, a step that will help remedy the damage done by the fabricated stories of Eliza Fraser. K'gari has been formally reinstated as the name of the Queensland island in a ceremony attended by the state's leader and traditional owners.

Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk on Wednesday joined the Butchulla Aboriginal Corporation on the world's largest sand island, formerly known as Fraser Island.

K'gari, the white spirit who was sent down from the sky to help make the land and the seas, was officially welcomed home by generations of Butchulla people and guests.

‘It was through disrespect to the Butchulla people that her name, K’gari – the home of the Butchulla people – was taken away,’ the corporation’s chair Gayle Minniecon said.

‘Thankfully, it is now through respect to the Butchulla people that K’gari, her name, has been reclaimed. Our oral history, our creation story, will now be told and learnt as it should be.’

In 1836, after the ship her husband James Fraser captained was wrecked on the reef, Eliza Fraser and several sailors landed by a leaking lifeboat on the island.

The SS *Maheno* shipwreck is one of the most popular attractions on the island. Credit: AAP / Shae McDonald, 2023.

Butchulla people fed the shipwrecked visitors and tried to integrate them into the community, assigning them food preparation and other tasks and trying to treat their sunburn.

Some of the other sailors made it to the colony and sent a rescue party for Mrs Fraser.

When Mrs Fraser arrived in the colony, she told authorities that she’d been tortured and kept as a slave, writing an account – debunked by other survivors – that depicted Aboriginal people as barbaric, cannibalistic savages. Over the following decades, the colony massacred Butchulla people, rounded up survivors and forced them onto missions.

Mrs Fraser parlayed her misadventures into a lucrative speaking career, embellishing and changing her story many times after she remarried and returned to the United Kingdom.

Ms Palaszczuk said as Queensland moved towards a treaty with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the government would continue to recognise Indigenous languages through place names, in the spirit of truth-telling and reconciliation.

‘While steps like this can’t change the wrongs of the past, it goes a long way to building a future where all Queenslanders value, trust and respect each other,’ she said. ‘This always was and always will be Butchulla Country.’

In 2017, the Fraser Island section of the Great Sandy National Park was renamed K’gari (Fraser Island) and in 2022, the island’s World Heritage Area was renamed K’gari (Fraser Island) World Heritage Area.

Butchulla land and sea ranger co-ordinator Chantel Van Wamelen said the official recognition honoured the elders who had fought for the change.

‘Part of the process is truth-telling and for people to recognise that it’s always been named K’gari,’ she said. ‘It is insulting to us to have our island named after a woman who did tell lies about our people, which led to a lot of our people being removed from the island and massacres. We’ve got such a unique ecosystem over here and there’s such rich cultural and environmental values on this island. It’s very special for us to call this place home.’

Queensland resources minister Scott Stewart said the official name change recognised the traditional owners.

‘She has always been K’gari to the Butchulla people,’ he said. ‘Now this beautiful area will carry its true name in all aspects, the National Park, World Heritage Area and the official place name.’

Sample response

Over time, a range of ethnocentric and culturally relativistic representations have had a profound impact on the awareness of First Nations cultures on this continent. Ethnocentrism involves judging other cultures against the values of your own culture's values, whereas cultural relativism is a method where one culture is not judged by another culture's values.

This representation is a news article describing the colonial experience of the Butchella and how the island of K'gari will no longer be known as Fraser Island.

A historical event is discussed: a white woman, Eliza Fraser, made up stories of torture and slavery that she then shared widely – these lies encouraged misconceptions and could have been easily believed due to racist and ethnocentric views that were widely held during that time, such as that First Nations people were savage or primitive. This connects to other misconceptions such as that the land belonged to nobody prior to European settlement. The lies told by Fraser were used by the colonial government to suppress culture by killing some Butchella people and moving others to missions.

The article includes an image of the shipwreck, saying that it is one of the most popular tourist attractions, which suggests that visitors are mostly still interested in the colonial history of the island – maybe more awareness needs to be developed about Butchella culture.

The article applies one sentence to a discussion of Butchella culture and seven sentences to the colonial history of K'gari – although it is critical of the dispossession of First Nations people, it is difficult to be culturally relativist when the topic revolves around the actions of white colonists rather than First Nations responses to it.

Clarifying the truth of this historical event leads to improved awareness of colonial history, and a debunking of lies, which could lead to better knowledge of First Nations cultures. The article quotes Queensland Premier Palaszczuk saying, 'While steps like this can't change the wrongs of the past, it goes a long way to building a future where all Queenslanders value, trust, and respect each other.' The article referred to truth-telling and reconciliation, which could raise awareness about how reckoning with history is an important part of reconciliation.

There are First Nations names, language groups and culture mentioned in the article, as well as specific creation stories of the Butchella people, which indicates a more culturally relativistic approach – as cultural relativism requires a deep knowledge of the culture being represented. The article shares information about Dreaming stories, which can increase awareness of First Nations culture. It shows an appreciation of K'gari's diverse ecosystem, this could be ethnocentric or culturally relativistic, as valuing the environment is shared by wider culture as well as First Nations culture.

Overall, this article can increase awareness of the history and culture of K'gari, the lies that Eliza Fraser told about the Butchella people and the violence these lies helped to justify. The article focuses on clarifying colonial history, which is an important part of truth-telling, and mentions some elements of Butchella non-material culture (creation stories) but doesn't discuss this in detail. Awareness (knowledge) about First Nations culture can be expanded by having large audiences view reliable sources of information that are freely available and enriched by First Nations people sharing their stories.

Further resources

For more resources relevant to this area of study, access the online resource library associated with this textbook: sev.asn.au/textbook-resources/soc34

Articles

Luke Pearson, 2021. 'Appropriate terminology for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People – it's complicated'. IndigenousX. indigenousx.com.au/appropriate-terminology-for-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-people-its-complicated

Lois Peeler, 2021. 'Aboriginal change makers: Stories of Aboriginal self-determination and empowerment'. Parliament of Victoria and Worawa Aboriginal College. indd.adobe.com/view/f810af89-4f8c-4fcb-aadc-c6186086d6eb

National Museum Australia 'Defining moments: The Black Line'. nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/the-black-line

Nathan Sentance, 2022. 'Genocide in Australia'. Australian Museum. australian.museum/learn/first-nations/genocide-in-australia

Films/Documentaries

First Australians, 2008. Directors: Beck Cole and Rachel Perkins. SBS Australia. sbs.com.au/ondemand/tv-series/first-australians

Looky Looky Here Comes Cooky, 2020. Director: Steven Oliver. SBS Australia. sbs.com.au/ondemand/tv-program/looky-looky-here-comes-cooky/1773167683939

The Australian Wars, 2022. Director: Rachel Perkins. SBS Australia. sbs.com.au/ondemand/tv-series/the-australian-wars

Podcasts

Jeannette Francis and Marc Fennell, 2019. 'How do you wake a sleeping language?' [podcast episode], The Few Who Do, SBS Radio. podchaser.com/podcasts/the-few-who-do-841370/episodes/how-do-you-wake-a-sleeping-lan-41603926

Websites

Common Ground. commonground.org.au

Culture is Life. cultureislife.org

First Peoples Assembly of Victoria. firstpeoplesvic.org

Indigenous X. indigenousx.com.au

Koorie Heritage Trust. koorieheritagetrust.com.au

Museum Victoria Bunjilaka. museumsvictoria.com.au/bunjilaka/about-us/first-peoples

Professor Lyndall Ryan's work – mapping of Australia's massacres: c21ch.newcastle.edu.au/colonialmassacres/map.php

Reconciliation Australia: reconciliation.org.au

Victorian Collections: victoriancollections.net.au/stories/koorie-art-and-artefacts

References

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). 2021. ‘Language Statistics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’. Australian Bureau of Statistics. abs.gov.au/statistics/people/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples/language-statistics-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples/latest-release

Australian Human Rights Commission. 1997. ‘Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families’. humanrights.gov.au/our-work/bringing-them-home-report-1997

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). 2020. ‘Return of Cultural Heritage Project 2018–2020’. aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-09/return-cultural-heritage-20182020-report_0.pdf

Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation. 2014. ‘Dhelkunya Dja: Dja Dja Wurrung Country Plan 2014–2034’. djadjawurrung.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Dhelkunya-Dja-Country-Plan-2014-2034.pdf

Mills, C. W. 1959. The Sociological Imagination. Oxford University Press: London.

Northern Territory Government. 2007. ‘Ampe Akelyernemane Meke Mekarle – ‘Little Children Are Sacred’: Report of the Northern Territory Board of Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse’. humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/57.4%20%E2%80%9CLittle%20Children%20are%20Sacred%E2%80%9D%20report.pdf

3.2 Unit 3, Area of study 2:

Ethnicity

Unit 3, Area of Study 2: Ethnicity

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse experiences of ethnicity within Australian society.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

1 the nature and meaning of the sociological concepts of race and ethnicity

2 the process of othering

3 the nature of the theory of ethnic hybridity, as informed by Stuart Hall, and its connection to experiences of ethnicity

4 Australia’s current ethnic diversity compared with other countries

5 the historical context and contemporary concept of multiculturalism

6 factors that may prevent or enable a sense of belonging and inclusion in Australia’s multicultural society:
  6.1 responses to cultural practices
  6.2 media representations
  6.3 political factors

7 the purpose of ethical methodology with reference to voluntary participation, informed consent, privacy and the confidentiality of data

8 the experience of a specific ethnic group in Australia’s multicultural society:
  8.1 how the ethnic group identifies itself
  8.2 an overview of the non-material and material culture distinctive to the group
  8.3 the impact of practising certain customs and traditions, the media and political factors, on the ethnic group’s sense of belonging and inclusion
  8.4 how ethical methodology was or could be applied in the study of this ethnic group.

Key skills

i explain and apply sociological concepts

ii explain the theory of ethnic hybridity

iii outline Australia’s ethnic diversity through the use of a comparative perspectives methodology

iv analyse factors that may prevent or enable a sense of belonging and inclusion in a multicultural Australian society

v analyse the experience of a specific ethnic group with reference to relevant sociological concepts and theory

vi explain the purpose of ethical methodology

vii apply an ethical methodology to source relevant evidence

viii gather and use a variety of relevant source materials to support observation and analysis

ix evaluate sources and critically reflect on their own and others' approaches to understanding the social world

x synthesise evidence to draw conclusions.

Preface

In this area of study, students examine the sociological concepts of race and ethnicity. The notion of ethnicity refers to a shared cultural heritage and way of life. This is different from the related concept of religion. For example, people can share the same religion but be of different ethnic groups. Students explore the process of othering in the context of ethnicity. Othering is a phenomenon in which some individuals or groups are defined and labelled as not fitting in within the norms of a social group. It may therefore play a role in the formation of prejudices against people and groups.

Students explore the ways that cultural identity is formed and experienced by Australian ethnic migrant groups, as shaped by various material and non-material aspects of culture such as faith, tradition and customs. These ethnic groups may include descendants of early immigrants, for example from Britain or China, or include more recent wider immigration. Students learn about hybridity, a key sociological theory informed by Stuart Hall related to the study of ethnicity. The theory of ethnic hybridity attempts to encapsulate the sense of ethnic diversity seen in dual or multiple cultural identities.

Students investigate Australia's ethnic diversity and the factors influencing members of ethnic groups and their sense of belonging and inclusion in multicultural Australia. They consider a range of factors that may shape both belonging and inclusion such as responses to certain customs and traditions, media representations and political factors such as government policy or funding. Students consider the ethical implications of conducting research on human subjects in the context of research into ethnic groups. Students' analyses of specific ethnic groups may be drawn from secondary sources and/or from primary research undertaken by the student. This research is informed by the ethical guidelines of the Australian Sociological Association. Students are expected to engage in ethical practice that respects the welfare and privacy of research participants. The Safety and wellbeing section on page 10 of the study design contains advice on the conduct of primary research. ”

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), 2023.
'VCE Sociology Study Design, 2024–2028'.
vcaa.vic.edu.au/documents/vce/sociology/2024sociologysd.pdf

Ethnicity

In the last chapter we explored Australian First Nations cultures – and in doing so, used our sociological imagination to develop our understanding. In this chapter, we build on this knowledge by learning about **ethnicity** and **race**. We focus on how different groups experience ethnicity while learning about the theoretical and historical foundations of race, racism and ethnicity so that we can effectively analyse people's experiences of these structures.

Ethnicity refers to a shared cultural heritage and way of life.

Race is the categorisation of a group of people based on physical characteristics such as skin colour, eye shape, hair type and bone structure.

Preliminary questions

- Do you think of yourself as belonging to an ethnic group?
- What is your understanding of the relationship between race and ethnicity?
- Has the way you identify in terms of race, culture or ethnicity ever changed? Why or why not?
- What is the relationship between the ideas of nationalism, racism, culture and ethnicity?
- How does belonging to a particular culture, race, nationality or ethnicity shape the way you experience and perceive the world?
- How much of this experience comes from within you and how much of it are you born into and have no control over?

Advice for choosing examples when studying ethnicity in VCE Sociology

While First Nations people experience the impacts of many of the issues discussed in this chapter in addition to those already explored in the preceding chapter, VCAA's advice is that you should only use examples and case studies relating to the experiences of migrant groups, rather than First Nations peoples. Nonetheless, developing our understanding about how concepts of race and ethnicity have influenced Australian history, politics, media and other structures is essential to a broader understanding of First Nations people and their experiences. You should be keenly aware of parallels and commonalities between the experiences of First Nations peoples and of migrant groups in Australia, even though for the purposes of learning and assessment our study design asks that we consider them separately.

In this chapter we also discuss religion and its connection with experiences of ethnicity. Keep in mind that while you can and should discuss religion as it relates to the experiences of specific groups, particularly in terms of how adherents of specific religions are 'racialised', religion is not *itself* considered a marker of ethnicity (don't make the mistake of grouping all members of a particular religious tradition together as a single ethnicity!). For instance, you might opt to study Lebanese Australians as a whole or focus specifically on the experiences of Muslim or Christian people *within* the broader Lebanese Australian community. Be aware that if you get *very* specific (for instance, focusing on *Orthodox* Christian Lebanese Australians) it may be harder to find the information you need to demonstrate the kinds of knowledge required by the study design.

Finally, you should use examples relating to people actually living in Australia wherever possible, *especially* in regard to your research.

The nature and meaning of the sociological concepts of race and ethnicity 3.2.1

Often used interchangeably, race and ethnicity are related but distinct ideas; to fully understand one we must also have a grasp of the other. Let's begin by unpacking the concept of race, which is important context for understanding contemporary views and experiences of ethnicity.

Race

People who promote the idea of 'race' assert that we can draw meaningful social, cultural or behavioural conclusions about people based on their ancestry and particular (usually physical) characteristics, and seek to group people according to those characteristics. The term 'race' derives from the 16th-century French word *rais*, meaning 'root'. The meaning and function of 'race' has changed since this time, for example, during the 19th and 20th century, the idea of race was thought to be scientific, but it is now considered **pseudoscience**. Contemporary scientists have found that there is no genetic basis for race and instead point to **shared experiences, history and culture** as a far *better* basis for understanding differences between human beings.

Pseudoscience refers to a collection of statements, beliefs or practices that claim to be both scientific and factual but are incompatible with the scientific method.

Making sense of physical difference

From a biological perspective, all humans are members of a single species – *Homo sapiens* – with some moderate variations in physiology. These generally stem from the effects of regional differences – in climate, the sorts of food available, the degree of contact with other groups and exposure to diseases, along with mere chance – magnified over thousands of years. While this is similar to the process of selective mutation at play in evolution, the timescales involved simply aren't enough for these superficial genetic variations to determine how people live and behave today, much less to be biologically meaningful (it generally takes 2 *million* years for new species to emerge).

'Race' is fundamentally a **socially constructed** idea. The 'rules' that govern racial categorisation (what makes someone a member of one race or another, what qualities are supposedly inherent or intrinsic to particular racial groups) depend on highly changeable factors, chiefly the nature of how power is distributed within the society having the conversation.

Social construction shapes how a culture is organised, functions and behaves, and guides what is seen as both natural and normal – it is the result of a society or culture developing conventions for communicating and understanding ideas.

Race, much like many other social categories, is a form of **generalisation** – an attempt to boil down a complex reality into something that is easier to understand and relay to others. Generalisation can be useful in certain contexts – and forms a crucial part of children's development, in particular – but it tends to be a poor fit when trying to understand social phenomena. The social processes involving human beings (who have self-awareness, agency and the ability to experience misery or joy) are much more complex than generalisations suggest. Like generalisations about sex, gender or class, generalisations based on race have harmful consequences and can lead to **prejudice**. These include (but are in no way limited to):

Prejudice is a positive or negative prejudgement (attitude) about an entire category of people.

- **Erasure of the individual** – where individuals within a particular category face assumptions about themselves (as well as limitations) that are not based on reason or actual knowledge about that person, but rather on what their supposed membership of a particular group means.
- **Erasure of identity** – where the group or value identifications that *are* important to people are ignored or displaced by assumptions about their membership of a supposed *broader* ethnic group.
- **Basis for discrimination** – where members of particular racialised groups are denied economic opportunities and exposed to greater risk when interacting with racist individuals and institutions, such as the police and criminal justice system.
- **Basis for exploitation** – historically and today, racial **hierarchies** have been used to justify mass atrocities, including invasion, dispossession, enslavement, genocide and colonisation.

Hierarchy is a way of arranging members of a group or society as 'higher' or 'lower' based on perceptions of status, level or authority.

Furthermore, while members of any particular group (regardless of how the 'in' group has been decided) may *tend* or *be more likely* to display a particular attribute, it's a mistake to infer that *everyone* in that group does, or does to the same extent.

In many societies, including Australia and the United Kingdom, the idea of race benefited people who had power. In this way, racist ideas can be understood as a tool that can be used to maintain and shape social, economic and political hierarchy. They often work together with other institutions in society (including economic structures), sometimes with the goal of intensifying exploitation and domination of particular people, or to encourage members within certain groups to compete with or participate in the exploitation of others rather than unite against those in power. Because the ways that people in power exploit or dominate others is dependent on context (time and place), ideas around race have also evolved and adapted over time.

This brief (3 min) video from Vox discusses the myth of race from an American perspective:

vox.com/2015/1/13/7536655/race-myth-debunked

The origins of racial ideology

> But this principle of race is unfortunately one of the reasons why I fear war may always exist; because race implies difference, difference implies superiority, and superiority leads to predominance.

British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli in an 1849 address to the British Parliament.
api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1849/feb/01/address-in-answer-to-the-speech

This section aims to build your understanding of race and help you think critically about race in society before moving on to the related concept of ethnicity. While it provides important context, the relationship between race and racism is not in the study design, so if you're in a hurry you can move forward to the next subheading, *Ethnicity*.

> “Racism never stands still. It changes shape, size, contours, purpose, function, with changes in the economy, the social structure, the system, and above all, the challenges, the resistances to that system.”
>
> A. Sivanandan, 2002. ‘The contours of global racism’. Institute of Race Relations. irr.org.uk/article/the-contours-of-global-racism

While you’re unlikely to get a question on the origins of racism prior to colonisation in Australia, we’ve included some discussion here in case you haven’t learned about this before now.

As we’ve touched on, a particularly difficult problem associated with race is its adaptability and resilience – many of its strategies are often normalised within society – to the point that challenging them often feels very uncomfortable.

Early ideas about race suggested that there were absolute and fundamental differences between people, which created the conditions for justifying certain people’s domination over others.

Before the 1600s, **slavery** was widely practised in many societies – including within Ancient Greece, Egypt and India, the Roman Empire, Africa, Asia and the Arab world, as well as in the Americas prior to European colonisation. Early slavery often paid little regard to characteristics that would later be taken as markers of race, such as skin colour. While laws in European countries did not allow certain types of slavery, by the 1500s European slave traders were enslaving vast numbers of black Africans and transporting them to the Americas, where they were forced to work in mines and plantations. This was known as the Atlantic slave trade and by the 1700s Atlantic slavery had become firmly ‘racialised’, meaning that a person’s status as a slave was increasingly based on their descent from earlier slaves of African ancestry. Earlier practices that had served as the basis for the effective enslavement of people of all ‘colours’ and backgrounds (including ‘white’ Europeans) faded away. In this way, the emerging **ideology** of race served to distinguish the interests of poorer ‘whites’ from enslaved ‘blacks’ in a way that discouraged the former from uniting with the latter against those with economic power (such as plantation owners in the Americas), in part because it allowed poorer whites to understand themselves as being innately superior to slaves in the racial hierarchy that underpinned the broader social system. This arrangement continued up to and beyond the formal abolition of slavery in Europe and the Americas in the 1800s.

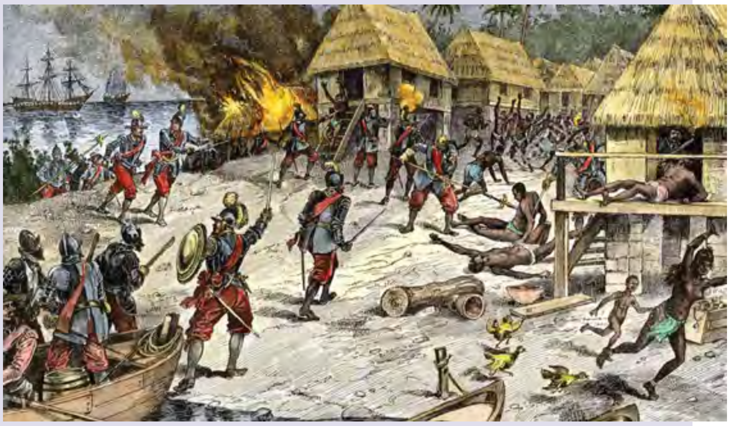
Slavery is the practice of owning and treating a person as property, especially in regard to the products of their labour.

Ideology refers to a system of ideas or beliefs about how the world is, and how it should be.

Before the era of colonisation, various societies expanded their territories by violently dominating neighbouring groups. While this was typically driven by the desire to accumulate power, land and resources, it did not typically hinge on notions of racial superiority (although ideas of *cultural* superiority were much more common). The Roman Empire conquered vast swathes of Europe, Africa and Asia and subjugated diverse populations and groups, but did not seek to categorise them or justify these actions on the basis of race or racial hierarchy. Much later, in the 1500s, European exploration and colonisation of the Americas was driven by the ambition to acquire wealth by exploiting indigenous resources and labour, and it also began to be supported by ideologies of race that denied the humanity of indigenous peoples. This justification was often grounded in belief in the supremacy of Christianity and (from the 1800s on) supposed scientific reasoning behind the **supremacy of ‘whites’**. This led to the displacement, enslavement and mass murder of many millions of people over generations across the vast majority of the non-European world.

White supremacy refers to a belief that white European people and their descendants are inherently superior, and that they should dominate or be privileged over non-white groups; the term also refers to social systems that embody these beliefs and maintain structures of privilege.

The birth and legacy of colonisation



A 19th-century illustration depicting the looting and destruction of Taíno villages by Spanish invaders in early 1500s Hispaniola

The landing of Christopher Columbus's expedition in 1492 in Hispaniola, in the north of present-day Haiti, marked the beginning of European violence and genocide against indigenous populations in the Americas. The local Taíno people greeted Columbus's party in a friendly fashion; in return, many thousands were enslaved, abused and worked to death. They were also exposed to European diseases. In total, 90 per cent of the Taíno population died within 30 years of first contact. Following this, Spanish and later French colonists imported tens of thousands of African slaves and forced them to work on lucrative plantations producing sugar and coffee.

Social, religious, political and scientific ideas used to support racial ideology

While the ideology of racism was tied up in science (particularly following the misapplication of the theory of evolution developed by Charles Darwin in the 1870s), racial science was just one aspect of racism's long history of adapting to particular settings and contexts. Social, religious and political factors also strongly influenced ideas of race. This serves as a reminder that institutions (such as religious or scientific ones) have been involved in most significant historical wrongdoings. While they certainly appear to be more humane in their operations in today's society, paying attention to how they work and what functions they serve is crucial when thinking critically, as we need to do as sociologists.

Consider the following excerpt from academic Ruid Duigo's 2023 article in The Conversation, 'Racist and sexist depictions of human evolution still permeate science, education and popular culture today' on the role of science in shaping our understanding now:

> “Darwin presented his biased views as scientific facts, such as in his 1871 book, *The Descent of Man*, where he described his belief that men are evolutionarily superior to women, Europeans superior to non-Europeans and hierarchical civilisations superior to small egalitarian societies. In that book, which continues to be studied in schools and natural history museums, he considered 'the hideous ornaments and the equally hideous music admired by most savages' to be 'not so highly developed as in certain animals, for instance, in birds', and compared the appearance of Africans to the New World monkey *Pithecia satanas* . . .
>
> Educational materials, including textbooks and anatomical atlases used by science and medical students, play a crucial role in perpetuating biased narratives. For example, the 2017 edition of *Netter Atlas of Human Anatomy*, commonly used by medical students and clinical professionals, includes about 180 figures that show skin colour. Of those, the vast majority show male individuals with white skin, and only two show individuals with 'darker' skin. This perpetuates the depiction of white men as the anatomical prototype of the human species and fails to display the full anatomical diversity of people.”

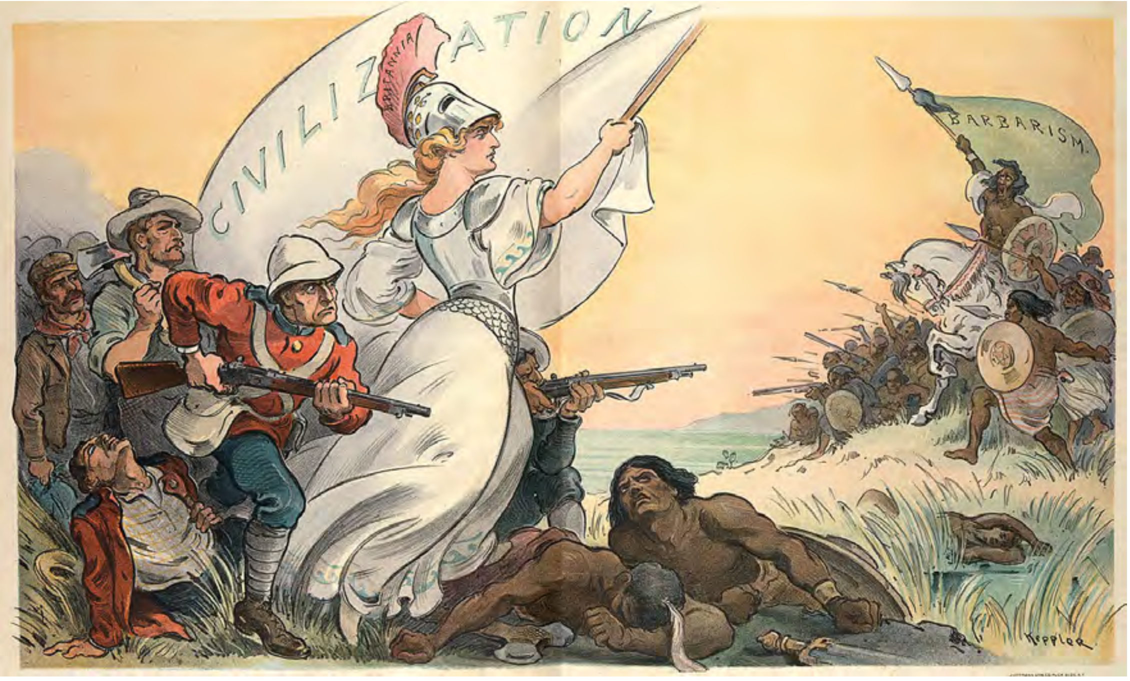
Excerpt from Duigo, 2023. theconversation.com/racist-and-sexist-depictions-of-human-evolution-still-permeate-science-education-and-popular-culture-today-202011

Race and racism in Australia

> “There is no racial equality. There is that basic inequality. These races are, in comparison with white races – I think no-one wants convincing of this fact – unequal and inferior.”
>
> Australia’s first prime minister, Edmund Barton,
> during debate on the Immigration Restriction Bill in 1901.
> historichansard.net/hofreps/1901/19010926_reps_1_4

By the time the British made first contact with First Nations Australians in 1770, the ideology of race was firmly established in their perspectives and motivations. In their project of colonial expansion, it had been developed and applied through their experiences subjugating Ireland, large swathes of North America, and parts of India, Africa and the Caribbean. As the Australian colonies grew, the British administrators facilitated population transfers from all around the world. This intensified with the gold rushes and economic growth in the late 1800s, which saw non-European immigration from nearby Asia increase substantially. This in turn resulted in a surge in the belief in the complete supremacy of ‘whites’ on the continent. As in North America, ‘whiteness’ was gradually and strategically expanded as a racial classification beyond an ‘English’ core to include Scots and Scottish Highlanders, Irish Catholics, and eventually to other groups with ancestry from north-western Europe.

At Federation in 1901, racist perspectives were reflected during the parliamentary debates about who should be included and/or excluded as Australian citizens (as shown in the quote from then Prime Minister Edmund Barton provided). Implementing stricter immigration controls was considered *the* most pressing issue facing the first parliament in 1901. In this way we can see how racism, along with the concept of *terra nullius* explored in the previous chapter, was embedded in Australia’s colonial history and in the foundation of Australia’s social, legal and political structure.



Udo J Keppler, 1902. ‘From the Cape to Cairo’, appearing in *Puck*, v. 52, no. 1345.

Activity A – Scientific and historical representations of race

1. Read and reflect on the following resources, then answer the questions that follow.
   - Gavin Evans, 2023. 'The unwelcome revival of race science'. The Guardian. theguardian.com/news/2018/mar/02/the-unwelcome-revival-of-race-science
   - Rui Diogo, 2020. 'Racist and sexist depictions of human evolution still permeate science, education and popular culture today'. The Conversation. theconversation.com/racist-and-sexist-depictions-of-human-evolution-still-permeate-science-education-and-popular-culture-today-202011

   a How is historical scientific racism characterised in each article?

   b How has the construction of race in fields like science and education changed over time?
2. Analyse the 'Cape to Cairo' visual representation provided. Answer the questions that follow with reference to the representation and supported by what you've learned so far about the history and construction of race.

   a Give a concise definition of race.

   b What is the relevance of the representation to historical ideas about race?

   c Describe the key elements or symbols in the representation that might connect to ideas of race, colonialism and power.

   d Explain the relationship between these concepts. Provide examples and evidence to support your analysis.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity, like race, is a form of social categorisation that people can use to make sense of, organise and construct group identities, and to evaluate the world around them. The term comes from the Ancient Greek *ethnikos*, roughly meaning 'a group of people'. It emerged in English in the early 1900s to refer to group identities in a way that was less reliant on the **essentialising** and biological elements of 'race'. While the terms are related in how they have been and continue to be used, ethnicity can generally be distinguished from race in that:

Essentialising is the practice of treating a certain quality or trait as being *fundamental* to a particular category of person or thing.

- it can be self-determined – that is, members of ethnic groups can exercise agency in how and to what extent they identify themselves and other members with it, rather than having it assigned by those 'outside'
- it involves shared cultural heritage and 'ways of living', which can include shared language, norms, symbols and/or systems of beliefs
- people of a particular ethnicity may share a narrow or wide spectrum of genetic ancestry, depending on how the group and members thereof understand its boundaries.

As with any identity, ethnicity can be a source of meaning in people's lives. The formation and understanding of ethnic identity is a social process and therefore is a core focus of sociological inquiry. When studying ethnicity, we seek to identify experiences shared between groups of people based on their social connections and which provide a distinctive national identity. Ethnicity is often considered equivalent to ideas of the 'nation', which emerged as a popular way of grouping and identifying populations in the 19th century.

Activity B – Introducing ethnicity

1. Before reading on, reflect on the words ‘ethnicity’ and ‘ethnic’ and what they mean to you.
2. Write down what *other* words you think of when you think about these terms. This is intended as a ‘free association’ activity – try to write down what occurs to you freely, without worrying about whether it’s ‘right’ or ‘wrong’.
3. Think about and respond to the following questions:
   a. What common themes or patterns emerged from the associations?
   b. Were the word associations for ‘ethnicity’ and ‘ethnic’ related, or distinct from each other? Why?
4. If you feel comfortable, and guided by your teacher, discuss what you discovered in your responses to these questions with your classmates.

A bit more on the origins of the term ‘ethnicity’

Examining a term’s **etymology**, where it came from, helps us understand its meaning. Given the way it has evolved in English, the word ‘ethnicity’ connotes some sort of ‘difference’. The Greek word *ethnos* loosely means ‘nation’ – not in terms of a sovereign state, but rather a group of people who have common ancestry. In their adjective form, the terms *ethnikos* (Greek) and *ethnicus* (Latin) were allocated to those deemed non-believers (‘heathens’) in relation to the dominant faith within a society. The English word ‘ethnic’ stemmed from this usage, and *at first* it meant someone who was neither Christian nor a Jew. In this way, the term has its origin, at least, in marking out people who are not part of the dominant culture – ‘others’ rather than ‘us’.

Writing in 1922, prominent German sociologist and historian Max Weber characterised ethnic groups as ‘those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonisation and migration’ (Weber, 1968). This characterisation points to some important features of ethnicity:

- While common ancestry is important to the shaping and making of ethnicity, the extent to which ancestry is *actually* shared between members can either be real or assumed.
- Shared historical and cultural experiences can serve as a basis for ethnic identity, as *can* physical resemblance and similarities.

Max Weber (1864–1920), considered one of the ‘fathers’ of sociology

Further to this, sociologist Stuart Hall argued in 1992 that collective identity and experience are not ‘natural’ occurrences, but rather ‘are **constructed** historically, culturally, politically – and the concept that refers to this is ‘ethnicity’. In this way, ethnicity, much more so than race, can be seen as a concept that implies much more room for change driven by members in response to their own beliefs and preferences and in response to other social, political and cultural developments.

Is ‘Australian’ an ethnicity?

While we might value how ethnicity allows people to take control of their own identity (in contrast to the biological essentialism included in ideas of race, which tend to be ‘assigned’ by outsiders), its much more subjective nature means it can be difficult to make objective claims about the nature or composition of a particular ethnic group. Consider whether and to what extent ‘Australian’ might be considered an ethnicity. You might like to read following article to expand your understanding.

Annabel Crabb, 2019. ‘What makes an Australian? Probably not what you think’. ABC News.
abc.net.au/news/2019-10-22/annabel-crabb-national-identity-what-makes-an-australian/11623566

Activity C – Understanding ethnicity

1 Considering what you’ve learned so far, answer the following questions.
   - a How would you define ethnicity?
   - b Reflect on your own ethnic background or heritage. How does your personal experience align with the concept of ethnicity described in the text?
   - c How do you think ethnicity is influenced by historical, cultural and social factors?
   - d According to Weber, a common ancestry can be real or imagined. How does this influence our understanding of ethnicity?
   - e In what ways do individuals and communities construct their ethnic identities? How is self-assignment related to the formation and maintenance of ethnic identities?

2 In the previous chapter, we explored the concept of the sociological imagination. In developing our sociological imagination regarding ethnicity, we should consider the influence on people’s lives of four interconnected parts. Write a paragraph on how these factors have influenced your knowledge of, attitudes to and experience of race and ethnicity in your own life.
   - a **Historical**: How has your family background influenced your beliefs, values and life choices? How have previous understandings of national identity and the past treatment of people based on ethnicity influenced your present?
   - b **Cultural**: How have culture, religion and/or traditions influenced your beliefs, values, attitudes and life choices?
   - c **Structural**: How have institutions – such as government, the law, healthcare, globalisation and education – and social change, such as globalisation, influenced your beliefs, attitudes, values and life choices?
   - d **Critical**: Why are things as they are and how could they be different? What has influenced your values, beliefs and actions concerning your ethnic identity and how could this change over time?

3 How would you distinguish between race and ethnicity? Present your response in a Venn diagram, showing similarities and differences.

Distinguishing between race and ethnicity

According to many sociologists of race and ethnicity, what separates race from ethnicity is the act of assignment: who gets to decide someone’s race or ethnicity. Race is usually constituted from the ‘outside’: it is ‘assigned’. Ethnicity, on the other hand, originates from assertion by group members themselves: from the ‘inside’. The act of assignment is central to the sociological conception of race, but not essential in the concept of ethnicity. Ethnicity is often the result of a sense of belonging within a community (which may be relatively ‘loose’ or ‘rigid’) where members share some cultural heritage.

Ethnic identity | **some groups may be both** | **Racial category**

Ethnic identity

- Based on assumed shared ancestry, history or symbols
- May originate in assignment from others or oneself
- May or may not reflect power relations
- May or may not imply inherent differences in worth
- Typically constructed through a combination of personal feeling and input from family, community and/or broader society.

Racial category

- Based on perceived physical or behavioural differences
- Is typically assigned by others
- Typically reflects power relations
- Usually implies inherent differences in worth
- Is constructed by others – but at the point of self-construction/ self-assignment becomes ethnic identity as well as a racial one.

Adapted from Stephen Cornell and Douglas Hartmann, 2006.
Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World. 2nd edn, Sage.

Ethnicity in an Australian context

In the early colonial period of 19th century Australia, identity was heavily tied to Anglo-Celtic experiences. Despite shared Australian experiences, members of the population were British subjects, most of whom had an identity linked to English, Scottish or Irish culture. Irish Catholic people were frequently othered and subject to discrimination as a separate ethnic group at this time. Additionally, people of colour (notably Chinese Australians during the gold rushes of the 1850s and 60s) and First Nations peoples across Australia were subject to ongoing and overt racial prejudice. It wasn't until after the two world wars that Australians began to develop a more unique national identity connected to their experiences of actually living in Australia. The experience of war helped Australian people identify as their own group with values and a culture similar to, but increasingly distinct from, that of the British.

Broadly speaking, the time after the wars was an era of nation-building and national hero-creation, giving many Australians a sense of pride in their country and of belonging to a particular shared cultural identity.

Activity D – Understanding 'Australian' as an ethnicity

Ethnicity is considered to be a shared cultural heritage and way of life – and Australians with 'Australian', 'British' or 'Irish' background tend to meet this definition of ethnicity. So how do we understand and summarise this way of life or cultural heritage?

1 Watch this 2017 Australia Day lamb advertisement made by Meat and Livestock Australia and answer the question that follow.
youtu.be/yGdj1TwBU1w
  a Describe the representations of Australian culture that appear in this advertisement.
  b Explain the historical narrative illustrated by the advertisement.
  c Outline the stereotypes that exist in the advertisement.
  d Discuss the cultural message the advertisement is trying to promote about Australia.
  e Research previous Australia Day lamb advertising campaigns, and explore the reasons why the message about Australian culture has changed over time.

2 How do the following myths and legends contribute to a sense of Australian shared cultural heritage?

   a The bush or 'outback'

   b The beach

   c ANZAC Day

   d Sports and sportsmanship

3 Make a list of Australian material and non-material culture, using the prompts provided below as a scaffold.

food	values	lifestyle
dance	beliefs	history
symbols	customs	other

   a Discuss your examples for each prompt as a class or in groups.

   b To what extent did your classmates agree or disagree about material and non-material aspects of Australian culture?

4 As a British colony, how Australians self-identify with ethnicity is complex. Do you think there is an 'Australian' ethnicity? Why or why not?

5 Why do you think it is difficult to grasp the concept of an Australian ethnicity? In your answer you could refer to the following elements: historical, social, cultural, political, ancestry, birthplace, citizenship, language, cultural affiliation, religion.

The process of othering 3.2.2

Othering is the process of viewing and treating others as fundamentally different from ourselves. When we encounter people who are different from us, we often rely on superficial characteristics such as language or appearance to categorise them as the 'other'. This can contribute to dynamics (whether on an individual or group level) that lead to the development of feelings of suspicion, fear or hostility towards the subjects of our 'othering', which can in turn create or exacerbate barriers to communication and understanding.

Credit: hamzaturkkol

Othering is a phenomenon in which some individuals or groups are defined and labelled as not fitting in within the norms of a social group; it plays a role in the formation of prejudices against people and groups.

Consider the following:

- Have you ever experienced othering, either as the one who is perceived as different or as the one who perceives others as different? How did it make you feel?
- What are some ways in which we can challenge our own biases and assumptions and seek to understand and connect with those who are different from us?
- How might the concept of othering apply to larger social and political issues, such as immigration, nationalism or racism?

How young Black African Australians use social media to challenge anti-Black narratives

This is an edited excerpt from Kathomi Gatwiri and Claire Moran, 2022. 'How young Black African Australians use social media to challenge anti-Black narratives and reclaim racial dignity'. The Conversation. theconversation.com/how-young-black-african-australians-use-social-media-to-challenge-anti-black-narratives-and-reclaim-racial-dignity-185504

For Black African young people in Australia, social media can be especially fraught – a place they witness footage of anti-Black violence, contend with an 'othering' gaze and encounter racist trolling, posts or comments.

Despite these challenges, social media can offer Black African young people in Australia safe spaces to engage in positive expressions of afro-Blackness, as our new study shows.

King (age 18) reflected on his attempts to separate himself from the 'African gangs' label often attached to young Black African people in Australia. This informed the design of his online avatar and profile photo, curated to evoke a 'friendly' persona:

'People sometimes they just look at your profile and they think you're a bad person or a bad influence based on your picture. They'll assume that you're like other Black people they've seen in their life, they'll assume you're the same person.'

The young people in our study reported digital spaces were safer than physical, offline settings in the white-majority Australian context.

Many used social media functions – such as block, delete, mute and unfollow – to effectively bypass racism online. They also used the 'close friends' and 'private stories' features to share their racial experiences.

This allowed people to engage in the kind of self-representation they chose – including posting pictures of themselves or discussing their experiences – within a 'safe digital space'.

Nya (age 18) told us these communities helped her to form a positive sense of identity as a young Black woman in Australia:

'I've created a communal space on every single platform which has made me feel comfortable with myself [...] I feel like I belong to the wider Black diaspora [...] I actually didn't grow up with Sudanese people, I grew up in (location removed for privacy) which is very white. So yeah, I created a community and I have connections and I like it.'

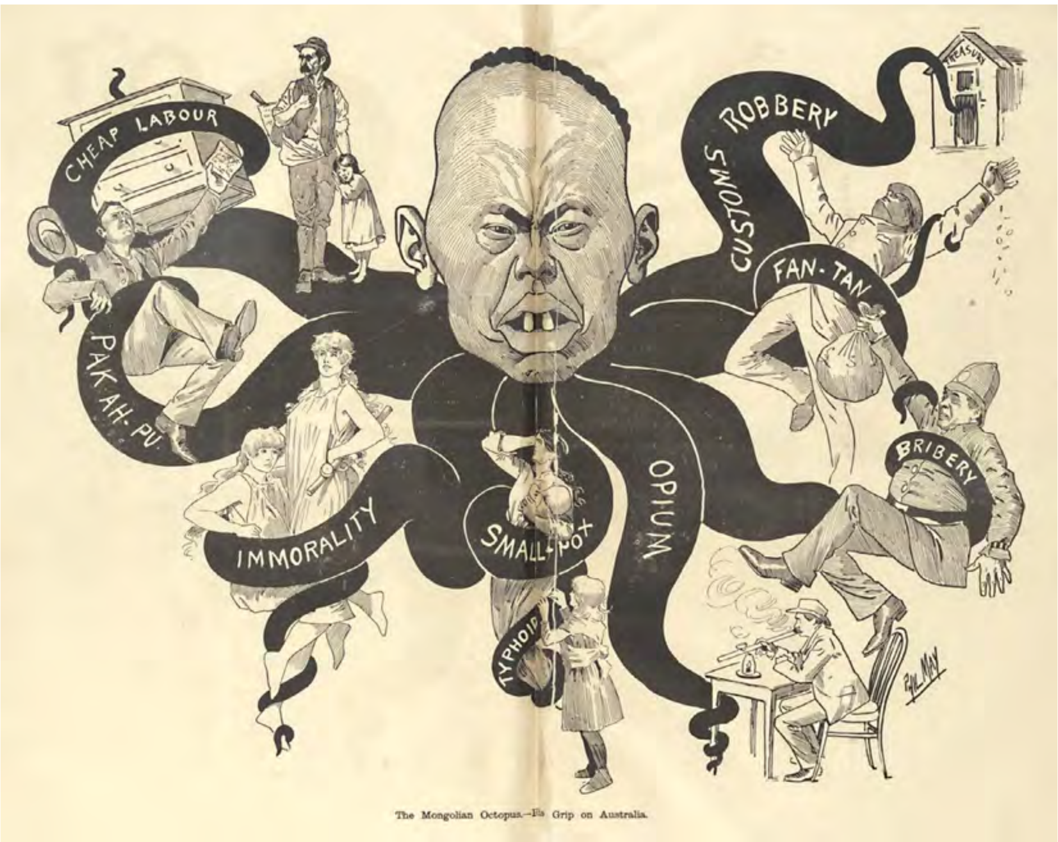
Activity E – Unwinding the effects of othering

1 With reference to the representation about Black African Australians, answer the following questions:
  a How might King's experience relate to othering?
  b How does Nya's experience of social media differ from this?
  c How would you interpret the concept of an 'othering gaze'?

The origins of othering

Othering is a process that describes how colonisers distinguished themselves from the local inhabitants of an area: that is, those they deemed fundamentally different ('others'). According to **postcolonial** thinkers, we forge identities based on telling ourselves not only who we are but who we are not.

Postcolonialism is the study of the cultural, political and economic legacy of colonialism and imperialism, focusing on the impact of human control and exploitation of colonised people and their lands.



This illustration, which was published in an Australian newspaper in the 1880s, articulated a range of common stereotypes and fears associated with increasing levels of Chinese immigration. Credit: Phil May, 1886. 'The Mongolian Octopus – His Grip on Australia'. The Bulletin. nla.gov.au/stories/blog/australia-white-man

To designate and name a race, as Europeans did, was to assert dominance over those they colonised. This objectifying process, known as 'othering', exerts control through its ability to classify and structure. In the hands of the colonisers, the act of assigning race was not merely an exercise in naming but one in *power*.

Postcolonialists argue that the process of othering was necessary for colonisers to stabilise themselves: that is, to construct a story about who they are and were. By assigning attributes to others, colonisers were able to distinguish between an 'us' and a 'them'. Therefore, othering is not just a process of oppressing others but also of justifying this oppression and changing the way the 'otherer' sees themselves (Raja, 2020). Othering often involves simplifying or misrepresenting the other, which is connected to stereotyping.

Activity F – Othering in the media

1 Plan and write a response to the following extended response question. Advice on how to break down the question and structure your response is provided below.

With reference to this representation, explain how the concept of the 'other' relates to race and ethnicity.

Unpack the question using the KLC method:

Key knowledge words: other, race, ethnicity.

Limiting words: with reference to this representation, relates.

Command terms: *explain*.

You can use this scaffold as a guide to structure your response:

- Briefly introduce the concept of the 'other' and its significance in the sociology of race and ethnicity.
- Provide a clear point or statement that indicates the focus of your response.
- Use the representation to provide specific examples that illustrate the relationship between the 'other' and race/ethnicity.
- Discuss how racial categories are used to construct and define the 'other'.
- Discuss how ethnic identities can be constructed in relation to the dominant culture and perceived as 'other'.
- Explore how ethnic minorities may experience marginalisation and cultural stereotyping because of being labelled as 'other'.
- Use examples and evidence.
- Provide a brief conclusion.

The nature of the theory of ethnic hybridity, as informed by Stuart Hall, and its connection to experiences of ethnicity 3.2.3

The layers and shades inherent to identity are fundamental factors in how humans understand and experience their own lives. When it comes to ethnicity, many people's experiences challenge assumptions that ethnic identity is an 'either/or' question. In reality, it is often made up of multiple parts. This means people can value elements of the mixture that makes up their own heritage and extend themselves beyond the need to conform to the expectations of a single ethnic identity. This experience of ethnicity is sometimes understood through the theory of **ethnic hybridity**.

Ethnic hybridity is a theory that describes the sense of ethnic diversity seen in dual or multiple ethnic identities.

Stuart Hall

Sociologist Stuart Hall (1932–2014) is considered by many as the 'godfather of multiculturalism', having influenced a whole generation of young scholars studying class, race, gender and national cultures. Credit: The Open University. flic.kr/p/q2Cbcz

Cultural theorist Stuart Hall developed and popularised the term 'ethnic hybridity', which was in part informed by his experiences as a Jamaican man of mixed African and European descent who spent much of his life living and working in London. Theories of ethnic hybridity seek to describe the ways cultural identities are formed and transformed in contemporary societies. Ethnic hybridity describes not just the mixture of two or more cultures to create a new one but a complex process of negotiating and renegotiating cultural differences.

Hall argued that ethnic categories are neither neat nor simple, and promoted a perspective that was highly critical of the idea of 'pure' racial or ethnic categories. He sought to highlight how people's identities are not fixed, but instead constantly in flux, highly fluid and shaped by historical and cultural factors. In his 1992 book *Formations of Modernity* (co-authored with Bram Gieben), he argued that no culture can be said to have one particular set of values. All cultures contain many influences that are often complex and occasionally contradictory. While many people can and do see themselves as having a single, coherent identity and sense of who they are, this is usually a result of some sort of disconnection from a truer understanding of the complexities of their own heritage. When reflecting on the state of being ‘British’, Hall noted that most cultures are inextricably multicultural – mixed ethically, religiously, culturally and linguistically. To extend this observation, every ethnic or cultural identity you can think of has been influenced by and includes elements from others. While certain developments might have accelerated the pace of hybridisation, it has *always* been at play. For example, a person in Manchester in the United Kingdom may consider themselves ‘British’ or ‘English’, even though their culture, language and ancestry is composed of Celtic, Saxon, Danish, Norman, Irish and other influences.

The experience of ethnic hybridity

Like experiences of ethnicity in general, experiences of ethnic hybridity are anything but consistent. Individuals who have a connection with multiple cultures may experience a sense of pride and feelings of belonging with any of them, to varying extents. In cases where there are clear and rigid distinctions between (for example) the ethnic backgrounds of two parents – and/or in settings very different to those their parents grew up in – people may end up feeling ‘split’ and may feel they can’t entirely identify with any culture. They may resonate with concepts such as ‘third culture kids’, where spanning these different categories *itself* becomes part of their identity.

People may adopt or resist ethnic hybridity. It gives some people a sense of freedom and makes others feel ‘out of place’ everywhere. People who have intense personal experiences of ethnic hybridity may become skilled at flipping between their cultures by changing their language or behaviour (this is sometimes known as **code switching**). They may also experience discrimination or judgement for not being easy to categorise.

People’s experiences are complex and can be simultaneously positive and negative – as we explore in the examples that follow.

Young Malaysian women celebrating the Hindu festival Holi – the Festival of Colours, Love and Spring – in Malaysia in 2020. Credit: unsplash.com/photos/IGjXf8P1TXo

Growing up as a Chinese-Cambodian Australian

Unpolished Gem (Black Inc, 2006*) is a memoir in which the author, Alice Pung, explores her experiences growing up as a Chinese-Cambodian Australian. The book portrays Pung's family and community in Footscray, a suburb of Melbourne, during the 1980s and 1990s, along with reflections on her experience of ethnic hybridity.

**Don't forget – in VCE Sociology, contemporary representations are those within the last ten years, so while this excerpt is still relatively recent, it is technically considered a historical representation. Make sure you refer to and analyse plenty of contemporary examples.*

> “I am the child of refugees. I speak two languages, neither of which is the language of my country of birth. I don't speak the same way as my schoolmates, or even my relatives. I don't have the right shoes, or the right haircut, or the right skin. I have no traditions or customs to cling to, no stories to pass down. I am like a jigsaw puzzle, a mix of bits and pieces from different places, trying to fit together into a whole.
>
> Growing up, I felt like I was constantly straddling two worlds. At school, I tried to fit in with my Australian classmates, but I always felt like an outsider. I spoke differently, ate different food, and celebrated different holidays. At home, I tried to honour my Chinese-Cambodian heritage, but I didn't always understand the customs and traditions. I felt like I was never quite Chinese enough, and never quite Australian enough.
>
> But despite these challenges, my family and community provided me with a sense of belonging and identity. We may have been a mix of different cultures and experiences, but we shared a common bond of love and support. We celebrated our cultural traditions together, shared our stories and experiences, and provided each other with a sense of strength and resilience.
>
> In the end, I came to realise that my cultural identity was not something that could be neatly defined or categorised. It was a fluid and ever-evolving mix of different cultural experiences and traditions, shaped by my family, community, and the world around me. And while it may have been a challenging journey at times, I am grateful for the richness and diversity of my cultural heritage, and the strength and resilience it has given me.”

Activity G – Ethnic hybridity and identity

1. Referring to the *Unpolished Gem* representation provided, answer the following questions:
   - a How does Alice Pung describe her experiences of growing up as the Cambodian-Australian child of refugees in Australia? What challenges did she face in trying to navigate different ethnic identities?
   - b How did Pung's family and community provide her with a sense of belonging and identity? What values and traditions did they share, and how did they help her to navigate her identity as a Chinese-Cambodian Australian?
   - c How does Pung's understanding of her cultural identity change over time? What does she come to realise about the complexity and fluidity of cultural identity?
2. Before reading on, consider and respond to the following questions:
   - a What does it mean to have an ethnic identity?
   - b How does the concept of ethnic hybridity challenge traditional notions of ethnicity?
   - c What are some potential benefits and drawbacks of embracing ethnic hybridity?
   - d How can we celebrate and embrace ethnic diversity while also respecting cultural traditions and practices?

3 *The Family Law* (2016–2019) is a TV series that follows a Chinese-Australian family living in Queensland. The show explores themes of cultural identity and the challenges of navigating a hybrid identity in Australia.

Visit these suggested resources to learn more, and then answer the questions that follow. (If you'd actually like to watch an episode, that's good too!)

- Nathania Gilson, 2019. 'How 'The Family Law' normalised cultural diversity on Australian TV'. SBS. bit.ly/3tkG6ql
- Maria Lewis, 2020. 'Modern immigrant stories and The Family Law'. ACMI. acmi.net.au/stories-and-ideas/modern-immigrant-stories-and-family-law
- Erin Chew, 2019. 'With 'The Family Law', my Asian-Australian story is finally being told'. Junkee. junkee.com/the-family-law-authenticity/190291

a How is the concept of ethnic hybridity portrayed in *The Family Law*?

b What are some challenges faced by culturally diverse communities in Australian society?

c Analyse the impact of *The Family Law* in normalising cultural diversity on Australian TV. How does the show challenge or reinforce stereotypes?

d Explain how the show challenges simplistic views of cultural identity. How does embracing ethnic hybridity promote inclusivity and multicultural understanding?

e Explore the potential tensions or conflicts that arise from ethnic hybridity, as highlighted in the articles. How does *The Family Law* address these complexities in its storytelling?

Thinking critically: Ethnic hybridity and postcolonialism

The concept of ethnic hybridity emerged in the context of the postcolonial world. It arose partly in response to the fact that local cultures had been suppressed and Western cultural norms promoted over them. Ethnic hybridity was seen as a way of challenging this hierarchical relationship and reclaiming cultural identities that were suppressed during the colonial period.

Power relations in society are a critical force in determining how identities are formed. Through the processes of racialisation and othering, dominant cultures attempt to create fixed identities by naming, labelling, categorising and even mythologising narratives that 'freeze' identity. Therefore, ethnic hybridity is not simply a combination of more than one culture; it describes an ongoing process of challenging power relations in society.

'I have three cultures': How young multicultural Australians are finding their identity

This is an edited excerpt from Ahmed Yussef, 2021. ''I have three cultures': How young multicultural Australians are finding their identity'. SBS News. sbs.com.au/news/the-feed/article/i-have-three-cultures-how-young-multicultural-australians-are-finding-their-identity/c86m25amz

Ishita said that being viewed differently in Australia and India has led to a tension within herself.

Ishita Mathur thinks of herself as an amalgamation of a number of different things – she was born in India and her family had a detour in the United Arab Emirates for a short time before settling in Perth when she was five.

The term 'third culture kid' feels like an apt description of her experiences.

'I have three cultures; I have my original, I have my found, and I have this third thing that I have created for myself,' Ishita told The Feed.

'It's so much better to be a third culture kid than a no culture kid.'

'The root of all of this is that people have a sense of they know what it is to be a proper Indian or a proper Afghan, or whatever it is. And if you don't fit that mould, then you're seen as inauthentic,' she said.

'It's really an impossible situation for children of migrants who cannot be authentically anything. And I think one of the things that research has shown is that we really need to broaden our understanding of what cultural identity is because we live in a globalised society.'

'It's really hard to reconcile being from two different cultures or being caught in between that third space.'

Associate Professor Christina Ho, researcher in migration and identity at the University of Technology Sydney, said there's still a lot of tension between the mainstream Australian culture, which is 'very Anglo dominated', and emerging migrant cultures.

'Even though we've now had decades of multiculturalism, that still is people's lived experience that there is this tension, and it's really hard to reconcile being from two different cultures or being caught in between that third space,' she said.

The feeling of being caught in between those tensions is something Ishita said she's still trying to understand. In Australia, Ishita said she's a minority and has to deal with the stereotypes and lack of access to opportunities because she doesn't have an Anglophone name.

But in India, she represents the dominant Hindu culture and comes from a middle-upper class background – the roles are reversed.

'I'm not a minority there, I'm actually part of a group that is very, very privileged. So living in the tension between those two is really odd,' she said.

Activity H – Ethnic hybridity, othering and experiences of ethnicity

With reference to the above representation, analyse the how ethnic hybridity might influence the experience of ethnicity. In your response, refer to the process of othering.

Remember: unpack this question using the KLC method:

Key knowledge words – *othering, ethnic hybridity*

Limiting words – *with reference to the above representation*

Command term – *analyse*.

Australia's ethnic diversity compared with other countries 3.2.4

We often hear about Australia being a 'nation of migrants'. How ethnically diverse are we and how does this compare to other countries? In this section we explore how we gather data about ethnicity and compare this to another (perhaps surprisingly) similarly diverse part of the world: England and Wales.

Activity 1 – So you think you know about Australia's ethnic diversity?

This activity aims to help you explore your own assumptions, challenge your stereotypes and gain a deeper understanding of the true ethnic mosaic that makes up this nation.

1 Using the prompts below, try to make educated guesses about the ethnic composition and diversity in Australia, based on your prior knowledge and perceptions. You might work with your classmates.

What percentage of Australians were born in Australia?	What percentage of people in Australia speak a non-English language at home?	What percentage of Australians speak more than one language?	What are the most common ancestries in Australia?	How many ethnicities are there in Australia?

2 After noting down your guesses, continue reading through this section **before** coming back to answer the next question.

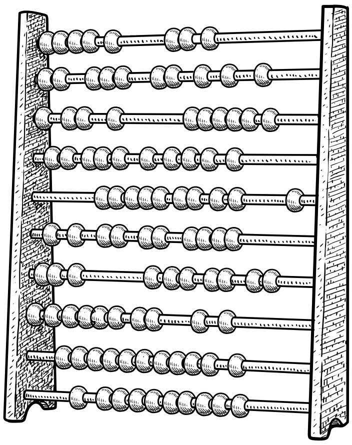
3 Compare what you've learned in your reading with your earlier guesses, and write down your reflections.
   a How close were you in your guesstimates?
   b Where were you way off? Why do you think that was?
   c What factors influenced your initial guesstimates about the ethnic diversity of Australia?
   d Were there any particular ethnic groups that you overestimated or underestimated? Why do you think that happened?

Measuring ethnicity: The census

A **census** is an official count or survey of a population.

Every five years, every household in Australia is surveyed on a variety of different measures to gather consistent data across the country – known as the **census** – a task undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The data gathered by the census is invaluable for understanding a huge array of factors in Australia's population and society. When measuring ethnicity, there are some complexities to the process used, which we will explore in detail.

When collecting data about Australia's ethnic diversity, the ABS uses a formal set of statistical standards and categories known as the Australian Standard Classification of Cultural and Ethnic Groups (ASCCEG). The ASCCEG uses the following definition of ethnicity to collect data:



Credit: jenesesimre

> “The words ‘ethnicity’ and ‘ethnic’ are associated with many different meanings. For the purposes of the ASCCEG, ‘ethnicity’ refers to the shared identity or similarity of a group of people on the basis of one or more distinguishing characteristics.
>
> These characteristics include:
>
> - A long shared history, the memory of which is kept alive.
> - A cultural tradition, including family and social customs, sometimes religiously based.
> - A common geographic origin.
> - A common language (but not necessarily limited to that group).
> - A common literature (written or oral).
> - A common religion.
> - Being a minority (often with a sense of being oppressed).
> - Being racially conspicuous.”
>
> ABS, 2019. ‘Australian Standard Classification of Cultural and Ethnic Groups (ASCCEG)’. Commonwealth of Australia. abs.gov.au/statistics/classifications/australian-standard-classification-cultural-and-ethnic-groups-ascceg/latest-release

The ASCCEG uses a hierarchical, three-tier classification system to categorise ethnic groups. The ABS frequently faces challenges in shaping these classifications in a way that make sense to the communities in question. For example, it places Jewish within the ‘North African and Middle Eastern’ group although many Jewish people identify as European. It also groups all Russian people within the ‘European’ group despite a significant part of Russia falling geographically within Asia, and in spite of many people living to the east of the Ural mountains in Russia being more culturally Asian than European.

‘Australia does not effectively measure our diversity,’ Andrew Giles, the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs, told a conference in Melbourne. He said Australia’s failure to collect data on ethnicity or race — unlike the United States, Canada and New Zealand — was a ‘fundamental barrier to understanding the issues that face multicultural Australians’. ‘I looked at the sort of countries that we often compare ourselves to … and we weren’t compiling data that enables us to understand the representation of different population groups,’ Mr Giles told the ABC at the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (FECCA) conference (Giles, quoted in Yussuf and Walden, 2022).

Australia’s ethnic diversity: A snapshot

Australia’s population surpassed 26 million in 2022, almost doubling in less than 40 years. In the span of only a few generations, the nature of Australia’s ethnic makeup has changed considerably.

In 1947, the proportion of the population born overseas was just under 10 per cent. By 2021, this figure almost tripled, with 27.6 per cent proportion of Australians being born overseas.

The proportion of Australian residents that were born overseas (first generation) or have a parent born overseas (second generation) moved above 50 per cent for the first time.

- First generation refers to people living in Australia who were born overseas.
- Second generation refers to people living in Australia who were born in Australia with one or both parents born overseas.
- Third generation refers to people living in Australia who were Australian born with both parents born in Australia (excluding overseas residents, visitors and responses not stated).

Australian	7,597 k

Oceanian	1,467 k
Australian Aboriginal	741
New Zealander	204
Māori	170
Samoan	98
Torres Strait Islander	67
other	187

South-East Asian	1,141 k
Filipino	409
Vietnamese	335
Thai	92
Indonesian	86
Malay	61
other	178

Southern and Central Asian	1,659 k
Indian	784
Nepalese	138
Punjabi	119
Pakistani	98
other	647

North-East Asian	1,632 k
Chinese	1,391
Korean	137
Japanese	78
Taiwanese	26
other	12

Peoples of the Americas	347 k
American	71
Canadian	42
Chilean	41
Brazilian	37
other	165

> **“What is the person's ancestry? Provide up to two ancestries only.”**

Sub-Saharan African	327 k
South African	145
African (so described)	57
Mauritian	36
Zimbabwean	22
Somali	18
other	114

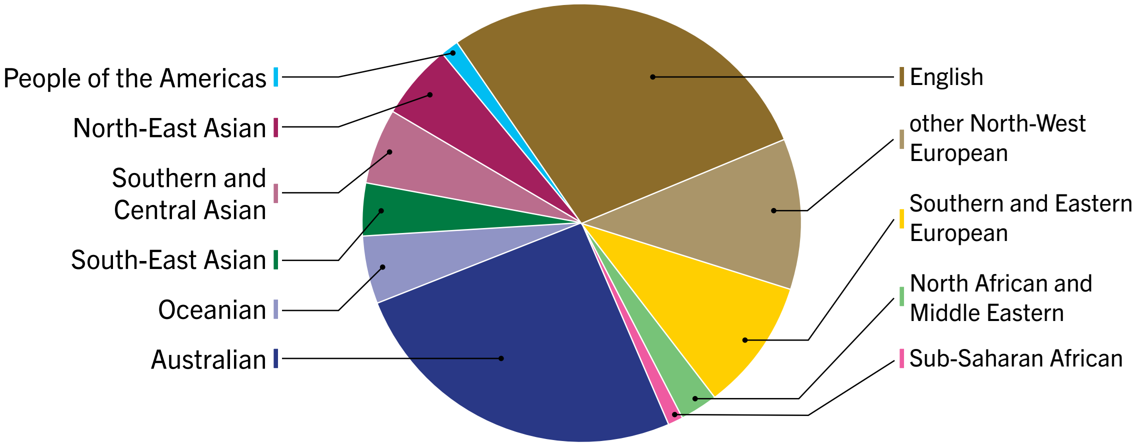
North African and Middle Eastern	802 k
Lebanese	248
Turkish	87
Iranian	81
Egyptian	60
other	360

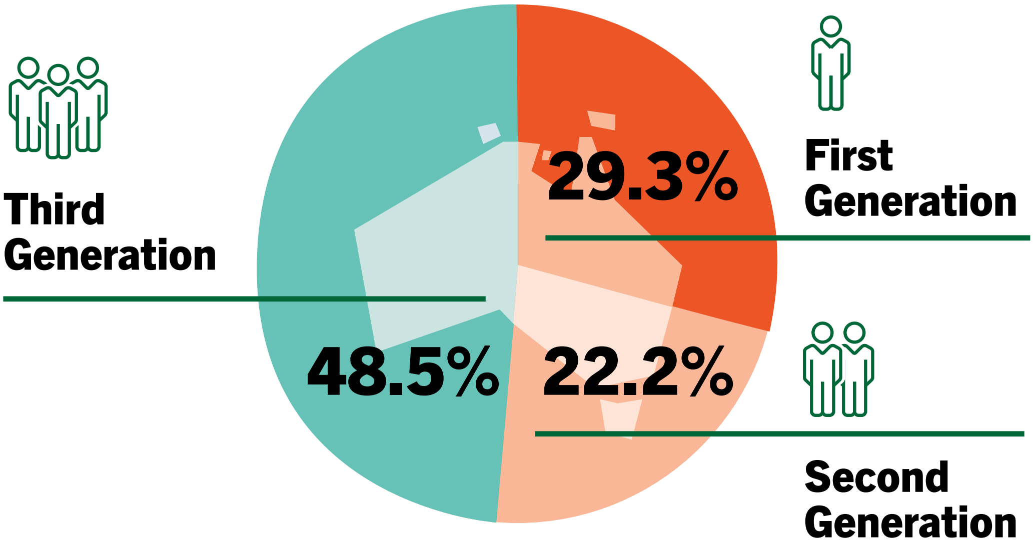
Southern and Eastern European	2,856 k
Italian	1,108
Greek	425
Polish	209
Maltese	199
Croatian	164
other	932

North-West European	11,705 k
English	8,386
Irish	2,411
Scottish	2,177
German	1,026
Dutch	382
other	608

Insufficient detail	182 k
Not specified	1,584 k

Total	25,423 k





Credit: 'Snapshot of Australia'. ABS, 2022.
abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/snapshot-australia/latest-release

LDB

Activity J – Gathering data on ethnicity

1 Answering a question about one's own ethnicity is often a complicated task – responses are often multi-layered. Data collection models attempt to capture this complexity but there is always room for improvement to enhance the usefulness of the data. Considering this, answer the following questions:
   - a Why might someone give a multiple response when asked about their ancestry, ethnicity or cultural identity?
   - b Can you provide an example of a multiple response that acknowledges continuing ties with more than one ethnic or cultural group?
   - c Why is it important to develop data collection models that can capture multiple responses?
   - d What questions about ethnicity might you avoid asking, or add?

2 Read the quote from Minister for Immigration Andrew Giles (and if you can, the source article provided in the References list) and answer the questions that follow.
   - a What is the purpose of the federal government's plan to measure ethnicity data in Australia?
   - b What are some potential benefits of collecting ethnicity data? What are some potential drawbacks or risks?
   - c How might collecting ethnicity data help address issues of inequality or discrimination in Australia?
   - d What ethical factors should be considered when collecting and using ethnicity data?

Comparative perspectives methodology

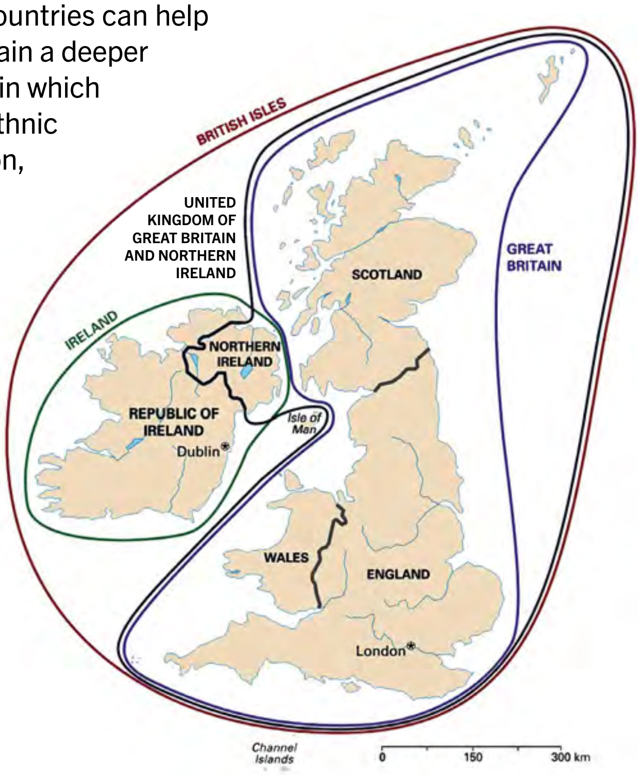
In VCE Sociology, we use **comparative perspectives methodology** to outline Australia's ethnic diversity. The goal of using a comparative methodology in sociology is to identify similarities and differences across societies so we can better understand them. The choice of what to compare is important. A common challenge is finding similar data sets to compare – for instance, the methods of gathering and categorising data on ethnicity in different countries can vary widely.

Comparative perspectives methodology is a type of research where two objects of study are looked at in relation to each other.

Depending on the measure, it isn't always easy to conclude how ethnically diverse a country is with precision. Non-material culture such as language, self-identification, ancestry, tribe and international migration are all factors that might be taken as markers of a person's ethnicity. So we can see that the methods by which ethnicity is framed and measured have an outsized influence over the conclusions we might draw.

Comparing the ethnic diversity of Australia with that of England and Wales

Comparing ethnic diversity across countries can help us identify patterns and trends and gain a deeper understanding of the unique context in which Australia's particular experience of ethnic diversity has developed. In this section, we will examine the information available on ethnic diversity in England and Wales and compare this to similar data for Australia. As we do so, look out for similarities and differences, historical and political factors that have influenced ethnic diversity, and immigration patterns in each country.



Map of the British and Irish Isles.
Image credit: Encyclopedia Britannica/Kenny Chmielewski

Like Australia, England and Wales are English-speaking countries with a significant history of overseas migration and cultural diversity. Unsurprisingly, both have been significantly influenced by:

- the consequences of the violence, dispossession and colonisation efforts of the world-spanning British Empire
- the corresponding spread of the English language, and English cultural and political norms more generally
- the legacy of waves of migration from mainland Europe from the 1800s through to the aftermath of World War II
- significant migration from their respective regional neighbours.

While the United Kingdom is a centralised state in many respects, the census in England and Wales (with a collective population of 59.6 million), is administered under separate arrangements to other parts of the United Kingdom such as Scotland and Northern Ireland. The census data collected by the Office for National Statistics reveals that the populations of England and Wales are, like Australia, becoming increasingly more ethnically diverse.

In the following pages are snapshots measuring and comparing the cultural diversity of each country according to specific measures: **language**, **ancestry**, **religion** and **birth country**. You should investigate these alongside the more detailed breakdowns of responses to ancestry questions in the Australian census provided earlier in this section, and (where possible) do some of your own research. Part of the English and Welsh census paper has been reproduced here to give you context for the data.

Ancestry or ethnicity

England and Wales		Australia	
What is your ethnic group? *Choose one section from A to E, then tick **one** box to best describe your ethnic group or background.*		*What is the person’s ancestry?* *Provide up to **two** ancestries only.*	
Excluding ‘White: English, Scottish, Northern Irish or British’, the top seven* were:		Excluding ‘English’ and ‘Australian’, the top seven responses* were:	
Asian: Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi	6.9 per cent	**Other European**	57.3 per cent
White: Other	6.2 per cent	**Southern and Central Asian**	6.5 per cent
Black: African, Caribbean or Other	4.0 per cent	**Other Oceanian**	6.4 per cent
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean, African, Asian, or Other	2.9 per cent	**North-East Asian**	5.6 per cent
Asian: Other	1.6 per cent	**South-East Asian**	4.5 per cent
Asian: Chinese	0.7 per cent	**North African and Middle Eastern**	3.2 per cent
Other: Arab	0.6 per cent	**Sub-Saharan African**	1.3 per cent

*Note: some categories and sub-categories have been combined to assist with our country-to-country comparison.

Observations:

The English and Welsh census uses colour-based terms like ‘White’ or ‘Black’, while the Australian one does not.

England and Wales uses quite different and often *broader* categories and sub-categories.

The Australian census offered respondents the ability to nominate two ancestries, while the English and Welsh did not. However, the latter includes a separate group containing a list of ‘Mixed’ ethnicities.

Noting India, Pakistan and Bangladesh make up a large proportion of ‘Southern and Central Asia’, both Australia and England/Wales appear to have a roughly similar proportion of their population falling within this group.

Australia had a much larger proportion of respondents from Oceanian and Asian groups, while England and Wales had a greater proportion with African ancestry.

Religion

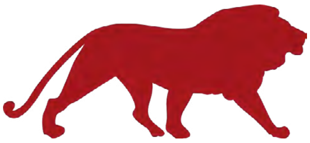
Both countries had similar rates of no religion, and a roughly similar proportion of Christian respondents.

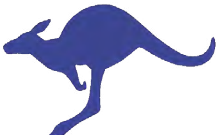
England and Wales featured roughly double the proportion of Muslim respondents that Australia had.

Australia had a much more significant number of Buddhist respondents – likely reflecting greater presence of migrants from North-East and South-East Asia.

Unlike Australia, England and Wales did not collect information on specific denominations within Christianity.

England and Wales		Australia	
What is your religion?		*What is the person’s religion?*	
No religion	37.2 per cent	**No religion**	38.9 per cent
Christian	46.2 per cent	**Catholic** **Anglican**	20.0 per cent 9.8 per cent
Islam	6.5 per cent	**Islam**	3.2 per cent
Hinduism	1.7 per cent	**Hinduism**	2.7 per cent
Buddhism	0.5 per cent	**Buddhism**	2.4 per cent





Country of birth

England and Wales	Australia
What is your country of birth?	*In which country was the person born?*
17% (one in six) were born overseas. Of these, the top five were:	50% (one in *two*) were born overseas. Of these, the top five were:
1. **India**	1. **England**
2. **Poland**	2. **India**
3. **Pakistan**	3. **China**
4. **Romania**	4. **New Zealand**
5. **Ireland**	5. **Philippines**

National Identity

England and Wales	Australia
How would you describe your national identity?	No question on 'national identity' (or similar phrasing) was asked in the Australian census.
Of those reporting a 'non-UK national identity', the top five were:	
1. **Polish**	
2. **Romanian**	
3. **Indian**	
4. **Irish**	
5. **Italian**	

Language

England and Wales		Australia	
What is your main language?		*Does the person use a language other than English at home?*	
9% of people reported speaking a language other than English (or Welsh in Wales) as their 'main language'. Of those, the top five were:		23% of people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Of those, the top five were:	
Polish	1.1 per cent	**Mandarin**	2.7 per cent
Romanian	0.8 per cent	**Arabic**	1.4 per cent
Punjabi	0.5 per cent	**Vietnamese**	1.3 per cent
Urdu	0.5 per cent	**Cantonese**	1.2 per cent
Portuguese	0.4 per cent	**Punjabi**	0.9 per cent

While the Australian figure seems higher at first glance, *many* of the 23% may nonetheless use English as their main language – both outside the home, and at home alongside another language.

In both countries...

- English was overwhelmingly the dominant language
- Punjabi was among the five most common languages.

Most of the largest language groups were from...

- Europe (in the case of England and Wales)
- the Asia-Pacific (in the case of Australia).

Australia's largest group (Mandarin) made up a much larger percentage than England and Wales' (Polish).

Data derived from:

'Cultural identity: Census 2021'. Office of National Statistics.
ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity

'Cultural diversity: Census 2021'. Australian Bureau of Statistics.
abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/cultural-diversity-census

'Census 2021 paper questionnaires'. Office of National Statistics.
ons.gov.uk/census/censustransformationprogramme/questiondevelopment/census2021paperquestionnaires

'2021 Census paper form'. Australian Bureau of Statistics.
abs.gov.au/census/census-media-hub/resources/education

Activity K – Comparing Australia to England and Wales

Refer to the information provided and answer the following questions.

1. What proportion of the population of Australia was born overseas?
2. How does this compare with the population of England and Wales?
3. Summarise the key similarities and differences between Australia and England–Wales revealed by the census data.
4. Did anything surprise you about the differences between the two countries?

Something else worth considering (that isn't necessarily captured in our snapshots) is how things might have changed over time. According to the 2021 UK Census:

- from 2011 to 2021, the percentage of people in the 'white British' ethnic group went down from 80.5 per cent to 74.4 per cent
- as part of the 'white' ethnic group, 74.4 per cent (44.4 million) of the total population in England and Wales identified their ethnic group as 'English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British'. This was a decline from 80.5 per cent (45.1 million) in 2011, and from 87.5 per cent (45.5 million) who identified this way in 2001.
- The next most common high-level ethnic group was 'Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh', accounting for 9.3 per cent (5.5 million) of the overall population. This ethnic group also saw the largest increase from 2011, up from 7.5 per cent (4.2 million people).

Activity L – Comparing Australia with other countries

1. Use the CIA World Factbook to compare the ethnic diversity in Australia with one country that could be considered ethnically *diverse* and one that is comparatively ethnically *homogenous* (all the same).

   cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries

   a. For your chosen country, note down:
      i. its total population
      ii. the ethnic groups that live in the country
      iii. what languages are spoken, and what percentage of the population speaks each of them.

   b. Write a short statement summarising your impression of your chosen country's degree of ethnic diversity compared to Australia.

   c. Consider how this information might be gathered. What challenges might we face when trying to do a detailed comparison of ethnic and cultural diversity between your chosen country and another country, such as Australia?

2. Read the article and answer the questions that follow.

   Rich Morin, 2013. 'The most (and least) culturally diverse countries in the world. Pew Research. pewresearch.org/short-reads/2013/07/18/the-most-and-least-culturally-diverse-countries-in-the-world

   a. What measures of ethnic diversity does this article use?

   b. How does this compare to other data in this section?

Credit: rob z/Adobe

The historical context and contemporary concept of multiculturalism 3.2.5

Multiculturalism is a key part of how we talk about Australian society. Before diving in, let's explore your initial understanding of and impressions about this idea.

Activity M – What do you know about multiculturalism?

1. Before reading on, brainstorm as many words or phrases you can think of that relate to the concept of multiculturalism. You can share your brainstorm with others and compare your answers.
2. Organise your ideas into categories, such as food, music, art, customs and traditions.
3. Consider these categories and what they represent. You can do this in pairs. Consider the following questions:
    a. How does the presence of multiple cultures and ethnicities in Australia make people's lives and experiences better?
    b. Is there a clear unanimous decision on what multiculturalism is and what function it serves?
    c. Are there definitions and thoughts shared by your classmate(s) that you agree or disagree with?
    d. Is it a difficult concept to define (even if we are familiar with the term)?
    e. What are some potential challenges involved in having a multicultural society, and how might people navigate them successfully?

The term **multiculturalism** is often used to celebrate the coexistence of diverse cultures. Like many concepts in sociology, it is a contested idea with a variety of interpretations. Opinions on multiculturalism differ significantly among individuals and across countries. Multiculturalism can also mean an ideology that promotes living with different cultures as something that is not only possible but desirable. It can also feature an understanding that minority cultures living within a dominant culture should experience a sense of belonging and inclusion without being expected to forget or erase their own distinctive features.

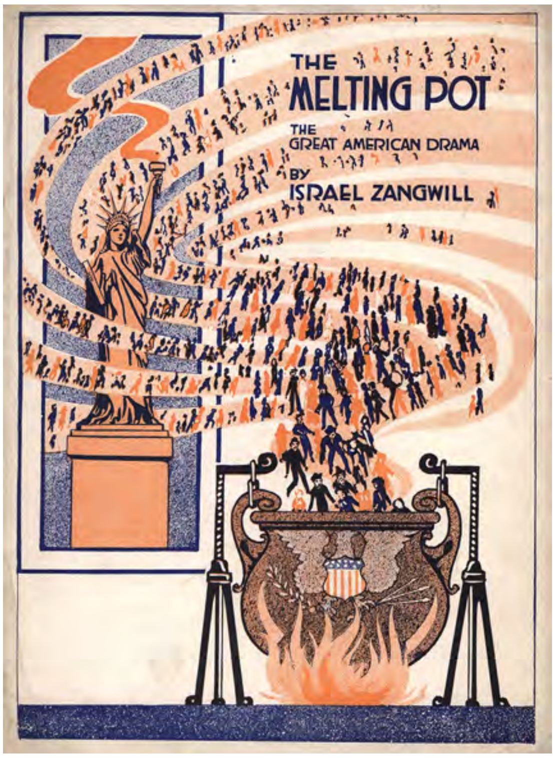
Multiculturalism is the practice of several different cultures coexisting peacefully and equitably in a single country.

Multiculturalism as an idea and multiculturalism in practice (for example, as expressed in policy) face different challenges. For example, we might both believe in the broad ideals and values of multiculturalism but have different perspectives on how multiculturalism should look or feel, be legislated or be expressed in private or public spheres. The increasing acceptance of multiculturalism in societies such as Australia has raised some tricky questions, such as:

- Does multiculturalism erode the collective identity of particular cultural groups, or is it simply accepting or 'tolerating' difference?
- Does embracing a collective multicultural identity erode the 'dominant' culture, and is that a legitimate source of concern?

Recently the idea of multiculturalism has come under attack with some people arguing the idea has failed. This has coincided with surges of anti-immigrant sentiment and **nationalist** agendas that have used multiculturalism as a scapegoat for social and economic problems. You can read a little more about these challenges in this article:

Simone Moriconi, Giovanni Peri and Riccardo Turati, 2019. 'The impact of immigration on EU countries nationalistic sentiments'. The Conversation. theconversation.com/the-impact-of-immigration-on-eu-countries-nationalistic-sentiments-117632



The metaphor of the 'melting pot' became a popular way of understanding the experience of migrants in the United States in the early 20th century. While it implies that different cultural influences can be blended together harmoniously, it also hints at the loss of the distinctions between those influences and identities as they fuse together – as happens when you add a small quantity of a certain ingredient to a soup already dominated by other elements and flavours.

Nationalism is identification with and support for one's nation over the interests of other nations.

The historical context of multiculturalism

> We are for the Empire; ... for the maintenance and protection of a White Australia.
>
> Prime Minister of Australia Stanley Bruce, 1925. Election speech. electionspeeches.moadoph.gov.au/speeches/1925-stanley-bruce

> The maintenance of the White Australia policy [is one of] four fundamental principles upon which the whole of our national life is based.
>
> Stanley Bruce, 1928. Election speech. electionspeeches.moadoph.gov.au/speeches/1928-stanley-bruce

As you can see from the words of Stanley Bruce, multiculturalism has not always been the goal of Australian government policy. From the Federation debates in the 1890s through to the 1960s, a suite of policies including those discussed in the previous chapter as well as immigration policies, specifically the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901*, became known as the 'White Australia Policy'. This policy was supported by a broad consensus of both major political parties at the time (the Australian Labor Party and the various non-labour parties that would eventually form the Liberal Party). This policy discriminated against people who didn't conform with social constructions of whiteness at the time. It was administered in part through the introduction of a 'language dictation test', which allowed officials (at the direction of the minister) to force potential entrants to sit a test in *any* language.

The Kisch affair

Egon Kisch was a communist and anti-war activist, born into the German-speaking Jewish community of Prague, Czechoslovakia (now Czech Republic). On attempting to migrate to Australia in 1934, he was one of very few Europeans to be given the dictation test, which, under the Immigration Restriction Act, could be administered to applicants in any European language. Kisch was able to speak several European languages, which should have given him an advantage, but he was given the test in Scottish Gaelic, which he did not speak.

Between 1907 and its formal abolition in 1957, nobody who took the dictation test was able to pass it.

Egon Kisch aboard a ship docked at Melbourne's Station Pier, 1934. Credit: Sam Hood

In the 1940s, various political interests began to seek to modify the policy in line with overtly race-based concerns (partly informed by fears stoked during World War II of being 'overrun by Asians'). This prompted an expansion of the range of backgrounds considered suitable for integration into the still largely Anglo-centric ideal of Australia. Hundreds of thousands of people of European heritage beyond just Great Britain were then able to settle in Australia, including large numbers from Ireland and Germany (who had already made up a significant component of earlier 'waves' of migration) and many more from Italy, Greece, Malta, Yugoslavia and the Netherlands. At the same time, popular sentiment gradually began to shift away from more overt forms of racism, partly as a result of horror at the policies of racial extermination pursued by the recently defeated Nazi Germany in Europe.

Immigrants arriving **before the late 1960s** faced the expectation that they shed cultural, traditional and/or political affiliations with their homelands, which were seen as impediments to their becoming fully-fledged members of Australian society. These policies weren't entirely effective, as many people managed to maintain these connections and traditions in private, among family and friends, and within members of their local communities who shared similar ties (even to some extent the face of imprisonment and cultural oppression, as was experienced by early migrants from Germany during both world wars and those from Italian and Japanese backgrounds during World War II).

By the 1960s the Immigration Restriction Act was widely criticised both domestically and internationally. Tensions arose between Australia and its Asian neighbours, who felt the policy inhibited trade, diplomatic relations and cross-cultural influence. Economic conditions during the post-war boom resulted in labour shortages that could only be met with immigration. The desire to boost economic growth led to more acceptance of immigration, particularly skilled migrants.

From the late 1960s, politicians and governments of both persuasions shifted their approach considerably to be in favour of greater immigration from non-European countries, as well as allowing for increasing tolerance (and eventually, to some extent, celebration) of cultural difference and diversity. A key moment that cemented this approach was the Fraser government's decision in the late 1970s to allow tens of thousands of Vietnamese refugees to settle in Australia. Embracing multiculturalism and multicultural policy formed the basis of a new rough consensus in Australian politics and society, which was (at least partially) part of a broader economic trend relying on greater numbers of people being able to participate in the Australian economy. Many people in this era benefited from greater inclusiveness despite visible and invisible differences and fewer expectations of ethnic minorities and migrants having to reinvent themselves, but nonetheless many significant challenges remained and new migrants were still overwhelmingly 'white'.

In 1977, the Ethnic Affairs Council set up by the Fraser government recommended that multiculturalism become official public policy. The first official programs were implemented the following year and in 1979 the Australian Institute of Multicultural affairs was established by an Act of parliament to raise awareness of cultural diversity and promote social cohesion, understanding and tolerance. This course was maintained by the subsequent Labor governments of Bob Hawke and Paul Keating. Keating in particular sought to promote Australia's identity and future as being linked with Asia.

Following the election of the Howard government in **1996**, the idea of multiculturalism was moderated and reshaped, with more explicit calls for migrants to 'respect Australian values'. Pauline Hanson emerged as an unapologetic critic of multiculturalism and immigration from Asia – and tensions were raised and inflamed by the government's participation in the 'War on terror' from 2001 onwards. Together, these factors expanded opportunities for veiled and coded attempts to polarise the population along cultural lines.

Common confusion: ethnic hybridity and multiculturalism

It's very easy to confuse ethnic hybridity and multiculturalism. Multiculturalism refers to the practice of multiple ethnic groups living fairly harmoniously within a society, while ethnic hybridity is individuals or groups **experiencing the features from multiple ethnicities**. Remember – we generally wouldn't speak of a society being ethnically hybrid, or of an individual as multicultural.

Contextualising Australia's multiculturalism

While Australia is broadly considered a successful example of multiculturalism, it's important to be aware of some of the specific factors that distinguish it from other countries' experiences in managing ethnic diversity:

- The attitudes and preferences of those with English ancestry dominated the character of Australian society, politics, culture, language and institutions since first contact. Subsequently, migrants were expected to ‘fit in’ to this status quo as a condition of being accepted.
- Despite the unwinding of the explicitly racist parts of the White Australia Policy in the late 1960s, the vast majority of the Australian population (at least 85 per cent) is descended from white Europeans (predominantly the English). Those of non-English European descent faced fewer hurdles to integration if they aligned themselves with the expectations coded in the idea of ‘mainstream Australia’, major components of which were the appearance of whiteness and speaking English.
- The opportunities available in a country with so many natural resources have allowed for strong economic growth. People who have gained from this (in the form of higher incomes) tend to feel more secure and are less likely to perceive members of other groups as a threat to their own wealth.
- While migration patterns have seen some ethnic groups concentrated in particular areas, this has never been to the extent that they have formed local majorities. Therefore the status of English as the dominant language has never been challenged, even at a local level.

Many other countries with much higher degrees of ethnic, cultural, religious and/or linguistic diversity, in contrast, have faced significant challenges that have constrained their ability to develop the sort of multiculturalism we recognise in Australia. For example, they may have had:

- minority groups who are geographically concentrated, forming a majority in some areas
- historically dominant groups that were less powerful *relative* to one or more minority groups, who in turn have been more inclined and more able to push for protections (such as regional language protections for French speakers in Canada and Belgium)
- more historical memory of violence between ethnic groups over a longer historical period, including attempts at ethnic cleansing (such as in Ireland or Cyprus)
- fewer economic opportunities and access to scarce resources, which increases the likelihood of conflict between groups (such as conflicts over valuable mineral deposits in Burma).

Activity N – The multiculturalism journey

1 Using the suggestions below as a guide, create a timeline with annotations for the following key events and policies that have shaped the experiences of multiculturalism in Australia.

In groups, for each event (choose at least five), summarise the social and cultural impacts and significance for migration and multicultural experience in Australia.

Immigration Restriction Act	World War II	Chifley’s ‘Populate or Perish’ policy	International Refugee Organisation founded
The ‘Ten Pound Pom’ scheme	Big Brother Movement	Vietnam War	Revisions to the Migration Act
Refugees and migrants from Vietnam	Abolition of the White Australia Policy	Racial Discrimination Act	Fraser’s multiculturalism policy
Mandatory detention	Pauline Hanson’s One Nation party formed	The ‘War on Terror’ and Iraq War	The ‘Pacific Solution’ and offshore processing
The Tampa affair	The ‘PNG Solution’	‘Stop the Boats’ campaign	Australia and US sign refugee resettlement deal

2 Explore the following resource, which discusses the waves of migration Australia has experienced.

AMES (Adult Migrant Education Services), 2020. 'Waves of migration to Australia'.
ames.net.au/ames-70-years/waves-of-migration-to-australia

a Which waves of migration did you already know about?

b Which were new to you?

c Which waves of migration do you think have influenced our society the most? How, and why?

The contemporary concept of multiculturalism in Australia

A mother, son and niece from Italy pictured while harvesting grapes in Stanthorpe, Queensland in 1949.
Credit: flic.kr/p/ekG124

Australia is considered a multicultural nation with significant ethnic diversity, legislation prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race and some services for diverse communities such as the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS). The contemporary concept of multiculturalism in Australia is characterised by language around diversity and inclusion, as well as efforts to increase the diversity of representations in media and advertising. Increasingly, non-Anglo festivals and religious holidays are celebrated, such as Diwali, Hannukah, Ramadan or Orthodox Easter. The contemporary concept of multiculturalism often doesn't engage with structural inequality within institutions but rather focuses on understanding and sharing culture.

The Australian Multicultural Council – a body whose members are appointed by the Minister for Home Affairs – identifies the following priorities for its efforts in promoting multiculturalism and social cohesion in Australia.

> “The AMC will focus on:
>
> a strengthening public understanding of a shared 'Australian identity' as a unifying characteristic of Australia
>
> b harnessing the economic and social benefits of our diverse population
>
> c advancing programs and policies aimed at building harmonious and socially cohesive communities
>
> d promoting the importance of mutual respect and responsibility, which foster our shared Australian values, identity and citizenship
>
> e building stronger and more cohesive communities and addressing barriers to participation, including racism and discrimination
>
> f promoting greater intercultural and interfaith understanding and dialogue.”
>
> Australian Multicultural Council, 2022.
> homeaffairs.gov.au/mca/Pages/australian-multicultural-council.aspx

Challenges to multiculturalism

We have included a discussion of *challenges* to multiculturalism here, but this is not specifically required in our study design. This content is provided only because it can help you develop a broader understanding of contemporary experiences of multiculturalism. You're very unlikely to receive an exam question hinging on challenges to multiculturalism.

The relationship of Australian people with multiculturalism is complex and sometimes contradictory. Nonetheless, most Australians believe multiculturalism has been a positive feature of Australia's social development.

A 2021 survey by the Scanlon Foundation found that, among respondents:

- 84 per cent agreed that 'multiculturalism has been good for Australia'
- 71 per cent believed that 'accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger'
- 60 per cent agreed with the statement 'too many immigrants are not adopting Australian values'
- substantial minorities admitted to holding negative views about particular national or religious groups, including Chinese, Sudanese and Muslim Australians.

This raises a few questions:

- What are 'Australian values', and would all respondents have had the same understanding in mind when answering this question?
- To what extent can or should a multicultural society be able to accept a diversity of values, given that values are themselves a component of culture and identity?
- Members of various national, ethnic or religious groups contain individuals and sub-groups with many different values and characteristics – including the dominant group we might understand as 'mainstream' or 'white' Australians. How do we know the extent to which white Australians share the same values; and if they don't, should that also be a cause for concern in a relatively liberal, democratic society?

> “We must also send a strong message that cultural tolerance is not a license for cultural practices that are offensive to the cultural values, and laws, of Australia and that our respect for diversity does not provide license for closed communities.”
>
> Scott Morrison, then Opposition immigration spokesman, speaking in 2013. Quoted in 'State Government defends multicultural policy'. Herald Sun, 2013. heraldsun.com.au/news/victoria/state-government-defends-multicultural-policy/news-story/cf050c3195b399f1ad2098e9e9e658d9

> “Pauline Hanson, an Australian conservative nationalist politician and leader of the right-wing anti-immigration party One Nation, claims that acceptance of multiculturalism and migrants has resulted in anti-white racism and that white Australians should know that 'It's OK to be White' – a motion that was only narrowly defeated in parliament. Other politicians paint multiculturalism as a 'success' story, one to be celebrated, one that has resulted in celebrations like Harmony Day.”
>
> Sengul, K. 2022. 'It's OK to be white': the discursive construction of victimhood, 'anti-white racism' and calculated ambivalence in Australia'. Critical Discourse Studies, vol. 19 no. 6. doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2021.1921818

Reducing culture to 'food, festivals and fun'

Another notable challenge facing Australian multiculturalism is a tendency to encourage seeing some cultural groups as fixed and homogenous. Top-down, government-led initiatives of multicultural policy can turn the abstract and fluid notion of culture and ethnicity into something that is physical or material: something that can be easily observed.

As you might remember from Units 1 and 2, the practise of overgeneralising when talking about different cultures and social groups can contribute to the perpetuation of stereotypes, discrimination and even dehumanisation. For example, two migrants might be from the same country but have nothing in common in terms of religion, class, ethnicity, education and so on, yet they are imagined as coming from a single culture and may only have opportunities to express this in terms of material culture (which better lend themselves to being 'consumed' by others): 'exotic' food, dress, music and dance. In the public sphere, cultural complexity can be oversimplified to superficial and secondary elements that are most palatable to wider Australian society. This dynamic is sometimes expressed as the 'commodification of otherness'.

An example of this aspect of multiculturalism is the practice of Harmony Day (altered to be Harmony *Week* in 2019). It was initially conceived in 1966 by the United Nations as the 'International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination' but in Australia in 1999 the conservative Howard government rebranded it as 'Harmony Day'. This change was justified as being more appropriate, passive and apolitical –more celebratory and positive in nature, focusing on 'unification' rather than drawing attention to injustice. This development illustrates how the story of multiculturalism can include 'performances' of equality and inclusivity, sometimes at the expense of understanding and addressing the ongoing oppression and institutional racism that persists in contemporary Australia.

You can read more about the story of Harmony Day here:

- Dan Butler, 2023. 'It's the International Day of Eliminating Racial Discrimination. Why does Australia call it Harmony Day?' SBS. sbs.com.au/nitv/article/its-the-day-for-elimination-of-racism-why-does-australia-call-it-harmony-day/nrexmxh21

HARMONY WEEK
EVERYONE BELONGS
HARMONY.GOV.AU

Activity 0 – Thinking critically about multiculturalism

1 Read the article and answer the questions that follow.

- Luke Pearson, 2023. IndigenousX. 'The truth about Harmony Day'. indigenousx.com.au/the-truth-about-harmony-day

a How does the author critique the way Harmony Day is celebrated in Australia?

b In what ways does the author argue that the concept of 'cultural diversity' hides the ongoing impacts of colonisation and marginalisation on First Nations peoples in Australia?

c How might the author's critique of Harmony Day be connected to broader debates about national identity, reconciliation and social justice in Australia?

d What alternative models or frameworks does the author suggest for celebrating cultural difference and promoting social cohesion in Australia, and what advantages or challenges might these models pose?

'Team Australia': Multiculturalism with a white core

> Everyone has got to put this country, its interests, its values and its people first, and you don't migrate to this country unless you want to join our team.
>
> Then prime minister Tony Abbott in 2014.
> Quoted in 'Join our team: Abbott spruiks terror laws'. SBS News.
> sbs.com.au/news/article/join-our-team-abbott-spruiks-terror-laws/291t2zg0r

The term 'Team Australia' dates from Tony Abbott's time as prime minister (2013–2015). Migrants, racial minorities or those considered 'different' are expected to conform and abide by the laws and values set out by 'Team Australia', who determine how they should behave. The power of 'Team Australia' is its ability to set parameters of what is acceptable or not: that is, creating a binary between 'bad culture' (which challenges the status quo) and 'good culture' (which complies with and adds value to mainstream society).

Multiculturalism's fixation with 'culture' has resulted in very little meaningful change or advantage for migrant and racialised groups in Australia in areas such as law, housing, education and health. Multicultural ideals are celebrated in Australia, and the nation is portrayed as being inclusive of difference. But does this reflect the everyday lives and experiences of migrants, racialised people or those from an ethnic minority? Jon Stratton (2020) argues that Australia, politically and socially, has a 'white core' and is only ethnically diverse on the periphery. In other words, although Australia is composed of various ethnic and racialised communities, these groups have very little influence or representation and are invisible in places where it matters, such as the highest levels of government, media, business and academia.

Key knowledge and key skill

Students will note that this key knowledge point relates to multiculturalism and also relates to the key skill of being able to 'analyse factors that may prevent or enable a sense of belonging and inclusion in a multicultural Australian society'. These factors are explored in the next section.

Activity P – Explaining multiculturalism

1. Compare the concepts of ethnic diversity and multiculturalism.
2. Explain what is meant by 'multicultural Australian society'.
3. Describe what is meant by the term multiculturalism.
4. Explain the historical context for multiculturalism.
5. Explain the contemporary concept of multiculturalism.
6. Outline two challenges to multiculturalism.

Factors that may prevent or enable a sense of belonging and inclusion in multicultural Australia 3.2.6

Given the many complexities of multiculturalism outlined in the previous key knowledge areas, not least the lived experiences of ethnic minorities, this section explores specific cultural, media and political factors that can prevent and/or enable a sense of belonging and inclusion in multicultural Australia. To understand these ideas with depth and nuance, it is essential to understand the terms ‘belonging’ and ‘inclusion’.

When people feel a sense of **belonging**, they experience positive emotions and feel connected both within and outside of their ethnic group. This inclusivity encourages active engagement in all aspects of social life. The interrelated notion of **inclusion** occurs when people believe they can fully participate in education, work, housing, and other aspects of public life. When individuals are included, they experience a safer, happier, and more peaceful life.

Belonging refers to the emotional experience of feeling secure and supported within a group. It includes the feelings of acceptance and inclusion among members of a particular community.

Inclusion refers to individuals and groups having the resources, opportunities and capabilities to learn, work, engage and have a voice in society.

> “Belonging occurs when there is an: ‘emotional attachment, a feeling of being at ‘home’, or as Ramon Spaijj has elaborated, having ‘a sense of being part of the social fabric’.”
>
> Nira Yuval-Davis, 2006. ‘Belonging and the politics of belonging’. Patterns of Prejudice, vol. 40 no. 3. doi.org/10.1080/00313220600769331

Activity Q – Introducing inclusion and belonging

1 Consider the concepts of ‘belonging’ and ‘inclusion’. Provide a definition of these ideas in your own words, along with an example from some of the content and experiences already explored in this chapter.

2 Share your example with your classmates and discuss the similarities and differences between your definitions.

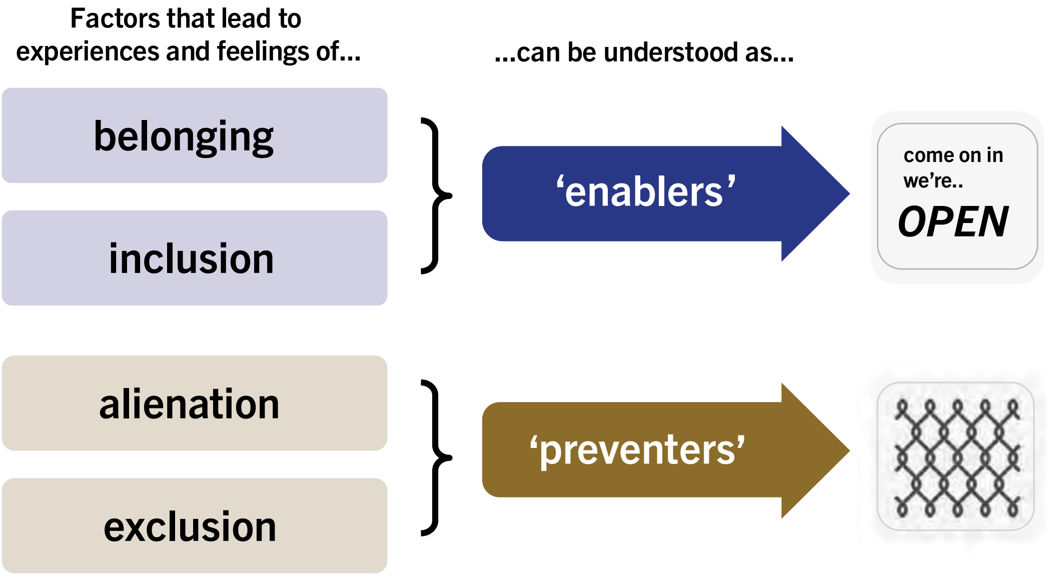
There are many factors that can impact on a person’s sense of belonging and inclusion in Australian society. These include the how cultural practices are perceived, how the media represents ethnic groups and political responses to these representations. Certain factors can create obstacles and impede individuals or groups from experiencing feelings of safety and inclusion. These are known as **preventers**. Conversely, there are **enablers** that foster a sense of safety and inclusion for individuals or groups.

Preventers are factors that limit, obstruct or make it difficult for an individual or group to feel safe and included in multicultural Australia.

Enablers are factors that encourage, promote or make it possible for an individual or group to feel safe and included in multicultural society.

Responses to cultural practices 3.2.6.1

Culture is one of the most important concepts within sociology because sociologists recognise that it plays a central role in our social lives. It is essential for shaping social relationships, maintaining and challenging social order, determining how we make sense of



the world and our place in it, and shaping our everyday actions and societal experiences. As explored in the first chapter, culture has two components: non-material and material.

As explored in the previous chapter, cultural practices refer to the customs and traditions that are unique to a certain ethnic group. They could include religious practices, traditional beliefs, forms of art, dietary habits and aspects of family life. The customs of a particular ethnic group could include participating in festivals, maintaining more than one language, religious practices and eating unique food. A tradition is a cultural practice that occurs regularly across time.

Responses to cultural practices as a preventer of belonging and inclusion

Earlier in this chapter, we explored the concepts of racism, ethnocentrism and 'othering'. Many ethnic groups in Australia have had these experiences because people from the dominant (Anglo-Celtic) culture have disapproved of and/or felt confronted by certain cultural practices they considered to be an unacceptable challenge to British, then Australian, identity.

The Cronulla riots of 2005 saw thousands of rioters converge on the beachside suburb and featured a number of incidents of assault and harassment of people of Middle Eastern appearance (note: while an extremely important event in recent Australian history, this representation is more than 10 years old). Credit: Warren Hudson.

Negative responses to cultural practices can take many forms, including protests, violence, verbal abuse, online harassment, racist comments, and discriminatory practices in housing and employment.

Some of these forms of exclusionary behaviour can prevent people from fully participating in social and professional activities.

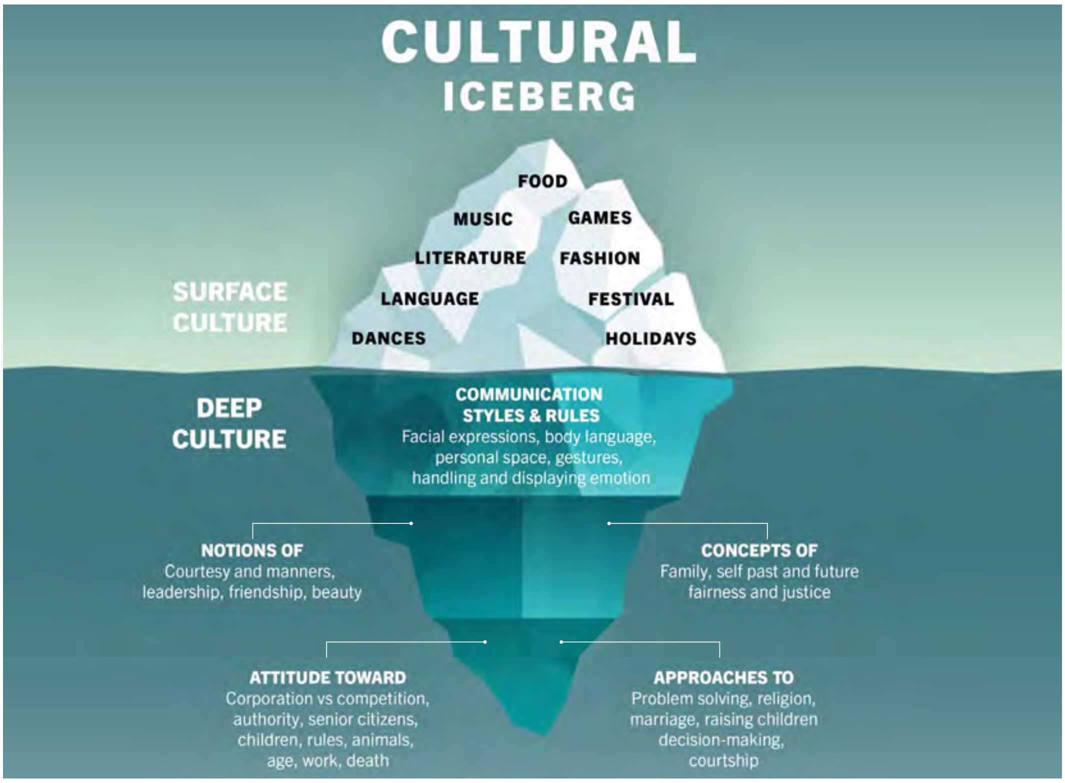
One example is discrimination based on someone's *name*.

According to Race Discrimination Commissioner Chin Tan, this is still prevalent in Australia today. The Australian Human Rights Commission has received numerous reports of people being denied job interviews or rental properties due to judgements about their names. Dr Rimple Mehta, a social science researcher from Western Sydney University, has observed that discrimination against people with non-Anglo-Saxon names has a profound impact on those who experience it. She notes that ‘it has a lasting impact on the sense of belonging of young people, who, at a very sensitive age, are trying to build a sense of identity and networks’ (Dayman, 2023).

Occasionally, cultural practices can lead to tension within ethnic communities. Differences in views about the importance and purpose of customary practices can cause conflict between generations. For instance, older members of an ethnic group may consider participating in religious activities crucial and participate in them regularly. However, younger members may feel disconnected and be less likely to do so due to their familiarity with multiple cultures. This divergence in beliefs and practices can cause conflicts within the community. Younger people may worry about disrespecting their family heritage or feel a loss of connection to their ethnic group. This observation is consistent with 2021 data collected by the ABS (discussed earlier in this chapter). These group dynamics can influence feelings of belonging and inclusion.

Responses to cultural practices as an enabler of belonging and inclusion

Many people in Australia place great importance on respecting the customs and traditions of its diverse ethnic groups. Inclusive approaches can cultivate a sense of mutual respect and appreciation among different cultural groups. One example of this is the wide variety of language courses available for students in high schools across the country (including the 48 languages available under the VCE). This serves to enable feelings of belonging and inclusion across generations.


CULTURAL
ICEBERG
FOOD
MUSIC
GAMES
LITERATURE
FASHION
SURFACE CULTURE
LANGUAGE
FESTIVAL
DANCES
HOLIDAYS
DEEP CULTURE
COMMUNICATION STYLES & RULES
Facial expressions, body language, personal space, gestures, handling and displaying emotion
NOTIONS OF
Courtesy and manners, leadership, friendship, beauty
CONCEPTS OF
Family, self past and future fairness and justice
ATTITUDE TOWARD
Corporation vs competition, authority, senior citizens, children, rules, animals, age, work, death
APPROACHES TO
Problem solving, religion, marriage, raising children decision-making, courtship

The ‘visible’ and ‘invisible’ layers of culture. Credit: ABC News/Adobe.

Local governments and community organisations supporting cultural practices have also been an important enabler, where there is sincere interest and support for those from diverse backgrounds and their religious traditions, such as Greek Orthodox Easter, or cultural festivals, such as Lunar New Year or Diwali, the annual 'festival of lights'.

Another enabler supporting diverse cultural practices is the national celebration of Harmony Week (discussed earlier in this chapter). Despite concerns about tokenism or the minimisation of racism, many Australians from a variety of backgrounds value this opportunity to recognise, embrace and share elements of their own cultural practices with others. By promoting and normalising cultural varied practices, Harmony Week does have some effect in fostering a sense of belonging and inclusion among members of many ethnic groups.

You can learn more about embracing cultural diversity in the context of education by following the link below.

'There are many ways to embrace cultural diversity in schools, but we need to look beyond 'visible' diversity.' ABC Education, 2023. abc.net.au/education/how-to-embrace-cultural-diversity-in-schools-every-day/102121878

Activity R – Cultural practices, responses and citizenship tests

1 Consider the examples provided below and identify whether they are *preventers* or *enablers* of a sense of belonging and inclusion in Australia.

   a Safe spaces encompassing cultural expressions and experiences, such as places of worship, independent schools, and sports clubs

   b White supremacist graffiti targeted at ethnic groups who practise the Jewish faith

   c Volunteers who run a free tutoring program for new migrants who do not have English as a first language

   d A medical centre with a booking system that does not have a link to language translation services

2 In small groups, discuss how each preventer or enabler links to the concepts of belonging and inclusion.

3 Review the following resources and answer the questions that follow.

   Australian Government, Department of Home Affairs – Immigration and Citizenship. Citizenship test and Interview. immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/citizenship/test-and-interview/learn-about-citizenship-interview-and-test

   The Conversation. 2022. 'Should new Australians have to pass an English test to become citizens?' theconversation.com/should-new-australians-have-to-pass-an-english-test-to-become-citizens-175324

   SBS Arabic24. 'These Iraqi parents are struggling with the citizenship exam, while their son got naturalised automatically.' sbs.com.au/language/arabic/en/podcast-episode/these-iraqi-parents-are-struggling-with-the-citizenship-exam-while-their-son-got-naturalised-automatically/x9buqyo4n

   a Create a dot point summary for each resource. Identify factors that might prevent or enable a sense of belonging and inclusion within Australia's multicultural society.

   b Explain how the cultural practice of language can be both a preventer and enabler to feelings of belonging and inclusion. Support your answer with evidence from the materials provided.

Media representations 3.2.6.2

As students of sociology, it's crucial to reflect on the various ways media can depict ethnicity and the effects this has on individuals who encounter or are the subject of these representations. Media has the power to present negative, biased or essentialising portrayals of ethnic cultural groups, which can contribute to intolerance, prejudice and discrimination – which, unsurprisingly, lead to feelings of alienation rather than belonging. Alternatively, the media may also present authentic, empathetic and culturally relative portrayals of ethnic groups, which can contribute to increased understanding and tolerance as well as feelings of inclusion.

Often certain representations can contain some elements from *both* these categories. Critically analysing media representations is a crucial skill because it allows us to understand and unpack their possible impacts.

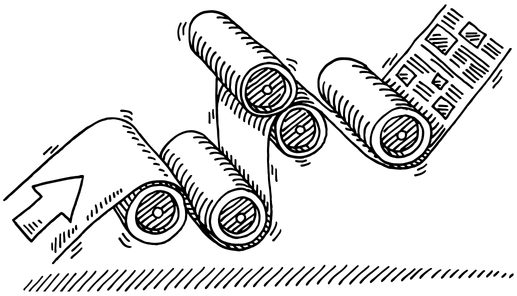
Analysing representations

Building on our analysis skills from the previous chapter, we can reflect on the 'agenda' of representations about ethnic groups using the **FAPO** strategy. This method involves considering the following factors:

- **Form** – consider the form of representation you are reviewing, such as a film, book or advertisement.
- **Attitudes** – identify the attitudes that are present or being challenged in the representation.
- **Positioning** – consider how the creator/s are attempting to persuade or educate their audience.
- **Omission** – observe whether there are any views, opinions, or facts that are missing from the representation.
- Media refers to all print, digital, and electronic means of communication, including print, digital and social media.

Media representations as a preventer of belonging and inclusion

Media representations that prevent feelings of belonging and inclusion may do so unintentionally or intentionally. Either way, they can reinforce negative stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination against ethnic groups. This problem is made worse by the fact that minority ethnic groups are underrepresented in many forms of media in Australia.



Credit: Frank Ramspott

It is important to remember that the media exists within society and is both a representation of society and a producer of meaning. Hall (1980) argues that media, in all forms, are tools of power in the constructions of race. The media exists within political, historical, social and cultural structures. It is a central tool through which social norms and hierarchies, including discrimination, are maintained.

Sometimes, the media can fuel a sense of moral panic that undermines feelings of belonging and inclusion within society. According to sociologist Stanley Cohen, **moral panic** is when the media is used to create fear about certain groups for the purpose of serving a political agenda. In the past, this approach was used to falsely claim that there were 'African youth gangs' on a crime rampage in Melbourne. This baseless assertion caused people living in certain areas to feel frightened and had lasting negative effects on those subjected to racial discrimination.

Moral panic refers to an intense emotional reaction (usually communicated through the mass media) to an issue that is perceived to threaten the social order.

Activity S – Sample response analysis

1 Read the extended response question and sample response below.

Analyse how the media's use of ethnocentrism can lead to othering and prevent inclusion and belonging for ethnic groups in Australian society. Use evidence from material you have studied this year in your response.

Sample response:

Ethnocentrism is judging another culture based on your own culture's standards. It involves an assumption that one's own culture is superior. This is often seen in the media, such as TV shows, movies and the news. Ethnocentrism can act as a barrier, making it harder for ethnic groups to have equal access to resources and opportunities to participate in education and employment or to experience inclusion and belonging, the feeling of connectedness to others and the nation.

The overrepresentation of 'African gang violence' in the media in recent years has led to the false representation of African groups such as people of Sudanese-Australian ethnicity as violent people who operate in gangs and cause public disruption. This ethnocentric judgement of people as dangerous can act as a barrier to belonging by making it difficult for Sudanese people to form connections with others who perceive them as dangerous and thus avoid them. It may also limit inclusion, as employers may adopt these ethnocentric beliefs and choose not to hire a Sudanese person due to associations with violence and misjudgements and biases about them as dangerous.

This ethnocentric thinking often leads to othering, a process of the dominant group viewing the attributes of their own culture as superior and anything that is different or contrasting as inferior, creating an 'us vs them' mentality. This is seen in the consistent linking of Sudanese Australians to criminal behaviour in the Australian media. This reporting defines Sudanese Australians as criminals, or 'them', and in opposition to the broader Australian society who are not criminals, or 'us'.

Similarly, despite large populations of Chinese Australians in Australia, bias and discrimination against Asians in Australia increased greatly during the COVID-19 pandemic, with some media outlets referring to the disease as the 'Chinese virus'. This is part of a longstanding history of Chinese people being 'othered' in Australia, starting during the gold rushes of the 1800s.

Overall, the media is highly influential in perpetuating ethnocentric beliefs, as it can represent certain ethnic groups as the 'other' and in the case of news reporting often reaches many people across the nation, thus being very influential and acting as a significant barrier for ethnic groups such as Sudanese Australians to experience inclusion and belonging in Australia's multicultural society.

2 Use the following colour coding method to highlight each component of the sample response to assess how well it answers the question.
   a Definitions of key concepts: yellow
   b Outline of ideas to be explored in the introduction and use of topic sentences: blue
   c Use of sourced supporting evidence in the body paragraphs: green
   d Engages in an analysis, specifically explores key concepts and then shows how they are linked: pink
3 Provide a score for the response out of 10 based on your assessment.
4 Improve one area of this response so that it is closer to a full mark (10/10).

Media representations as an enabler of belonging and inclusion

More recently, more media outlets have created and promoted positive and authentic representations of ethnic groups. Community-run media organisations have created platforms for specific ethnic groups to take ownership of news related to their own issues. These have provided ethnic groups with the chance to create more meaningful content as well as to challenge discriminatory media representations.

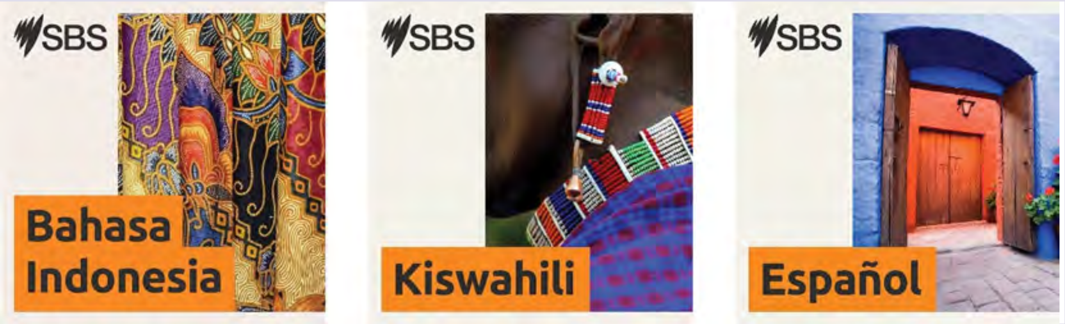
Recent studies from the University of Technology Sydney in partnership with the organisation All Together Now (2021), found that racist reporting is standard in Australia's most consumed news sources, The Daily Telegraph, The Australian and the Herald Sun. Over the last few decades, media coverage of migrants, second- and third-generation ethnic Australians and asylum seekers has played a key role in encouraging racism. You can learn more via the following resource:

All Together Now, 2021. 'Politely racist: a case study on readers' comments in Australian mainstream newspapers'. alltogethernow.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Politely-Racist_Media-Report-2021.pdf

SBS

In 1975, the creation of the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) significantly affected ethnic groups' experiences. SBS aims to provide high-quality media to all Australians, regardless of geography, age, cultural background or language. It offers news, current affairs, business, sport, culture and community profiles in 68 languages. It is a unique platform that has made a considerable contribution to the ability for people to connect to their cultures, subcultures, beliefs, generations, interest groups and language communities, and has contributed significantly to the degree of belonging felt by various ethnic and cultural groups in Australia.

sbs.com.au/aboutus/our-history



SBS offers programming across a wide range of topics and formats in an enormous range of languages.

Activity T – Media representations as enablers

1 Watch a segment from a film or television show that depicts an Australian ethnic group. For example:

- 'The Family Law'. SBS On Demand, 2016. sbs.com.au/ondemand/tv-series/the-family-law
- 'Who The Bloody Hell Are We? With Adam Liaw'. SBS, 2023. sbs.com.au/ondemand/tv-series/who-the-bloody-hell-are-we.

2 Explain how your selected media representation helps enable a sense of belonging and inclusion in Australia's multicultural society. Make sure your response includes the following elements:

  a definitions of the following key terms: media representation, belonging, inclusion and multicultural society

  b a description of the key features of the ethnic group

  c an exploration of how feelings of belonging are nurtured

  d an exploration of how inclusion is facilitated

  e specific evidence (i.e. the use of quotations to signpost the use of evidence).

3 Read the article below and then answer the questions that follow.

- Sora Park, Jee Young Lee and Kieran McGuiness, 2023. 'Fair representation in the news makes multicultural Australians feel more at home: new research'. The Conversation. theconversation.com/fair-representation-in-news-makes-multicultural-australians-feel-more-at-home-new-research-204104

  a According to the article, what is meant by the concept of belonging?

  b Explain the relationship between news representations and feelings of belonging for Australian ethnic groups.

  c Outline how and in what way many migrants felt under or misrepresented in Australian news.

  d Outline the recommendations made to ensure that media representations act as an enabler rather than a preventer of feelings of belonging and inclusion in Australian society.

4 Make a media journal for a day or a week – what kinds of representations of culture or ethnicity do you interact with? Consider how they may be preventers or enablers.

Political factors 3.2.6.3

Political factors refer to aspects of the structure, organisation and policies of a government or political system that can influence society and individual behaviour.

Political factors, regardless of their form, can significantly affect the lives of ethnic groups due to their substantial influence on society. Political factors influence the creation and enforcement of laws and the distribution of funding, and are a key source of content for the media.

At times, government officials and policymakers have acted in ways that have made minority ethnic groups feel excluded and disrespected. Studies show that politicians and social commentators sometimes express racist beliefs, either subtly or overtly, in ways that are intended to benefit their own political agendas (ATN, 2017). However, there are also instances where politicians and parties have promoted and implemented anti-racist policies that *do* promote inclusivity and celebrate cultural diversity. For instance, in 2017 Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull reaffirmed the nation's commitment to multiculturalism.

> We are an immigration nation. You can't look in the mirror – no-one can look in the mirror and say, 'Australians only look like this'. Australians look like every face, every race, every background because we define ourselves and our nation by our commitment to shared political values, democracy, freedom and the rule of law . . .
>
> [We] renew and reaffirm our commitment to a multicultural Australia in which racism and discrimination have no place and which integration and contribution are core elements of our success.
>
> We are rich in our diversity, but we are bound together in our commitment as Australians, our commitment to those values and, as I said, the glue that binds us together is mutual respect.
>
> Malcolm Turnbull, 2017. 'Remarks at the release of the Multicultural Statement'. malcolmturnbull.com.au/media/remarks-at-the-release-of-the-multicultural-statement-2017

Political factors as a preventer of belonging and inclusion

In Australia, political factors can negatively impact feelings of belonging and inclusion for people from ethnic groups. Political parties sometimes use organised activities and events to promote racism, prejudice and xenophobia, which can lead to the marginalisation and targeting of migrants. This greatly reduces feelings of acceptance and belonging among targeted groups.

An example of this from 2023 involved senators Mehreen Faruqi and Pauline Hanson. Faruqi, of the Australian Greens party, lodged a complaint against Hanson with the Australian Human Rights Commission, accusing her of racial discrimination and hatred. This was due to an inflammatory tweet by Hanson in which she directed Faruqi to 'piss off back to Pakistan'. The matter was considered a potential breach of section 18C of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*. Hanson has previously been accused of insensitive and disrespectful behaviour towards various groups, such as donning a burqa before entering the Senate chamber in 2017 and claiming halal certification was being used to fund terrorism. These ethnocentric views and actions compromise feelings of inclusion and belonging and do not represent the social norms of most Australians. You can read more about this incident here:

Josh Butler, 2022. 'Mehreen Faruqi's racism complaint over Pauline Hanson tweet accepted by Human Rights Commission'. The Guardian. theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/oct/07/mehreen-faruqis-racism-complaint-over-pauline-hanson-tweet-accepted-by-human-rights-commission

Another factor that undermines feelings of belonging and inclusion is the lack of cultural diversity within the Australian parliament. According to a 2018 report by the Australian Human Rights Commission, only 4.1 per cent of parliamentarians are of non-European background, while the estimated population of non-European individuals in Australia is 21 per cent (Farhart, 2022). Underrepresentation in formal political institutions means politicians are less likely to take action on issues affecting ethnically diverse groups.

Political factors as an enabler of belonging and inclusion

Members of Australian ethnic groups may also benefit from political factors that promote feelings of belonging and inclusion. For instance, parliamentarians *may* play a crucial role in creating legislation and approving funding for services that support diverse cultural groups. A prominent example of this is the

Racial Discrimination Act, an important legal instrument that goes some way to promoting belonging and inclusion. This legislation makes it illegal to discriminate against individuals based on race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, or immigrant status (among other protected categories). The Act goes also goes some way to protecting the rights of individuals by providing legal protection against discrimination and deterring potential acts of vilification. However, as we saw in the previous chapter, the *Racial Discrimination Act* can be suspended (as it was in the course of the Northern Territory Intervention), which can inhibit the security it offers.

Activity U – Political enablers extended response

1. Read the article below and then use the KLC and extended response scaffolding provided earlier in the text to plan a response to the extended response question that follows.

   Biwa Kwan and Marcus Megalokonomos, 2021. 'A new anti-racism taskforce is being set up in Victoria'. SBS. sbs.com.au/news/article/a-new-anti-racism-taskforce-is-being-set-up-in-victoria/jzw1s72n5

   Analyse how political factors have acted as enablers and shaped the ability of members of ethnic groups to feel included in Australian society. Use evidence from the representation and other material you have studied this year to support your response.
2. Check and compare your plan with a classmate's. Use this opportunity to discuss and reflect on what you plan to write, and make any improvements.
3. Write your response.

Factors that can prevent or enable feelings of belonging and exclusion

Responses to cultural practices

May prevent belonging and inclusion:

- promoting social exclusion
- promoting religious vilification.

May enable belonging and inclusion:

- cultivating inter-group connections
- celebrating diversity.

Media representations

May prevent belonging and inclusion:

- encouraging moral panic
- lack of visibility or authentic representation

May enable belonging and inclusion:

- SBS and other culturally diverse platforms
- reactions against racist behaviour.

Political factors

May prevent belonging and inclusion:

- xenophobic rhetoric (i.e. Pauline Hanson)
- lack of diversity in parliaments.

May enable belonging and inclusion:

- passing laws that challenge racist practices
- parliamentarians listening to a range of groups in their electorate(s).

Activity V – Belonging, inclusion and bringing it all together

1 Create a table with the headings modelled below.

	Preventer	Enabler
Cultural practices		
Media representations		
Political factors		

a Read the articles below.

b After you have finished each article, complete a dot point summary. Include evidence that shows how each factor is a preventer or an enabler.

Cultural practices – preventer:

Yasmin Noone. 2019. 'Battling lunchbox racism starts with a diverse spice tin'. SBS. sbs.com.au/food/article/battling-lunchbox-racism-starts-with-a-diverse-spice-tin/fvfl58n35

Cultural practices – enabler:

Emmie Dowling and Debra Pearce, 2021 'Breaking down barriers for migrants and refugees seeking careers in regional Victoria'. ABC. abc.net.au/news/2021-06-30/breaking-down-barriers-for-migrants-and-refugees-/100253446

Media representations – preventer:

'These numbers show us who gets to tell Australian stories'. SBS Voices. 2020. sbs.com.au/voices/article/these-numbers-show-us-who-gets-to-tell-australian-stories/89mqvqm94

Media representations – enabler:

Wilfred Yang Wang and Shashini Gamage, 2022. 'Ethnic community media can play a key role in a crisis – but it needs our support'. The Conversation. theconversation.com/ethnic-community-media-can-play-a-key-role-in-a-crisis-but-it-needs-our-support-195193

Political factors – preventer:

Kurt Sengul, 2020. 'Pauline Hanson built a political career on white victimhood and brought far-right rhetoric to the mainstream'. The Conversation. theconversation.com/amp/pauline-hanson-built-a-political-career-on-white-victimhood-andbrought-far-right-rhetoric-to-the-mainstream-134661

Political factors – enabler:

Multicultural Seniors Support Program. 2023 by Ethnic Council of Shepparton and District Inc. ethniccouncilshepparton.com.au/?p=11003

c **Analyse** how one of the following – responses to cultural practices, media representations or political factors – can prevent or enable a sense of belonging and inclusion in Australia's multicultural society. In your response, refer to evidence studied this year.

The purpose of ethical methodology with reference to voluntary participation, informed consent, privacy and the confidentiality of data 3.2.7

How would you feel if you were approached by researchers and asked questions about your ethnicity and culture?

When conducting research, sociologists gather their information and data from people. It is important that sociologists apply **ethical methodology**. Ethics refers

Ethical methodology refers to the process used to conduct socially responsible research, including people who have agreed to take part, after being provided with information about the study, whose privacy is protected.

to the moral dilemmas that researchers face when conducting and reporting their research. The purpose of research ethics is to protect the safety and wellbeing of research participants, as well as to find valid answers to the research questions. Some of the questions we need to ask ourselves when we engage in sociological research, which usually involves studying people, are:

- What consequences will our research have on participants and the wider world?
- How is my research an ethical and political matter?
- Am I being neutral? Is this even possible? As sociologists live in the social world we study, can we be value-free? (Hint: This is why we use the sociological imagination!)
- How can we reduce the impact of our conscious and unconscious biases?

The Australian Sociological Association (TASA) is the official body of sociologists in Australia. It has issued a guide to ethical procedures that sociologists and students are expected to follow that you can access here:

tasa.org.au or bit.ly/3CNSd1h

In this unit we focus on four elements of ethical methodology: **informed consent**, **voluntary participation**, **privacy** and the **confidentiality of data**. Informed consent means the person understands what participation involves and how the research will be conducted and analysed, and how their information will be stored. They should sign a consent form outlining the key features of their rights. Privacy can include disguising personal identities in written and oral reports about the research.

Informed consent is the formal agreement of an individual to participate in a research project.

Voluntary participation is the willing involvement of research participants, including awareness of their right to refuse to participate in a research project without having to give a reason or justify their decision.

Privacy refers to the use of methods to protect the identity of participants.

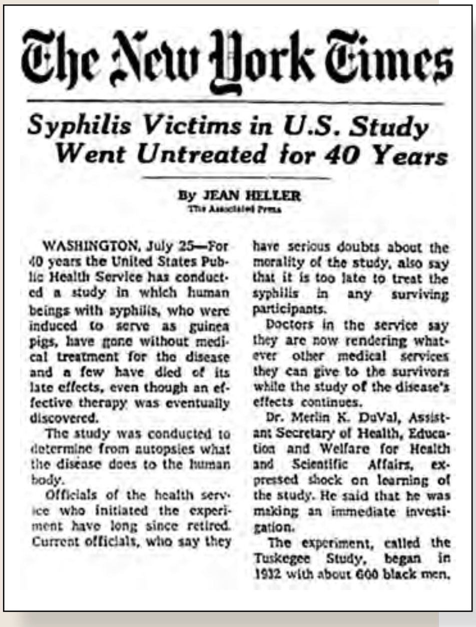
Confidentiality of data means protecting data gathered from research participants and storing it carefully and securely.

Element of ethical methodology	Steps for implementation
Informed consent	• Consent is sought for participation. • Researchers share the purpose, process and intended publication/audience of the research. • Interpreters or translators are engaged as needed. • Consent includes the participant understanding their rights.
Voluntary participation	• There are no consequences for not choosing to participate. • Participants have the power to refuse participation.
Privacy	• Pseudonyms are used to disguise identities. • Places, names and other information that could be used to identify participants are deidentified. • Raw data is not shared.
Confidentiality of data	• Data is stored and transferred safely. • Encryption is used. • There is password protection. • Data is destroyed at the end of the research process. • Data is tracked, including logging copies or shares.

What not to do: The Tuskegee Syphilis Study

You might have formed the impression that sociological inquiry and ethical conduct go hand in hand, but in the past ethical methodology hasn't always been prioritised. The risks and consequences of improperly conducted research have been severe.

Legally binding ethics policies, along with ethics committees to administer them, emerged in part because of serious ethical violations involved in a syphilis study conducted in the United States over four decades (1930–70). The aim of the study was to observe the effects of *not* treating syphilis, despite effective treatments being available for the disease. The participants, almost 400 African-American men, were not made aware of the nature of the study: more than one hundred participants were allowed to die over its course. The Tuskegee Syphilis Study spurred the implementation of the *National Research Act* in the US, which set explicit benchmarks for ethical behaviour in the conduct of research.



The New York Times

Syphilis Victims in U.S. Study Went Untreated for 40 Years

By JEAN HELLER
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON, July 25—For 40 years the United States Public Health Service has conducted a study in which human beings with syphilis, who were induced to serve as guinea pigs, have gone without medical treatment for the disease and a few have died of its late effects, even though an effective therapy was eventually discovered.

The study was conducted to determine from autopsies what the disease does to the human body.

Officials of the health service who initiated the experiment have long since retired. Current officials, who say they have serious doubts about the morality of the study, also say that it is too late to treat the syphilis in any surviving participants.

Doctors in the service say they are now rendering whatever other medical services they can give to the survivors while the study of the disease's effects continues.

Dr. Merlin K. DuVal, Assistant Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare for Health and Scientific Affairs, expressed shock on learning of the study. He said that he was making an immediate investigation.

The experiment, called the Tuskegee Study, began in 1932 with about 600 black men.

Learn more here:

- 'The Untreated Syphilis Study at Tuskegee Timeline' Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. cdc.gov/tuskegee/timeline.htm

Purposes of ethical methodology: focus on integrity

When conducting research, sociologists must strive to be honest and reliable as they collect information to seek answers to sociological questions. This means being as transparent as possible with participants about the methods we use to collect, analyse and report our data. Integrity in social research means avoiding any practices that could potentially compromise the validity of the research.

When conducting research, sociologists must consider the interests of everyone who will be involved, including people who may be *directly* or *indirectly* affected by the work and findings. This includes considering the broader social implications of our research, and taking measures to ensure it doesn't cause disrespect or fuel social exclusion. Sociologists should be aware of and take into account the enormous range of diversity in terms of people's beliefs, values and social contexts, including age, gender and experiences.

Critically reflecting on the limitations of sociological research

One of the trickiest parts of social research is that participants tend to (consciously or unconsciously) tell researchers what they think they want to hear. This is known as the Hawthorne effect. This serves as a reminder that even with the best possible analytical and ethical tools, research in the social sciences is complicated. The complexity of the human mind and behaviour, imposter syndrome, constantly changing social patterns and their effect on the human experience can all influence the process and results of a research project.

Acknowledging the boundaries and limits of research is part of being a professional sociologist. This also means recognising our limitations in matters outside our realm of practice – even if we have an interest in adjacent fields such as psychology or economics, we should be cautious about making claims that go beyond what we have experience in.

Activity W – Implementing ethical methodology

1 In your own words, explain how you would implement each of the following in your own research.
   - a Informed consent
   - b Voluntary participation
   - c Privacy
   - d Confidentiality of data.

2 With reference to the representation provided, explain which elements of ethical methodology were neglected in the Tuskegee syphilis study.

Tools of sociological research

Professional sociologists use different research tools to gather information about society. A research tool is a *systematic technique for conducting research*. Research can be conducted using many methods, and in VCE Sociology these tend to fall into two broad categories: **qualitative** or **quantitative**.

Qualitative methods are processes that generate descriptive data, including lived experiences and personal perspectives about social issues.

Quantitative methods are processes that generate data as, or that can be translated into, numbers.

Qualitative research methods	Quantitative research methods
• Used when nuanced data is required to understand a research question • May include participants' opinions, descriptions of experiences or language gleaned from textual, audio or visual sources • Includes broader scope for appreciating factors such as context, chronology or emotion • Common methods include in-depth interviews, focus groups, open-ended survey questions, research diaries, textual and/or discourse analysis • Qualitative methods are selected when seeking to gain an in-depth understanding of something that cannot be understood through statistical trends alone	• Tests hypotheses via statistical analysis • Data derived from primary or secondary sources • Primary sources include observation or mapping • Secondary sources are large-scale data sets, such as census or survey data • Measures of data quality include sample size and representativeness, sampling methods, appropriateness of statistical tests • Used when trying to prove or disprove a hypothesis or explore the effects of known variables • Interpretation usually more straightforward than qualitative analysis

A combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods generally provides the most insight.

Activity X – Exploring ethical research methodologies

1. Explain ethical methodology. In your response, refer to material you have studied this year and two of the following:
   - voluntary participation
   - informed consent procedures
   - privacy
   - confidentiality and/or anonymity of participants.

   Note: You might refer to the Tuskegee syphilis study or another relevant example from your own research.
2. Describe the purpose of ethical methodology when conducting sociological research.

The experience of a specific ethnic group in Australia's multicultural society 3.2.8

In this section, you will be researching the experience of a specific ethnic group in Australia. Listening to and being able to represent the authentic voices of members of your selected ethnic group is essential for this part of the course. When you provide information about their experiences, you should support this with evidence, such as quotes from a survey they have completed or comments reproduced from media articles or documentaries.

Examples need to be specific to the ethnicity you are researching. Students often say 'food' or 'traditional music', which is too vague for this task – aim for specific examples. For example, '*mandazi* is a popular form of fried pastry for many South-Sudanese Australians'.

The preventing or enabling factors should also be specific to the ethnicity.
For example:

- Pauline Hanson's One Nation party wanting to ban migration from Muslim-majority countries acts to precent a sense of inclusion for many Muslim Lebanese Australians.
- Anti-African media representations is a factor preventing feelings of belonging among Dinka people in Australia.
- Providing free-of-charge interpreting services during medical appointments promotes feelings of inclusion for members of the Greek Australian community in northern Melbourne.

What do you need to do?

For this key knowledge you must research:

1. how the ethnic group identifies itself
2. an overview of the non-material and material culture distinctive to the group
3. the impact of practising certain customs and traditions, the media and political factors on the ethnic group's sense of belonging and inclusion
4. how an ethical methodology was or could be applied in the study of this ethnic group.

Growing up African in Australia

The following reflection by Somali Australian writer and poet Magan Magan is excerpted from Maxine Beneba Clarke's 2019 anthology entitled *Growing Up African in Australia*.

> For me, growing up Somali in Australia meant confusion. Literally and metaphorically. Identity was a complex puzzle, with several missing pieces. The first was language. It meant a loss of culture, a loss of kin and a loss of country. My advice for first-generation Somalis my age and younger is to learn to take pride in our mother tongue. Language is what connects our people, old and young. It is the basic building blocks upon which culture is built. With it, we can learn about our history, make sense of our present and build our future.
>
> But when we came to Australia, that feeling didn't leave me. I still didn't feel settled. On our first drive to our first home, in Maribyrnong, I remember we were in a white van. I was right next to my mother. She had her hair out, and looked incredibly happy. She was wearing a brown velvet dress and a matching cropped jacket. I remember her asking me if I wanted to eat an apple she had in her bag. I said yes. For some reason, I didn't want to eat the apple skin. So she peeled the skin and gave me the flesh to eat. This mundane, uninteresting memory has stayed with me my entire life. Perhaps the apple, shed of its skin, represented what it would mean to become Australian.

Credit: Kate Twohig / Shutterstock

> Back in 1999, in my twelve-year-old mind, I felt we had been in Australia for a long time. Somalis use this term, *dhaqan celis*. *Dhaqan* means 'culture', and *celis* means 'return'. It is used to describe Somali kids who have somehow lost their culture or have failed to carry their culture, kids who need to return 'home' to align themselves with who they are. My mother felt the gap between herself and her children more vividly as the years went on. Her dream for a better life in Australia began to feel bittersweet. My mother's solution to this was for us to experience some good old *dhaqan celis*. At the end of 1999, she uprooted us all to Somalia to learn about our culture.

Activity Y – Experience analysis 'warm-up'

1 Read the memoir extract representation about growing up Somali in Australia and answer the questions that follow to practise analysing experiences.
   - a What elements of material and non-material culture does the author mention?
   - b What places or names are mentioned that might need to be removed to follow ethical methodology (for confidentiality, for example)
   - c What factors that might prevent or enable inclusion can you identify from this passage?
   - d Describe the author's experience, including at least two short quotes as evidence.

The experience of a specific ethnic group in Australia

This section features a suggested structure for you to consider as you begin your own research into the experiences of a specific ethnic group in Australia. When undertaking this research, take special care to consider and make use of the ethical methodologies discussed in the previous section. Remember: your research must not be of a First Nations Australian group.

Research questions

Provide an overview of your ethnic group.

How does the ethnic group identify itself?

This question asks you to define the racial and ethnic features of your group. A good answer will provide a viewpoint from both members and non-members of your chosen ethnic group. It might be that different members of the group identify differently. It will also explore whether members or non-members have changed their perceptions over time.

Which physical symbols (material culture) tend to be important to members of your ethnic group?

This might relate to objects such as flags, clothing styles or handicrafts. This may also refer to identifying features that are strongly associated with the ethnic group and contain physical elements, such as cuisine, musical instruments, art styles, implements or consumer products.

What are some of the values, beliefs, norms and language(s) (non-material culture) common to your ethnic group?

This can refer to a wide array of norms and rules that might be social, moral, cultural or religious in nature. They may be very specific for some ethnic groups, such as belonging to a particular religion or having specific schools or rituals tied to religious or ethnic affiliation. Your group might celebrate specific holidays or commemorate particular events. They may tend to hold particular beliefs in relation to family roles or customs related to birth, death or marriage.

What are some of the activities members of your ethnic group participate in that foster feelings inclusion and belonging?

This refers to culturally significant events, such as:

- street festivals
- sporting events
- cultural teaching and learning services
- religious services
- cultural art, craft or literature exhibitions
- forms of media; i.e. newspapers, film, music, television programs or social media platforms or trends
- family celebrations.

Some of this information might be available via government websites (whether local, state or national). It can be helpful to determine where members of your selected group are geographically concentrated, because often this is where such resources are available. Resources such as ’What’s on in Melbourne’ (or any other location) can be helpful when trying to find relevant contemporary cultural events.

Identify (that is, find evidence of) and explain some of the factors that prevent and enable experiences of inclusion and belonging experienced by the ethnic group in Australia.

The three factors listed in the study design are:

- responses to cultural practices
- media representations
- political factors.

Examples of these have been provided in earlier sections of the chapter. Some common ones are summarised below.

- Preventative factors: racism, stereotyping, discriminatory and protectionist laws, negative or stereotyping representations.
- Enabling factors: diversity festivals, welcoming or citizenship ceremonies, languages taught in schools, programs to support economic participation for diverse communities.

Through your own research, you should be able to find information about the influences that various institutions (including media entities, local, state or federal governments, politicians and political parties and/or the education system) have served to enable or prevent belonging and inclusion.

You may need to source historical records to find the information that you need, particularly in cases where rates of migration of your ethnic group might have 'peaked'.

Adapted from Despina Rentos, 2018. *Sociology: VCE Units 3 & 4* (2nd ed.). Social Education Victoria.

Suggestions for developing your research project

1 Identify a few potential candidates for the ethnic group you wish to study. Remember: it must be located in Australia. Consider choosing a group you are familiar with, are interested in or can readily access data on.

2 Try performing some preliminary research to see whether the resources you'll need are available for your chosen group. Be sure to chat with your teacher about which option you have chosen.

3 Start working on putting together a description of the group's key features. We suggest beginning your research with information about your group available here:

- the ABS website: abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area
- The SBS Cultural Atlas: culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/countries
- Wikipedia: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australians#Ancestries

The research questions provided below can help guide your research.

See if your ethnic group has its own community website, online newspaper (or print newspaper) or cultural organisation, or whether it has been the subject of television programs, a podcast or other media representations.

All media representations of your chosen group will feature perspectives on the ethnic group. Identify whether these representations are coming from within or outside the group. Make a note of the positive and negative viewpoints and any stereotypes.

Perspectives from within the ethnic group will have their own perception, and also reflect individuals' opinions and experiences of Australian culture, as well as the challenges and successes they see as facing members of your group. Save any relevant newspaper articles, video clips and other publicly available research that you might be able to use.

4 Make contact.

You may wish to speak in person to a few members of your selected ethnic group. This can be extremely helpful, especially because it provides you with an opportunity to frame your questions to them in a way that aligns with what the study design asks for.

In this case, you should try to devise a questionnaire that has questions and prompts. If you've found it challenging in earlier parts of your research to find specific examples for one area, this can be a good opportunity to put greater emphasis on that area in your questions.

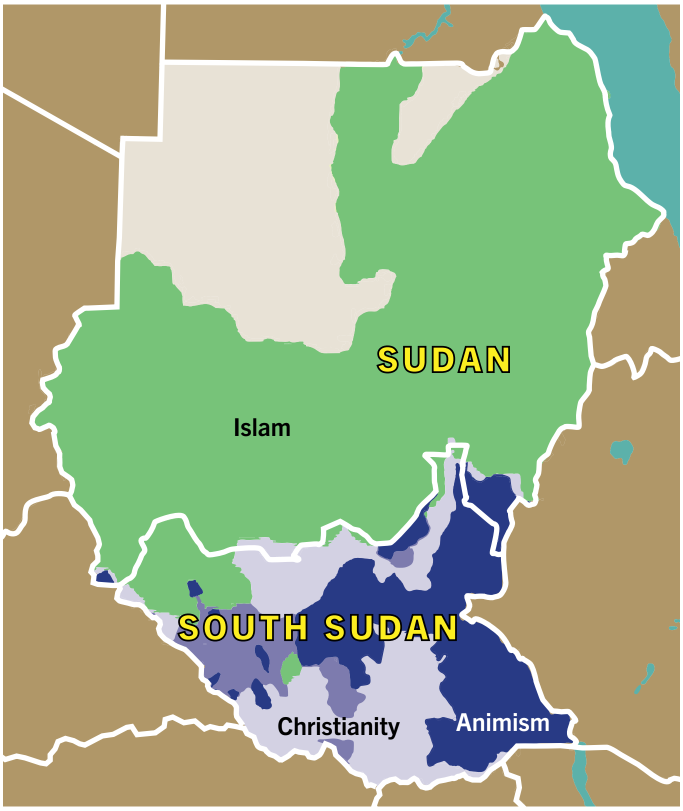
Remember to be polite and transparent when enquiring with potential interviewees, and respect their right to decline if they would prefer not to participate (you may be able to ask if they know of anyone who might be interested in participating). Be sure to listen respectfully and show gratitude to your interviewees, and be rigorous in observing guidelines for the ethical collection of data outlined in this text and on the TASA website.

Case study: Sudanese and South Sudanese Australians

How does the group identify itself?

While many South Sudanese people have a shared cultural heritage and way of life, the community is made up of many diverse ethnic identities.

In some ways 'South Sudanese' is not a specific ethnic group but a collection of ethnic groups with a shared national identity. Sudan and South Sudan are separate countries. South Sudan (like many African nations) has many indigenous ethnic groups. Many South Sudanese people in Australia are Dinka, which is a language group, and within the Dinka group there are subgroup ethnicities. Many South Sudanese Australians are Christian. Islam is associated with Sudan and the government in Khartoum.



National borders and dominant religious groups across Sudan and South Sudan

People might identify differently; some people say we're *African*, others *Sudanese* or *Dinka*. Many South Sudanese Australians are very proud to identify as South Sudanese and celebrate their national day.

The lines separating specific ethnic groups are blurry because identity is complex and *personal*. People might qualify themselves as members of an ethnic group 'label' in some ways, but not in others.

Here are some resources you could refer to for more information.

- 'North Sudanese culture'. SBS Cultural Atlas. culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/north-sudanese-culture
- 'South Sudanese culture'. SBS Cultural Atlas. culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/south-sudanese-culture
- 'Mum's dokwa'. SBS Food, 2023. sbs.com.au/food/the-cook-up-with-adam-liaw/recipe/mums-dokwa/vzb06d1qo
- 'Sudanese lentil soup (addas)'. SBS Food, 2022. sbs.com.au/food/recipe/sudanese-lentil-soup-addas/dh6t22f3l
- Rafqa Touma, 2023. 'Sudanese Australians watch conflict rage in their homeland'. The Guardian. theguardian.com/australia-news/2023/apr/23/its-like-reliving-the-trauma-sleepless-and-terrified-sudanese-australians-watch-conflict-rage-in-their-homeland
- 'The Sudanese Family'. Embassy of the Republic of Sudan, 2023. sudanembassy.org/us-sudan-relations
- 'Ez Eldin Deng'. Footscray Community Arts. footscrayarts.com/profile/ez-eldin-deng

Applying ethical methodology in the study of a specific ethnic group

The study of ethnic groups, such as the Sudanese Australian community in Australia, requires careful consideration of ethical principles to ensure that participants are protected and respected. This section examines how ethical methodology can be applied in studying the Sudanese Australian ethnic group, highlighting key considerations, strategies and ethical principles.

We recommend including an ethical methodology statement similar to the example provided below in your report.

Example of an ethical methodology statement

This research prioritises ethical considerations to protect the rights and wellbeing of the participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring they understand the purpose, nature, and potential implications of the study. Participants were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without facing negative consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process, and participants' personal information was and will be stored securely.

CUSTOMER
JOURNEY MAP
Problem
UX ONLINE TRAINING

Sample introduction of written research project

Remember that an interpreter may be required to assist with the consent form to ensure that potential interviewees with limited written English skills can understand the scope, process and purpose of your research before formally agreeing to participate.

Research project – participant information and consent form

My name is ______________ and I am a VCE Sociology student at [*insert school*].

I am completing research into ________________ as part of my school-assessed coursework.

If you agree to participate, it would involve _______________ that would take ________________ of your time.

There are no risks in the participation of this study. You are under no obligation to participate and you may withdraw from the study at any time. No personal identifying information will be collected about you. Your involvement will be confidential. Any information gathered will be kept securely, and shredded at the end of the school year.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact my teacher, [*insert name*], by phone on [*insert number*] or email at [*insert email*]. If you are interested in the results of my research, I am happy to provide you with a copy or summary of my work.

Participant consent statement

I agree to take part in this research, which has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the research. I understand that my identity and any information that I provide will be treated confidentially. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

Signature: __________________________________

Name printed: ______________________________ Date: ______________

Sample student case study: Sudanese Australians living in Melbourne

Methodology

Conducting this research investigation involved having two participants undertake a qualitative survey of eight questions, and five participants undertake a quantitative survey of five questions. The qualitative survey consisted of questions that were designed to explore the experience of Sudanese Australians in Australian society, focusing upon South Sudanese Australian culture as an identifier for variance. The quantitative survey required participants to rate their responses to the questions on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being ‘strongly disagree’ and 5 being ‘strongly agree’ to the statement made. In both studies, the questions presented were based upon the sociological study of ethnicity, specifically referencing an ethnic group and its experience within Australia.

To adhere to the ethical guideline necessary for sociological research, participants' identities have been concealed to protect their privacy and confidentiality. Participants were advised of their rights in reference to withdrawing from the investigation and having their answers removed from the results, and have been offered a copy of the finalised research study upon completion. All participants are currently residing in Australia permanently and have either Sudanese heritage or were born in Sudan or South Sudan. The limitations with this research investigation were the number of available participants, only seven, and the extraneous variables of age and time they've lived in Australia.

While this sample provides a solid foundation for an ethnicity report, your job as a student is to identify areas in which the report can be enhanced and extended in the context of your own work.

Part 1: Key features

Historical background

The land that came to be known as Sudan was known as *Kush* in ancient times. It was invaded by several different empires in the 19th century and became part of the British Empire in 1896. Sudan gained independence from Britain in 1956. The lasting impact of colonisation has been civil war and violence. Key conflicts include the War in Darfur and the Sudanese Civil War.

A Sudanese Australian man addressing a rally in Melbourne, 2019. Credit: Adam Calaitzis/Shutterstock.

Tensions between different groups, often represented as North and South Sudan, heated up into a full civil war in 1983. Millions of people were displaced through this conflict and became refugees – many of these people spent time in UNHCR (United Nations High Commission on Refugees) camps in Egypt and Kenya. In 2005 the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was created between the North and the South, which included independence for South Sudan and a ceasefire. In 2011 South Sudan became an independent country. This makes country of origin difficult to report for many South Sudanese and Sudanese Australians as they might be from the country that is now South Sudan but were born before the creation of that country.

The ongoing conflict in Darfur has also killed many people and forced others to flee.

Waves of migration and settlement in Australia

- Between 1997 and 2007, more than 20 000 settlers born in Sudan immigrated to Australia.
- 98 per cent of Sudan-born migrants entered Australia under the Special Humanitarian Program (SPH).
- The largest waves came between 2001 and 2006. About 71.4 per cent arrived between these years (ABS, 2011).
- According to the 2016 census, the majority of South Sudanese lived in Victoria (2750 people), followed by Queensland (1430 people).

- In 2021, there were 8255 people born in South Sudan living in Australia according to census date, but this may not be entirely accurate. Many may have put Sudan as their place of birth as that was the country that existed when they were born.
- Community leaders estimate that there are more than 20 000 South Sudanese people nationally.

Non-material culture

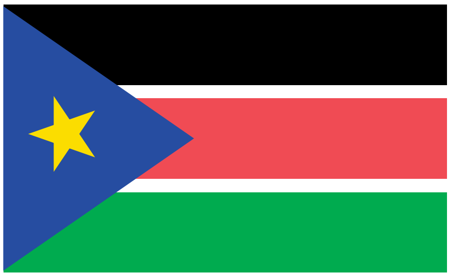
Non-material culture refers to all the intangible aspects of a culture.

- There are more than 64 Indigenous languages and kinship groups in South Sudan.
  - The Dinka (a Nilotic people) are the biggest ethnic group in South Sudan, forming approximately 35.8 per cent of the population.
  - The Nuer (also Nilotic) is the second biggest ethnic group (15.6 per cent).
  - This highlights that South Sudanese people are not a homogenous group.
  - One research participant speaks Nuer at home with her family as well as Arabic, having grown up in Northern Sudan.
- Gender norms are an important part of non-material culture. Young girls are expected to do the housework rather than homework after school.
- The sanctity of marriage is also highly revered. One research participant mentioned that 'divorce is not common back home', in reference to South Sudan.

Material culture

The material – tangible and physical – culture of the South Sudanese includes dishes such as *sukuma wiki* (smoked collard greens) and *molokhia* (molokhia leaves cooked in meat-based soup). One research participant also described eating 'fish and cow's milk' in Sudan.

Overlap of material and non-material culture



Sometimes material and non-material culture overlaps, as in the South Sudanese flag. While the flag is a tangible object, its design is a reminder of the ongoing campaign for the relatively recent national independence of South Sudan, and represents elements symbolising its people, land and history. In this sense, it is also non-material.

Colours in the flag ...	... and what they represent
Black	The South Sudanese people
Red	Bloodshed, sacrifice and courage during independence struggle (sacrifice, courage)
Green	Natural resources and progress
Blue	The Nile River: source of life, connection to the land
Yellow	Hope for the future, unity and high aspirations

Part 2: The impact of cultural practices

South Sudan has been the site of a lot of violent conflict, including civil war, both historically and in recent years. For this reason, many South Sudanese Australians feel ‘lucky’ to be in a relatively safe and generous country.

One research participant describes Australia ‘as a second home’ that is ‘safe for [themselves] and [their] kids’.

Enablers are factors that (help to) support or encourage someone’s sense of belonging or inclusion in Australian multicultural society. These are organisations, initiatives and services that are customised to the needs and aspirations of Sudanese-Australian people. These might be enablers by building skills, supporting wellbeing and health and building community strength and pride, as well as supporting cultural practices such as language, religion and other norms.

Improving outcomes with Sudanese Australians occurs through such services as:

- *High Demand*: Four unique service offerings leveraging community expertise to lift the whole community throughout life transitions (employment, education and training, health and wellbeing)
- *Talk with me*: Mending an intergenerational divide through conversations
- *Culture Curator*: Leveraging community talent to promote a new, positive, strength-based media message about the South Sudanese Australian Community
- *Community Lab*: A neutral community team that works with government to improve connection to and outcomes for the South Sudanese Australian community.

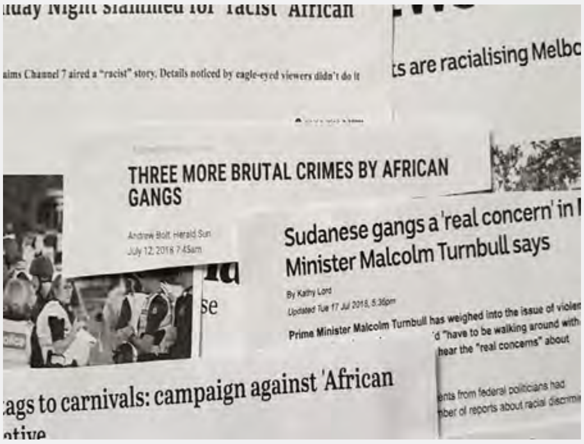
Source: ‘Improving Outcomes with South Sudanese Australians’. cohealth, 2018. cohealth.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Improving-Outcomes-with-South-Sudanese-Australians.pdf

Organisations and groups that enable belonging and inclusion

- South Sudanese Community Association Victoria (SSCAV)
- Community of South Sudanese and Other Marginalised Areas group (CSSOMA)
- South Sudanese Youth Advocacy Group

Part 3: The media (preventer: racist reporting and negative stereotyping)

> In 2015 and 2016, there was a surge of an ‘African gang’ rhetoric, largely targeted at the South Sudanese community.
>
> Mr Monoah, who moved to Australia from South Sudan in 2004 and is now a lawyer in Melbourne, said ‘media profiling has been the main challenge and factor in alienating the community.’
>
> ‘During the Apex gang [media coverage], the community struggled to find rental housing,’ he said, claiming families were rejected on the basis of being South Sudanese.



THREE MORE BRUTAL CRIMES BY AFRICAN GANGS

Sudanese gangs a ‘real concern’ in

Minister Malcolm Turnbull says

> 'People already working would get asked funny questions, 'are you a member of the Apex gang?', and children as young as five or six were being asked this in school – not to mention those already struggling to find employment.”
>
> Excerpt from Kelsey Munro, 2017. 'Who are Australia's South Sudanese?'. SBS News. sbs.com.au/news/article/who-are-australias-south-sudanese/qeeg561xt

This sentiment was exacerbated by the coverage of riots at the 2016 Moomba festival, which emphasised the perceived ethnicity of the participants rather than other factors that led to the clashes.

One interviewee felt that the South Sudanese community was under unfair scrutiny, saying that there are 'there are bad people in every culture' and they are rarely stereotyped on the 'bad' minority.

It has been well documented that the media shows a particular interest in reporting crimes committed by people who have South-Sudanese heritage.

> “If you are an African offender, and certainly if you're an African youth of South Sudanese background from the western suburbs of Melbourne, rest assured your case will be reported upon.
>
> The media choose to report upon those cases. That creates an impression that we, that our work, a very significant proportion of our work is taken up with African youths from the western suburbs of Melbourne. That's a false impression.
>
> I can say that in general terms, most of our work, the vast, vast majority of our work does not involve Africans.”
>
> County Court Chief Justice Peter Kidd, 2018, quoted in 'Three charts on: representation of Australian, New Zealand and Sudan born people in Victorian crime statistics'. The Conversation, 2018. theconversation.com/three-charts-on-representation-of-australian-new-zealand-and-sudan-born-people-in-victorian-crime-statistics-101308

While the events above took place some years ago, they continue to affect the experience of belonging and inclusion of Sudanese-Australian people in Australia – this shows that while a preventer or enabler may have occurred in the past, it's impacts continue. In addition to this, no major changes have occurred to the way that people of African descent in Australia are reported in the media and so flare ups of this preventer occur regularly.

More information can be found about this here:

- Abbie O'Brien, 2018. 'South Sudanese youth feel 'held-back' by media stereotyping'. SBS News. sbs.com.au/news/article/south-sudanese-youth-feel-held-back-by-media-stereotyping/nzmh2xela

Part 4: Political factors

Some enabling political factors affecting this ethnicity include:

- political representation by South Sudanese Australian and other African-Australian people. This can help to redistribute some power for this community as well as providing direct influence on decision-making.
- changes to immigration policy that make family reunification easier as well as supporting the rights of people claiming asylum in Australia. More information on how policies for asylum seekers can enable or prevent belonging is provided by the Refugee Council:
  - refugeecouncil.org.au/asylum-policies

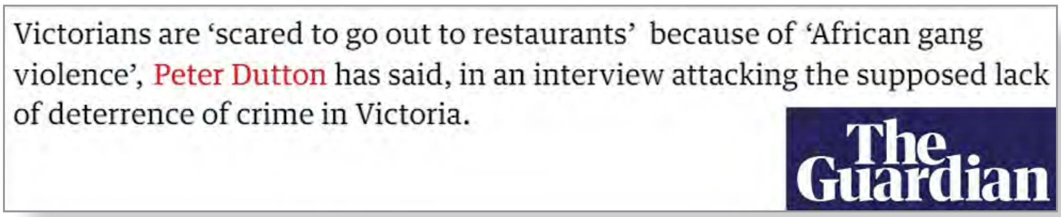
- resourcing from federal, local and state governments for language and community programs, anti-racism programs led by community members for institutions such as police, healthcare and education, authentic community consultation on projects and issues.

Preventative factors in this area constitute an obstacle to a migrant's sense of belonging or inclusion in Australian multicultural society. When negative media coverage was producing stereotyped misrepresentations of South-Sudanese people in Australia, politicians were a key part of this dynamic, as shown by Peter Dutton's comments shown below.

These are ethnocentric comments because they perpetuate the stereotype that South Sudanese people, particularly young men, are violent and a danger to Australian society. It positions 'white' Australian culture as the victim of violence and doesn't represent the voices of South Sudanese people, particularly young people. It emphasises the perceived ethnicity of lawbreakers (there is little effort in this reporting to check whether people are in fact South Sudanese) to make generalisations about this community as a whole. This prevents feelings of belonging because it can make people feel like they are not welcome. It also encourages other parts of society to discriminate against young people who they might perceive as being South-Sudanese Australian, which is a preventer of inclusion. This has prevented South Sudanese people from job and educational opportunities and has 'othered' them in relation to the rest of Australian society.

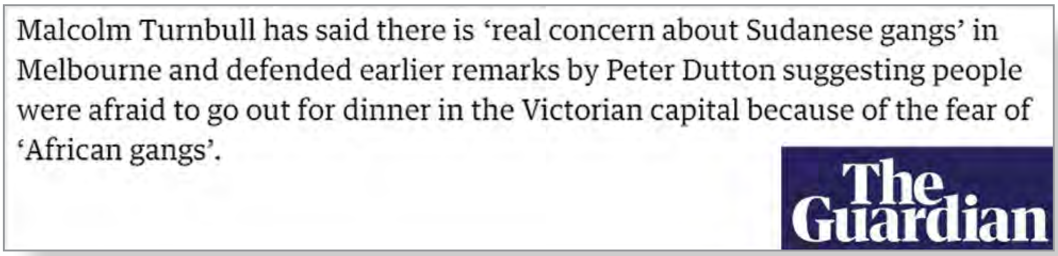
During the COVID-19 pandemic people from African backgrounds were more likely to be fined for supposed infringements of restrictions. This confirms other evidence suggesting that policing methods and attitudes serve to prevent experiences of belonging and inclusion for South-Sudanese people in Australia. You can read more about this here:

Casey Briggs and Ahmed Yussuf, 2023. 'African and Middle Eastern communities over-represented in COVID-19 fines in Victoria, data shows'. ABC News. abc.net.au/news/2023-06-27/covid-pandemic-victoria-police-fines-african-middle-eastern/102523060



Victorians are 'scared to go out to restaurants' because of 'African gang violence', Peter Dutton has said, in an interview attacking the supposed lack of deterrence of crime in Victoria.

The Guardian



Malcolm Turnbull has said there is 'real concern about Sudanese gangs' in Melbourne and defended earlier remarks by Peter Dutton suggesting people were afraid to go out for dinner in the Victorian capital because of the fear of 'African gangs'.

The Guardian

Paul Karp, 2018. 'Peter Dutton says Victorians scared to go out because of 'African gang violence''. The Guardian. theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/jan/03/peter-dutton-says-victorians-scared-to-go-out-because-of-african-gang-violence

Activity Z – Student sample report

1. Read through the sample report provided.
    a. What are the strengths of this report?
    b. What could the student have explored in more detail?
    c. How did the interview data engage with the research the student had explored?
2. Watch this video and analyse its contents.

    ‘South-Sudanese Australians talk police, politics and the media’. VICE Video, 2020 (7 min). video.vice.com/en_au/video/south-sudanese-australians-on-how-it-%20feels-when-the-media-makes-you-the-enemy/5b6a6654be407715e2064103

    a. What social responses, media and political factors are identified by the young people in the video?
    b. What preventers are identified?
    c. What are the impacts of the preventers?
    d. What enablers are identified?
    e. What are the impacts of these enablers?

Revision questions

Short-answer questions

1. Using one example, outline how the process of othering has led to negative experiences for an ethnic group.
2. Compare the concepts of ethnicity and race.
3. Describe Australia's ethnic diversity in comparison to another country.
4. Explain what is meant by the term ethnic hybridity.
5. Identify three factors that might enable or prevent a sense of belonging and inclusion.
6. Describe what is meant by belonging and inclusion.
7. Explain the purpose of ethical methodology.

Extended response questions

1. Discuss the role of the media as both a preventer and an enabler of belonging and inclusion in a multicultural Australian society. Provide two media-related examples in your response.
2. Explain the processes sociologists need to follow to ensure that they are adhering to the Australian Sociological Association's (TASA) ethical methodologies and why it is important to follow these methodologies. Explain how you would apply these ethical guidelines in your investigation of a specific ethnic group.
3. 'Individuals often define themselves, or others, as members of at least one ethnic group based on a common heritage that gives them a unique identity.'

   Analyse the experience of one ethnic group that you have studied this year based on material and non-material culture, including cultural activities that give this group a unique identity.

Further resources

Articles

Will Higginbotham, 2017. ‘Blackbirding: Australia’s history of luring, tricking and kidnapping Pacific Islanders’. ABC News. abc.net.au/news/2017-09-17/blackbirding-australias-history-of-kidnapping-pacific-islanders/8860754

Biwa Kwan and Marcus Megalokonomos, 2021. ‘A new anti-racism taskforce is being set up in Victoria’. SBS News. sbs.com.au/news/article/a-new-anti-racism-taskforce-is-being-set-up-in-victoria/jzw1s72n5

Yasmin Noone, 2019. ‘Battling lunchbox racism starts with a diverse spice tin’. SBS Food. sbs.com.au/food/article/2019/11/25/battling-lunchbox-racism-starts-diverse-spice-tin

RacismNoWay, 2000. ‘Australia’s cultural diversity’, Australian Government, NSW Department of Education. racismnoway.com.au/about-racism/australias-cultural-diversity

Omid Rezaei and Vicki Banham, 2019. ‘‘I say Tajikistan or Uzbekistan’: why Afghan refugees feel unwelcome in Australia, even after becoming citizens’. The Conversation. theconversation.com/i-say-tajikistan-or-uzbekistan-why-afghan-refugees-feel-unwelcome-in-australia-even-after-becoming-citizens-170557

Simon Worrall, 2017. ‘Why race is not a thing according to genetics’. National Geographic. nationalgeographic.com/science/article/genetics-history-race-neanderthal-rutherford

Books

Alice Pung et al., 2008. *Growing up Asian in Australia*. Black Inc.

Maxine Beneba Clarke et al., 2019. *Growing up African in Australia*. Black Inc.

TV/Video

Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2017. ‘Refugees’. *You Can’t Ask That*. iview. abc.net.au/video/LE1617H006S00

Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2019. ‘African Australians’. *You Can’t Ask That*. iview.abc.net.au/video/LE1817H002S00

References

All Together Now. 2017. 'Who Watches the Media? Race-related reporting in Australian mainstream media’. alltogethernow.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/ATN-Who-Watches-The-Media-FINAL.pdf

Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2011. ‘2011 Census – All persons quickstats’. abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2011/0

Dayman, I. 2023. ‘Name discrimination still ‘prevalent’ in Australia, says race discrimination commissioner’. ABC News. abc.net.au/news/2023-03-25/experiences-of-name-discrimination-in-australia/102140644

Farhart, C. 2022. ‘The ethnic diversity of Australia’s parliament is lagging behind other countries’. SBS. sbs.com.au/news/article/the-ethnic-diversity-of-australias-parliament-is-lagging-behind-other-countries/bkv2c5x9p

Hall, S. 1980. ‘Encoding/Decoding’ in S. Hall, D. Hobson, A. Lowe, and P. Wills (eds.), *Culture, Media, Language*. Hutchinson.

Hall, S. and Gieben, B. 1992. *Formations of Modernity*. Polity Press.

Raja, M. 2020. ‘Reviews, commentaries, analyses’. youtube.com/c/RajaReads

Scanlon Institute. 2021. ‘Mapping social cohesion’. scanloninstitute.org.au/mapping-social-cohesion-2021

Stratton, J. (2020). *Multiculturalism, Whiteness and Otherness in Australia*. Springer International Publishing.

Weber, M. 1968. *Economy and Society*. University of California Press.

Yussuf, A. and Walden, M. 2022. ‘Multicultural groups welcome federal government’s move to collect ethnicity data’. ABC News. abc.net.au/news/2022-06-16/federal-government-to-measure-ethnicity-data-multiculturalism/101158038

4.1

Unit 4,
Area of study 1:

Community

“Unit 4, Area of Study 1: Community

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse the experience of community generally and analyse and evaluate a specific community.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge

1 changes to the concept of community over time:
  1.1 the theory of Ferdinand Tönnies
  1.2 Michel Maffesoli’s theory of neo-tribes
2 the experience of community generally:
  2.1 factors that influence feelings of belonging
  2.2 the impact of information and communications technology
  2.3 the effects of economic, social and political factors, and of geographical characteristics
3 the nature of a selected community and reasons this group can be classified as a community
4 influences on the experience of the selected community and the interplay between these influences:
  4.1 factors that may have influenced feelings of belonging
  4.2 information and communications technology
  4.3 economic, social and political factors, and geographical characteristics
  4.4 different perspectives on the sense of community from different members within the community
5 the nature of ethical methodology with reference to voluntary participation, informed consent, privacy and the confidentiality of data.

Key skills

i explain and apply sociological concepts
ii analyse changes to the concept of community over time with reference to the theories of Ferdinand Tönnies and Michel Maffesoli
iii compare Ferdinand Tönnies’ and Michel Maffesoli’s approaches to understanding community
iv identify and explain the factors that influence feelings of belonging
v analyse the influence of information and communications technology on the experience of community
vi analyse and evaluate the influence of economic, social and political factors, and of geographical characteristics on the experience of community
vii explain why feelings of belonging can vary within a community

viii apply ethical methodology to source and use a range of relevant evidence to support observations and analysis

ix gather and use a variety of relevant source materials to support observation and analysis

x evaluate sources and critically reflect on their own and others' approaches to understanding the social world

xi synthesise evidence to draw conclusions.

Preface

Sociologists refer to the concept of community as a group of people who share social relationships through being geographically close to each other and/or being in regular contact with each other, and through having similarities such as mutual interests and/or shared ideology. In this area of study, students explore community in general as well as through a detailed case study of a specific community. The specific community may be located within Australia and/or overseas. However, the chosen specific community cannot be any Australian Indigenous community from which examples might have been selected for study in Unit 3, Area of Study 1, or the specific ethnic group explored in Unit 3, Area of Study 2.

Students investigate changes to the concept of community over time by exploring the theories of Ferdinand Tonnies and Michel Maffesoli. The study of the experience of community includes an exploration of economic, social and political factors, as well as relevant geographical characteristics. Geographical characteristics affecting the experience of community could be related to proximity and accessibility, climate, scenic quality, landforms and natural resources, or built features such as community centres or other relevant characteristics. Students evaluate a specific community experience with an emphasis on the varying levels of belonging to the group. Groups with high levels of belonging are said to have a strong sense of community. A sense of community occurs when members actively participate and have an emotional connection with the group.

Data may be drawn from secondary sources and/or from primary research undertaken by the student. This research is informed by the guidelines of the Australian Sociological Association.”

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA). 2023.
'VCE Sociology Study Design, 2024–2028'.
vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/vce/sociology/2024SociologySD.docx

Community

Changes to the concept of community over time 4.1.1

Community is a word that we use often, but what does it really mean? At its core, community is about connection and belonging. It is about groups of people who share common goals, values and experiences. Community can take many different forms, from a small group of friends to a large, diverse neighbourhood. In this chapter, we will explore the concept of community, how it has changed and what it means to different people. We will look at the different types of communities that exist, how they are formed and the impact they have on our lives.

The term 'community' evolved during the 14th century to refer to 'the common people', as opposed to those of higher social status. By the 18th century, the term evolved to encompass the people of a specific area or those who shared common interests (Giddens and Sutton, 2021, p. 126).

A community has traditionally been used to describe groups of people who:

- live in the same geographical area: e.g. Footscray
- are connected with a social institution: e.g. a school or religious group
- belong to the same cultural or language group: e.g. Indian Australians
- have similar occupations: e.g. construction workers or medical professionals
- share similar experiences: e.g. refugees or trauma survivors
- have ideas or values in common: e.g. climate change activists
- have a similar interest: e.g. sporting clubs and gyms
- share a lifestyle: e.g. people who are minimalists
- share a government: e.g. the City of Booroondara.

Ashburton Community Festival, 2020. Credit: City of Booroondara

Activity A – Quick community questions

1 Briefly describe three groups that you have been involved in during the past year. Explain what brings and keeps the group together.

2 Do you believe that you have a connection with your suburb/town? Explain why.

3 Write a paragraph that describes your favourite or most influential community. Explain why this group is important to you.

4 Do you expect that the ways in which people interact in community groups will change over the next 10 years? Why, or why not?

5 How do you think past advances in technology such as the telephone and the family car have affected communities?

6 Do you expect that recent online developments will affect the ways communities work (e.g. tools used to connect during the pandemic lockdowns)? Justify your answer.

7 What have you learnt about community because of your lived experienced?

Defining community

Today, the term 'community' has multiple definitions with overlapping or shared characteristics. The study design outlines specific features that are present among modern communities. Here, **community** is described as a group of people who share social relationships through being geographically close to each other and/or being in regular contact with each other, and through having similarities such as mutual interests and/or shared ideology.

Community refers to a group of people who share social relationships through being geographically close to each other and/or being in regular contact with each other, and through having similarities such as mutual interests and/or shared ideology.

Key features of a contemporary community

A group of people: A community is a group of people who share a common bond. Depending on the type of community, the group may be comprised of a few people (e.g. a book or chess club) or hundreds of people (e.g. a sporting or school community).

Shared social relationships: Social relationships within a community can be apparent in various ways, such as through trust, mutual support, shared experiences or a shared sense of identity.

Geographically close: While not always necessary, geographical closeness is a key feature of many communities. Living in close proximity to other members of a community can assist with the development of social connections. Geographical references to a community may include specific locations such as a street, a suburb, a town or a designated travel distance from a particular location.

Regular contact: Even in cases where members of a community are not geographically close, regular contact is an important factor in maintaining social relationships. This can take many forms, including face-to-face meetings, phone calls or online interactions.

Shared mutual interest: Community members often share common interests that have drawn them together. These can vary widely, and may include hobbies, art and sporting activities.

Shared ideology: Another important factor in the formation of communities is the presence of a shared ideology, or shared set of beliefs. This can take many forms, including shared cultural or religious values, political beliefs or a common worldview.

The Wild Harvest Seafood Festival held in the town of Mallacoota, 2019.
Credit: wildharvestseafoodfestival.com

The table below shows how the town of Mallacoota is a community.

Applying the concept of community: the town of Mallacoota

Group of people	Mallacoota is a tight-knit community consisting of more than 1080 permanent residents, according to the 2021 Australian Bureau of Statistics Census.
Share a social relationship	The community members have formed social bonds over time. Some people have raised families in the areas and others have established strong friendships.
Geographically close to each other	Mallacoota is a small town located on the eastern coast of Victoria, where its residents enjoy living in close proximity to each other, to the beach and to their natural surroundings.
Regular contact	Many members of the community in Mallacoota are highly active and engaged, with residents participating in a wide range of activities such as beach walking, fishing, diving and various community projects.
Mutual interests and shared ideology	The Mallacoota community has demonstrated remarkable resilience and solidarity, particularly during the devastating 2019–20 Black Summer bushfires, when its members came together to support each other in a time of crisis (ABC, 2022).

Activity B – Your school as a community

1 Using the definition provided below, explain how both your school and one other group are a community.

> “The concept of community is a group of people who share social relationships through being geographically close to each other and/or being in regular contact with each other, and through having similarities such as mutual interests and/or shared ideology.”
>
> Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), 2023.
> ‘Victorian Certificate of Education Sociology Study Design, 2024–2028'.

2 Create a table using the headings below and use it to organise your observations. Compare your findings with a classmate.

Defining features	Examples from your school community	Examples from another community
Group of people		
Shared social relationships		
Geographically close to each other		
Regular contact		
Mutual interests and shared ideology		

Types of communities

During this area of study, you will be required to identify and study a specific community. There are many different types of modern communities.

- **Geographic communities**: These may include a local neighbourhood, suburb, shire, town, or city. These types of communities are described as a large group living near one another.
- **Cultural communities**: These may include a local club, a subculture, or a religious or multicultural youth group.
- **Community organisations**: These may include more formal groups such as political associations, work groups, professional associations and charities. Examples include personal support groups and advocacy groups.
- **Interest-based communities**: These comprise people who share a common identity other than location, and who often interact regularly. Examples include a sports club or a local community garden.
- **Intentional communities**: These are formed with the purpose of providing social and/or practical support for a group of people. Examples include a retirement village, alternative lifestyle communes, housing cooperatives or a parents’ group.
- **Online communities**: These are groups of people who may never meet, but who share some interest or connection via the Internet. An example is a gaming community.

A group of Dungeons and Dragons players. Credit: flic.kr/p/84pTyQ

Activity C – Identifying communities

Determine which of the following groups qualify as communities.

1. A group of co-workers who only interact during work hours
2. A neighbourhood association that meets regularly to discuss local issues
3. A group of strangers waiting in line for a concert
4. An online forum where members regularly interact and support each other
5. A group of students who attend the same school but do not interact outside of class
6. A large extended family, the members of which live near each other and interact daily
7. A group of tourists who are all visiting the same city
8. A religious group who meets weekly to celebrate their faith
9. A group of people waiting at a bus stop
10. A group of bike riders who regularly attend the same events.

The theory of Ferdinand Tönnies 4.1.1.1

During a time of significant social change in Britain and Europe, caused by **industrialisation** and **urbanisation** (i.e. living in cities close to places of work), German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies (1855–1936) and other sociologists became interested in communities and their purpose in broader society. The processes of industrialisation and urbanisation had a profound impact on people's daily lives and social relationships. The traditional close-knit life of the village – centred on the family, the neighbourhood and the church – was lost, and replaced by an urban life that was viewed as lacking in depth and warmth, and characterised by impersonal and superficial relationships.

Industrialisation refers to the process of transforming an economy from an agricultural-based one to a manufacturing-based one; this involves the introduction of machinery and technology to increase productivity and efficiency.

Urbanisation refers to the growth of cities and the movement of people from rural areas to urban areas; this often occurs due to the creation of jobs in urban areas, which can provide better opportunities for work.

In his book *Community and Society* (1887), Tönnies studied how life in the new industrial cities differed from life in rural villages, and introduced two concepts that reflected the contrast between very different social experiences. The German word **Gemeinschaft** (community) was used to describe a social group in which people are closely tied by **kinship** (family) and tradition. Tönnies used the word **Gesellschaft**, which is usually translated as 'society', to describe the informal and impersonal relationships that occur within cities (Macionis, 2021).

Gemeinschaft refers to a cohesive, close and long-lasting relationship on a community-level, often used to describe family relationships within small geographical communities.

Gesellschaft refers to individualistic and impersonal relationships on a societal level, used to describe post-industrial and urban communities where people are more anonymous, private and busy.

Gemeinschaft

In traditional villages, the intimate ties of Gemeinschaft connected people. Tönnies described these connections as being based on blood (kinship), mind (sense of being a unique group) and land. Gemeinschaft communities were seen as being culturally homogenous, as they were shaped by the moral laws of the church and family. There was also minimal social and geographical mobility. Tönnies' work reflects an admiration for the way that Gemeinschaft groups maintain social cohesion, and a concern about the loss of these forms of community (Macionis, 2021).

Current examples of groups bound by Gemeinschaft include:

- rural farming communities
- communal living groups
- close-knit extended families
- religious communities, such as the Amish in Tasmania.

Gesellschaft

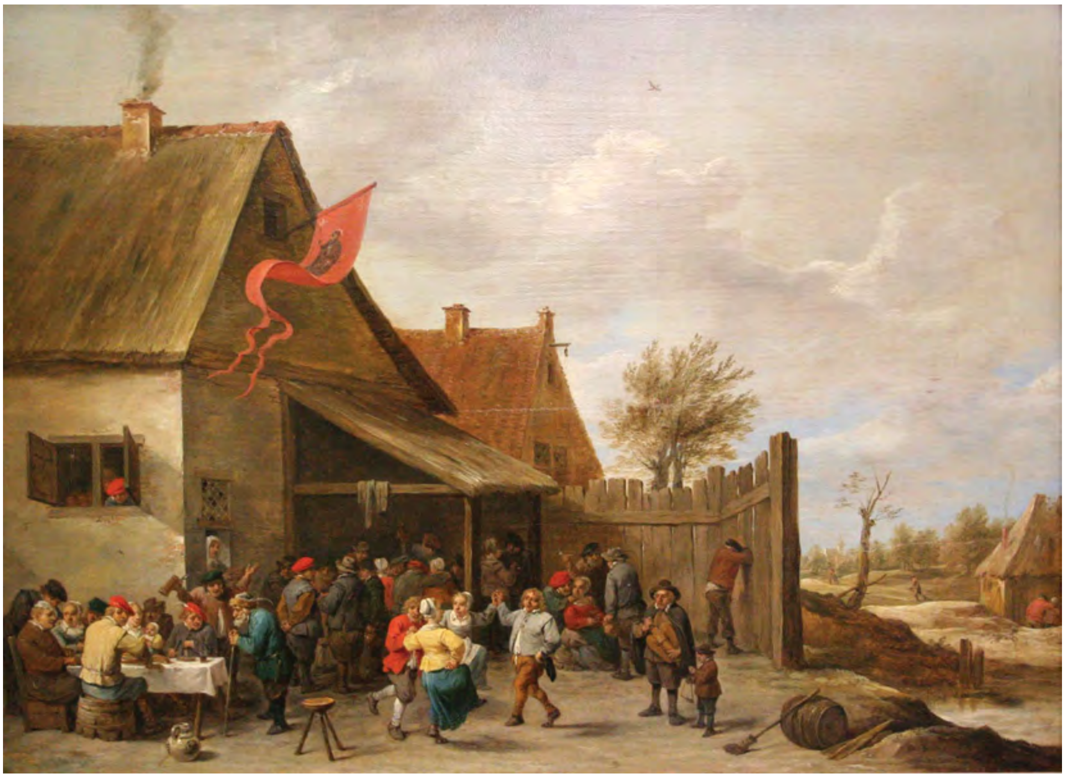
Gesellschaft characterises a group of people who come together by choice, usually for very specific practical reasons. Instead of being guided by traditional norms, people increasingly follow their own selfish interests. They adopt a 'contractual' attitude, becoming more deliberate, rational and calculating in their social interactions (e.g. connecting for work opportunities rather than for emotional wellbeing). Tönnies was concerned that society, over time, would primarily comprise Gesellschaft groups. He was worried that people would be 'essentially separated in spite of unity factors' (cited in Macionis, 2021). Tönnies noted that, as social and geographical mobility increased, the close ties of Gemeinschaft were replaced by relationships that were impersonal, superficial and fleeting (Giddens and Sutton, 2021).

Current examples of these groups include:

- workplace social clubs
- fitness centres
- online communities
- large cities, such as Melbourne.

Key features of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft

Gemeinschaft (Community)	Gesellschaft (Society)
Bonds between people are intimate and personal	Bonds are practical and impersonal
Typically small in size	Large and diverse groups
Based on strong social ties, tradition and personal relationships	Association of people with weak social ties, considerable social diversity and impersonal relationships
Descriptive of rural life	Descriptive of urban life
Members live in close proximity to each other	Members live in different geographical locations
People know each other and share interests orientated towards collective community	People are largely motivated by self-interest, which can result in disunity
Shared identity and purpose	Few common values or shared identities
Family ties are strong, which provides unity	Tradition and custom are no longer binding forces; individuals choose to participate
Tend to resist change	More open to change



Gemeinschaft, a premodern form of social organisation characterised by strong interpersonal relationships and a sense of shared history; 'The Saint-Georges fair', painting by David Teniers the Younger, 1645.

Gesellschaft, a social organisation characterised by weak interpersonal relationships, a sense of individualism, and a focus on material success and achievement; Workers assembling condensers at the Atwater Kent Factory in North Philadelphia, 1925.

Tönnies' theory tips

Tip 1 – The coexistence of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft in modern communities

'Pure'
Gemeinschaft

Contemporary communities
... contain elements of both

'Pure'
Gesellschaft

Today, most communities have features of both Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft. For example, most communities comprise many relationships that are close-knit and long-lasting (Gemeinschaft), as well as other connections that are individualistic and impersonal (Gesellschaft). The extent to which these features are present varies depending on the size and nature of the community, as well as the social, cultural and economic factors that shape it.

Tip 2 – Memory aids

ABCs

Gemeinschaft is often associated with **traditional** or **earlier** forms of communities, while Gesellschaft is typically linked to more **modern** or **later** forms of social groups.

An easy way to remember that Gemeinschaft is associated with earlier forms of communities and Gesellschaft with later ones is to recall that 'm' (Ge**m**einschaft) comes before 's' (Ge**s**ellschaft) in the alphabet.

Minecraft versus The Sims

The games Minecraft and The Sims have been used by students to remember the contrast between Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft.

Minecraft players explore and build in a procedurally generated world made up of blocks. The focus is on survival and creativity, with players gathering resources, building structures and defending against monsters. Its rules and focus represent Gemeinschaft. It also starts with ‘M’!

The Sims is a life simulation game whose players control virtual people (the Sims). The focus is on managing the Sims’ daily lives, including their relationships, careers and homes. The nature of this interaction represents Gesellschaft. And, of course, The Sims has an ‘S’.

Activity D – Gemeinschaft or Gesellschaft?

Determine which of the following statements are true and which are false.

Statement	T	F
1 The concept of Gemeinschaft refers to a community classified according to traditional and personal relationships, whereas Gesellschaft refers to a community based on impersonal relationships.		
2 Gemeinschaft communities tend to be smaller and more closely connected than Gesellschaft communities.		
3 Gesellschaft communities are typically based on shared values and common cultural traditions.		
4 The notions of industrialisation and urbanisation are often associated with the decline of Gemeinschaft communities and the growth of Gesellschaft communities.		
5 Gemeinschaft communities are more likely to be found in rural areas, while Gesellschaft communities are more common in cities.		
6 The distinction between Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft is based solely on a community’s economic resources.		
7 Gesellschaft groups place a higher value on social harmony and collective wellbeing than Gemeinschaft communities.		
8 In a Gesellschaft community, individual rights and freedoms are often prioritised over collective values and responsibilities.		
9 The rise of individualism and the decline of traditional values are often seen as contributing factors to the growth of Gesellschaft communities.		
10 According to Tönnies, the decline of Gemeinschaft communities is often seen as a negative development that has led to a sense of social dislocation and alienation.		

‘The People’s Republic of Mallacoota’

Mallacoota is a small coastal town in East Gippsland, Victoria. The geographical community has features of Gemeinschaft, as evidenced by the close-knit and personalised relationships among its residents. A resident’s observation that ‘there’s always somebody to look after you’ (ABC, 2021) indicates Mallacoota’s strong sense of mutual support and belonging, and demonstrates the town’s close-knit community.

The town’s closeness was further demonstrated at the end of 2019 when Mallacoota was devastated by horrific bushfires. Rather than acting as individuals, the townspeople united and showed a collective determination to move ‘forward together’, reflecting their strong sense of connection and solidarity. The strong social support system in Mallacoota was highlighted in the ABC documentary *People’s Republic of Mallacoota*. In one scene, Jess, a community member who had lost her house to fire, performed a sage ceremony with a group of friends at the site. Rachel, a friend of Jess who had also suffered a similar loss, emphasised the importance of being present with your community and friends during such tough times (ABC, 2022).

The community’s sense of kinship and togetherness reflects the concept of Gemeinschaft. Strong familial ties and close-knit relationships have existed in Mallacoota for generations, and this is evident in the town’s history. Many families have resided in the area for a long time, drawn by the stunning natural beauty of the waterways and bushland. The region’s tourism industry and abalone trade have played a crucial role in sustaining the economy for these families over time. This was demonstrated in a 2016 episode of ABC’s *Back Roads*, which highlighted the vital role of these businesses in supporting families in the town.

The geographic proximity of residents in Mallacoota is another characteristic of Gemeinschaft. Living near one another in a regional area has led to a sense of familiarity and closeness between community members. Some of the traditions of this rural location are reflected in the town’s social activities. For example, there is a regular farmers’ market where people come together to buy and sell locally grown produce. There are also annual art, seafood and surfing events. These activities help to strengthen the sense of togetherness in the town.

MALLACOOTA
CAMPING PARK

Clockwise: Mallacoota camping grounds (credit: CFitzart, 2005. w.wiki/6kRV);
Fishing at Bastion Point (credit: Caroline Jones, 2022. flic.kr/p/2nkS3iK);
Aftermath of the 2019–20 fires near the beachfront (credit: Caroline Jones, 2020. flic.kr/p/2ib97QZ)

Although Mallacoota embodies many Gemeinschaft characteristics, there are also elements of Gesellschaft present in the town. One such feature is the town's status as a partial tourist destination, with a **population** increase of 8000 during the summer months (Boey, 2020). Many of these seasonal residents have holiday homes in the town, creating a more diverse population where people do not have close relationships with one another and do not tend to engage in many social activities together. As a result, some of the townspeople's social connections can be individualistic and impersonal.

Population refers to the number of people living in a particular area or region. It can be influenced by factors such as migration, birth rates and death rates.

One of the characteristics of Gesellschaft present in Mallacoota is the trend of young people to leave the town in search of more urbanised areas, a phenomenon known as youth drain. The town's median age of 59 (ABS, 2021) indicates that many young people are leaving the town in search of education and employment opportunities that the small coastal town cannot offer. In doing so, they are inevitably leaving behind close personal relationships they have forged with others in the town, at least temporarily. The permanent loss of young people can also impede the passing on of traditions and values shared in the town, as they are more likely to start a family elsewhere.

Overall, Mallacoota is primarily a Gemeinschaft community, characterised by its strong sense of kinship and togetherness. However, it also shows some features of Gesellschaft, particularly in the form of youth drain and short-term residents.

Case study above compiled using information from the following resources:

- ABC, 2016. 'Mallacoota'. *Back Roads*. iview.abc.net.au/video/FA1527V003S00.
- ABC, 2021. 'Back to Mallacoota'. *Back Roads*. iview.abc.net.au/show/back-roads/series/7/video/RF2027V008S00
- ABC, 2022. *People's Republic of Mallacoota*. iview.abc.net.au/show/people-s-republic-of-mallacoota
- ABS, 2021. 'Mallacoota: 2021 Census all persons QuickStats'. abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/SAL21584
- K. C. Boey, 2020. 'Looking forward in Mallacoota, one year after the flames arrived'. The New Daily. thenewdaily.com.au/news/2020/12/29/mallacoota-vic-bushfires-anniversary
- Visit Mallacoota, 2023. visitmallacoota.com.au

Activity E – Applying Tönnies' theory

1. Review the case study provided about the community of Mallacoota. Highlight the Gemeinschaft features in one colour, and the Gesellschaft features in another colour.
2. Based on the information provided, what are the key Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft features present in the community of Mallacoota? Create a table or dot-point summary outlining these features.
3. To what extent does Mallacoota embody Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft characteristics? Is it predominantly Gemeinschaft, Gesellschaft or an equal blend of both?

Kyneton: Change over time

Kyneton is a geographic community located in the Macedon Ranges region of Victoria, about 80 kilometres from Melbourne. The town was established during the gold rush in the mid-1800s. Kyneton has undergone significant changes over time in terms of population size, social activities and forms of work available.

Population

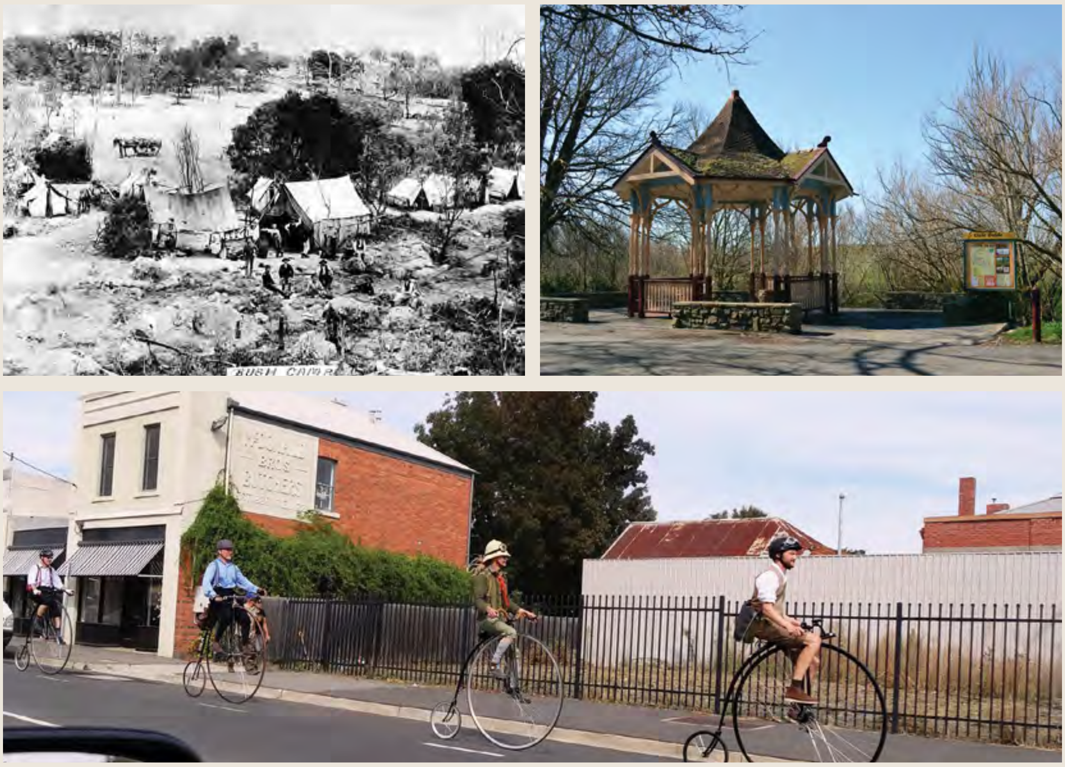
According to historical records, Kyneton's population was estimated to be around 300 people in the 1850s when it was formed in response to the gold rush. According to the 2021 ABS Census, the population of Kyneton was 5151 people.

Kyneton's population has continued to rise. This can be attributed to a growing number of individuals seeking a lifestyle change, colloquially referred to as 'tree changers'. This trend has been assisted by the ability of people to work remotely, as well as the accessibility of Bendigo and Melbourne via train for employment opportunities.

Social activities

Social activities in Kyneton have also changed over time. In the early days, social activities were centred around the miners and included events such as dances, or attending one of many of the local pubs and churches. The activities that people engaged in were located within walking distance of their homes.

With the growth of its population, Kyneton has seen an expansion in the range and types of social activities available to its members, such as horse racing, art workshops, and food and wine festivals. In addition, due to its proximity to Melbourne, residents can easily attend music festivals and sporting events in the city on the weekends.



Left to right: Gold mining camp in Kyneton District, circa 1865 (credit: Museums Victoria. collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/items/769995); Rotunda at the mineral springs at Kyneton (credit: Mattinbgn, 2013. w.wiki/6mHP); Penny farthing bicycle riders on Morrison Street (credit: denisbin, 2016. flic.kr/p/EHn125)

Business and industries

The nature of work in Kyneton has changed significantly over time. In the 1800s the primary employment opportunities would have been gold mining and associated businesses, such as the provision of supplies and transportation. As Kyneton continued to expand, new industries such as agriculture and manufacturing emerged. It can be imagined that the communal efforts of its residents, who worked together to harvest wheat for the local mill and construct two Christian churches, fostered a strong sense of community.

Today, Kyneton has a mix of small businesses, service industries and larger employers such as hospitals and schools. It has also become a popular tourist destination. Visitors are drawn to the activities that the local community enjoys – for example, exploring the new and vintage clothing stores, viewing the pieces in the numerous art galleries, enjoying the range of gourmet food and wine options, and participating in an array of outdoor activities such as hiking, fishing and golf.

Case study compiled using information from the following sources:

- ABS, 2021. ‘Kyneton: 2021 Census all persons QuickStats’. abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/UCL214013
- Kyneton Connections, 2021. ‘History of Kyneton’. kyneton.org.au/history.html
- Macedon Ranges Shire Council, 2023. ‘Visit Kyneton’. visitmacedonranges.com/village/kyneton

Activity F – Changing Kyneton

1 Explain how the concept of community has changed due to industrialisation. Refer to Ferdinand Tönnies’ theory and a community group you have studied this year to support your response.

2 Based on the reading material, justify whether the community of Kyneton exhibits predominantly Gemeinschaft characteristics, predominantly Gesellschaft characteristics, or a combination of both. Support your answer with reference to theory and representation material.

Extended response practice question

Getting started – recap

When interpreting and planning assessment questions, remember to identify and think about the following interrelated KLC components: key knowledge words, limiting words and command (term) words.

- Focus on the key knowledge words in the assessment question, which relate to different parts of the course material. Ensure that you understand the ideas, theories and concepts explored so that you can provide an accurate response.
- Identify and pay attention to the limiting words in the assessment question, which help narrow the focus of your response. These may specify sub-topics, or the number of examples required.
- Understand the VCAA command terms and ensure that you answer the question accurately. Pay attention to the specific differences between terms such as ‘compare’ and ‘evaluate’.

Next step – complete the following extended response question

Explain how the concept of community has changed due to industrialisation. Refer to Ferdinand Tönnies’ theory and a community group you have studied this year to support your response.

Apply the KLC model:

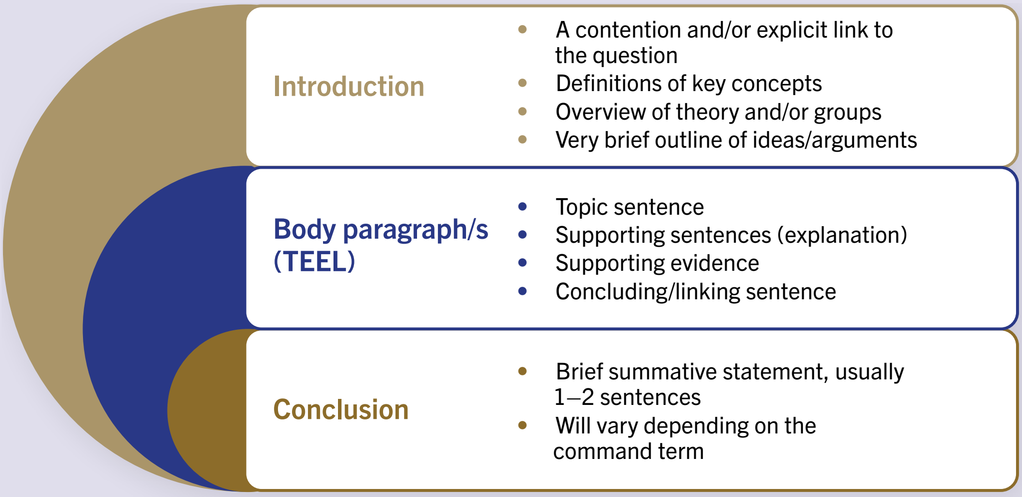
1 **Key knowledge:** *the concept of community, Gemeinschaft, Gesellschaft and industrialisation*

2 **Limiting words:** must refer to Tönnies' theory and other material (e.g. Mallacoota examples)

3 **Command terms:** *explain*. This means that you must give a detailed account of *how* industrialisation shifted what is viewed as a community group. Tönnies described this shift as a movement from Gemeinschaft (community) to Gesellschaft (society) groups.

Start writing using a TEEL model.

Use the model below to help you get started.



Introduction

- A contention and/or explicit link to the question
- Definitions of key concepts
- Overview of theory and/or groups
- Very brief outline of ideas/arguments

Body paragraph/s (TEEL)

- Topic sentence
- Supporting sentences (explanation)
- Supporting evidence
- Concluding/linking sentence

Conclusion

- Brief summative statement, usually 1–2 sentences
- Will vary depending on the command term

Introduction

- Sociologists have observed changes in the forms and experiences of community due to industrialisation.
- Define community and industrialisation.
- Ferdinand Tönnies studied the impact of industrialisation on traditional forms of community in the 1800s.
- The industrial revolution transformed the economy from agriculture-based to a mechanised system, which shifted groups from Gemeinschaft (community) to more impersonal Gesellschaft (society) groups.

Body paragraph 1

- Tönnies conceptualised early forms of community as Gemeinschaft. Explain the meaning of this theoretical concept.
- Use evidence from a group (e.g. Mallacoota) to show these theoretical features.
- Linking sentence: Changes brought about by industrialisation led to the emergence of newer groups, such as Gesellschaft.

Body paragraph 2

- As a result of industrialisation, Tönnies noted the formation of a newer group, known as Gesellschaft. Explain the meaning of this theoretical concept.
- Use evidence from a group (e.g. Mallacoota) to show these theoretical features.
- Linking sentence: Tönnies' theory highlights how industrialisation fundamentally transformed the concept of community.

Conclusion

- Include two summative sentences noting that, before industrialisation, groups were close-knit and family-focused. Later, newer groups emerged who were more urban, less formal and shorter-term in nature.

Michel Maffesoli's theory of neo-tribes 4.1.1.2

The concept of community has undergone significant change since Ferdinand Tönnies' work more than 130 years ago. Michel Maffesoli, a French sociologist, has made significant contributions to understanding the nature of community in a modern context. In his 1988 book *The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society*, he introduced the notion of a **neo-tribe**. (Note that this book was originally published in French in 1988, but translated into English in 1996.)

Neo-tribe refers to a dynamic and loosely formed community that is brought together by a shared interest in seeking a sense of belonging. According to the theorist Michel Maffesoli, these social groups have formed in response to constantly shifting identities within modern societies.

Maffesoli noted that community groups had changed over time due to shifting values, attitudes and interests in **postmodern** society. He argued that these neo-tribes had emerged in response to the rise of **individualism**, the decline of traditional social structures, and the evolution of new forms of social interaction. Maffesoli noted that, in contemporary society, individuals tend to connect with multiple groups based on shared interests, rather than through familial or employment obligations.

Postmodernism is a way of thinking that emerged in the late 20th century. The approach recognises that there are many different perspectives and ways of understanding the world. This way of thinking often involves challenging traditional approaches and beliefs.

Individualism refers to the political and/or personal belief that emphasises the worth and importance of the individual over the collective or group.

Maffesoli theorised that neo-tribes are characterised by fluidity, occasional gatherings and dispersal. Neo-tribes are different to the traditional notion of a tribe that anthropologists study. Instead, they are like temporary gatherings of people who share similar interests or identities. These groups come together for a while and then go their separate ways, but they might come back together again later in a different form. This reflects how society is always changing, and how people's identities are constantly shifting as well.

Maffesoli observed that the development of a sense of connection in neo-tribes is influenced by three key factors. These include the significance of the 'territory' to which the neo-tribe is connected, the sharing of 'common tastes', and the emergence of a 'return of the eternal child' phenomenon. Neo-tribes are characterised by their fluidity, as people move in and out of different groups based on their changing interests and needs. They are also defined by a sense of belonging and shared identity, which is based on emotional connections and experiences rather than rigid social structures. Maffesoli argued that neo-tribes offer a sense of community in a world that is increasingly individualistic and fragmented. Neo-tribes provide a means for people to connect with like-minded individuals, forming meaningful relationships based on shared experiences and emotions.

According to Maffesoli (2016), the contemporary fascination with 'role-playing games [and] chat rooms', and various 'social media sites', represents an expansion of community rather than an erosion of social connections.

These digital technologies have revolutionised the way people connect and interact, leading to the formation of new, temporary social groups based on shared interests and identities. New groups are emerging all the time, such as the hipster, skater, surfer and e-kid groups. These neo-tribes provide a sense of belonging and shared identity to their members that reflects their unique values and shared experiences.

Recap – Maffesoli key quotes

Key words/phrases from theory/quotes	Meaning
Territory	The physical space or environment where the neo-tribe is located plays a significant role in shaping their sense of identity and belonging. For example, a group of surfers may feel a strong sense of identity because they surf at the same beach or surf spot each time; a gaming community may have a favourite platform.
Sharing common tastes	This phrase refers to the idea that members of a neo-tribe are united by their shared interests or preferences; for example, a love of music, fashion, or a particular hobby or activity.
Return of the eternal child	This phrase describes a phenomenon where adults in neo-tribes may embrace a childlike state of mind. This may be expressed in different ways, such as through a love of playfulness, spontaneity and/or experimentation.

The following are some current forms of neo-tribes.

Gamers: This neo-tribe is characterised by a shared passion for playing video games and engaging with online gaming communities. With an abundance of options available, gamers can connect with like-minded individuals through multiplayer games such as Fortnite, Grand Theft Auto and Halo. These virtual worlds offer a diverse range of experiences that cater to different interests and skill levels. In addition to the thrill of gaming, the online communities foster a sense of friendship and shared experience in this space.

Health and fitness devotees: This neo-tribe is characterised by a shared passion for physical fitness and healthy living. This group includes members of gyms and Pilates studios, as well as those who regularly participate in outdoor fitness activities such as the popular Australian Parkrun groups.

Cosplayers: This neo-tribe is characterised by a shared interest in dressing up as characters from popular culture, such as anime, comics and video games. This group is known for its creativity. Cosplay group events provide a safe space for members of the neo-tribe to share their costumes and connect with like-minded individuals. The cosplay community is known as an inclusive and accepting space that celebrates diversity and individuality.

Sports fans: Members of this neo-tribe are known for their shared love of sports, attending live sporting events and showing unwavering support for their favourite teams. In Australia, the passion for sports is a common thread that runs deeply through the country’s culture, spanning various sports, such as AFL football, soccer, netball, basketball, lawn bowls and even rollerblading. This connection goes beyond mere passive observation and extends to social gatherings and fervent discussions.

Spirituality seekers: This neo-tribe is characterised by a shared interest in personal growth, spirituality and/or alternative healing communities. Members of this group are known for their reflective nature and their dedication to personal growth and wellbeing. Members of this neo-tribe hold a wide range of beliefs and undertake different practices, from meditation and yoga to energy healing. The popularity of this neo-tribe is evident in the more than 3600 Melbourne-based spiritual, personal growth and meditation Meetup groups in 2023. These groups offer a space for people to connect, share their experiences and learn from one another.

Michel Maffesoli’s theory of neo-tribes

Michael Maffesoli’s theory of neo-tribes is based on the emergence of fluid, temporary and loosely organised community groups in today’s society

Formed based on ‘shared interests’, lifestyles or values

The group’s ‘territory’ can be geographic or cyber

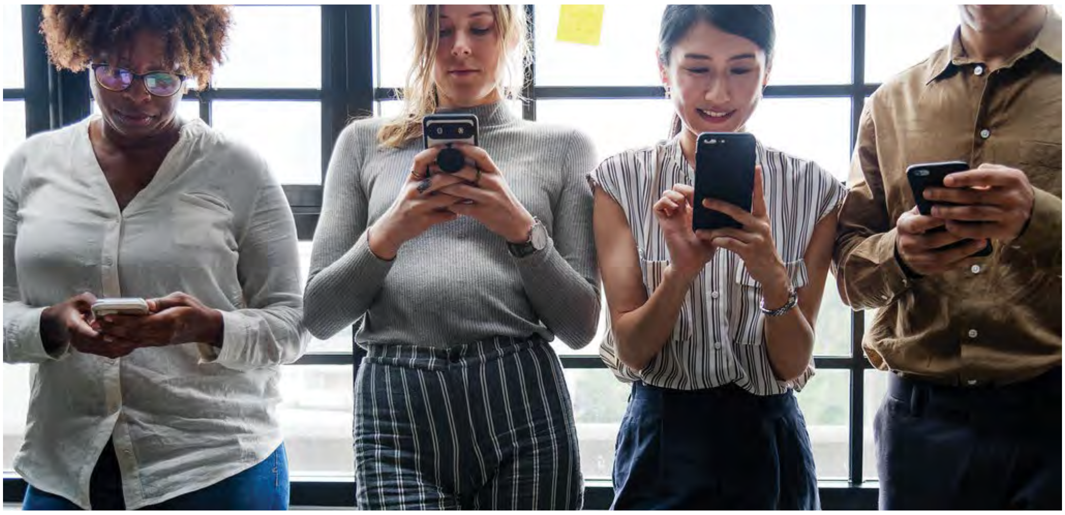
Formed to meet the human desire for ‘belonging’

Facilitates a connection with our ‘eternal child’

What to consider when categorising a group as a neo-tribe

Do they have:

- **shared interests?** Does the group share common tastes or preferences, such as music, art or fashion? Are members drawn to the group because of their mutual appreciation of a particular hobby or activity?
- **a shared territory** (space)? Does the group feel a connection to a particular place, such as a neighbourhood, a city, a region or cyberspace? Does this connection to the ‘territory’ of the group contribute to a sense of identity and belonging?
- **a desire to connect with their ‘eternal child’?** Does the group have a sense of playfulness or childlike freedom? Does the group prioritise having fun and enjoying the moment over more serious or adult concerns?
- **changing group aims and membership?** Does the group regularly change the types of activities that they participate in? Do they have a stable or shifting number of group members? Does the change have a positive or negative impact on the group?



Activity G – Exploring neo-tribes

Before answering the following questions, take a moment to think about what a neo-tribe is and how it differs from traditional social groups.

1. Explain what is meant by the term ‘neo-tribe’. Provide an example to support your answer.
2. Explain how a neo-tribe differs to a Gemeinschaft community.
3. Provide an example of a neo-tribe in modern society. Explain what brings its members together.

Gamer neo-tribes

A contemporary form of neo-tribe is represented by gaming communities, where individuals are united by their mutual interest in video games. While gaming was historically considered an individual activity, it has now evolved into a social experience, allowing gamers to connect with like-minded individuals. Such communities offer an opportunity to build connections and establish friendships with others who share similar interests.

Gamers have created subgroups within the broader gaming community, ranging from online multiplayer games to in-person tabletop games. These subgroups typically have frequent meetups, which foster a sense of connection and belonging among individuals who share similar interests. For instance, a Dungeons and Dragons (D&D) group may convene every few weeks, drawing together colleagues and online acquaintances to play in person.

Chantelle Gontier is a 30-year-old gamer living in metropolitan Melbourne. In addition to gaming, she works full-time as a general practice nurse, and also connects with her geographic community and a dance community. She is actively involved in a gaming community. While many connections occur online, she will also catch up face-to-face within specific subgroups. Chantelle has been known to ‘travel an hour’ to attend, while another group member lives interstate. They radio and video themselves into events.

One of the first events that Chantelle attended was the ‘Big Lan’ event, which attracts around 150 to 200 individuals who share a passion for gaming. Various sections are dedicated to different types of games and activities, including computer, tabletop and console games. The event also has a competitive spirit, with prizes given for the ‘coolest and most terrible gaming setups’.

The gaming community is known for its fluidity, which means that people may join or leave the community as their interests or life circumstances change. However, despite this, gamers still feel a strong sense of belonging and connection to the community as a whole. For example, Chantelle found a D&D group through a Facebook post that invited beginners to join. She eventually decided to join a different group that she felt more connected to, but still continued to play with a smaller group and attend gaming events such as the ‘Big Lan’ event. When Chantelle’s nursing shift work ‘became too demanding’, she had to leave the first D&D group. The changing level of participation reflects the different layers of connections that exist within the gaming community, from one-on-one interactions to smaller groups and larger events.

Overall, Chantelle finds the gaming community to be a great source of enjoyment and connection. As she puts it, ‘I don’t really like playing combat games individually, but they can be fun to play socially.’ She appreciates how easy it is to hop online and fulfill her desire to socialise with others. Despite the community being stereotypically male-dominated, Chantelle feels that it has become more inclusive over time. She shares, ‘It’s really great to see more diversity in the gaming community. I’ve formed a small group of girlfriends in my regular group.’ Chantelle also values the long-term friendships that she has formed through gaming, including a non-binary friend she met through the community. She sums up her feelings by saying, ‘It’s a place where I can simply be myself and have a good time with people who have similar interests.’

Activity H – Applying Michel Maffesoli’s theory to a gaming community

1 Use the table provided below to document the key neo-tribal theoretical characteristics that are shared among the gaming community.

Michel Maffesoli’s theory of neo-tribes	Gamer community
A community based on shared interests	
Individuals tend to connect with multiple groups	
Characterised by fluidity, occasional gatherings and dispersal	
Broader geographical ‘territory’ than past geographically based groups	
May use ICT to participate and/or to nurture a sense of belonging	

2 Undertake research to identify and describe a neo-tribe of your choice. This group can be one that you belong to, such as a fan or sporting group, or a subculture that you have observed.

Your description should include specific details regarding the key features of the neo-tribe, supported by relevant theoretical evidence. Use the headings from the table above to guide your evidence-gathering and note-taking.

How has the concept of community changed over time?

The concept of community has undergone significant change over time. Although its forms and methods of connecting have evolved, community still plays a crucial role in modern society.

As we have learnt, Ferdinand Tönnies saw this shift as being caused by the forces of industrialisation and urbanisation. He wrote about the erosion of traditional social structures and the emergence of new forms of social organisation. Tönnies categorised these new forms of social organisation as either Gemeinschaft (community) or Gesellschaft (society).

Michel Maffesoli's theory of neo-tribes provides a contemporary explanation as to how and why people form communities. Maffesoli argues that modern societies have witnessed the fragmentation of social life and the erosion of traditional forms of social grouping, such as the nuclear family, the workplace and formal institutions. As a result, individuals have turned to informal social networks, known as neo-tribes, to establish social and emotional connections. These communities are based on shared interests, passions and lifestyles rather than on tradition or geographic location. According to Maffesoli, changes brought about by shifting social values and the **digital revolution** have led to an expanded definition of community, rather than to its demise.

Digital revolution refers to the widespread adoption and integration of digital technologies, particularly information and communication technologies, that have led to significant changes in the way people communicate, work, access information and socialise.

In sum, it could be argued that community today can be defined as a neo-tribal social network formed by individuals based on shared interests, passions and lifestyles, in response to the decline of traditional social structures as observed by Tönnies.

Activity I – The concept of community

1. Explain how the concept of community has changed over time. Describe two factors that have influenced this change.
2. Briefly describe the features of a Gemeinschaft community and a current neo-tribe. Compare the similarities and differences between each group.
3. Using the VCAA definition as well as the theories of Tönnies and Maffesoli as a guide, create a contemporary definition of community.

Comparing Tönnies' and Maffesoli's approaches to understanding community

A critical component of this key knowledge area in the study design is to compare the theoretical perspectives of Ferdinand Tönnies and Michel Maffesoli. In VCE Sociology, this key skill requires you to identify and then explore similarities and differences. In this instance, you will be required to compare the features of these two theories that we've been using to explain community.

These two sociologists offer distinct approaches to understanding the nature of community. Tönnies focuses on the distinction between Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, which reflects the transition from traditional to modern societies. In contrast, Maffesoli focuses on the evolution of new forms of community based on shared interests and identity, referred to as neo-tribes.

Similarities

Ferdinand Tönnies' and Michel Maffesoli's theories both highlight the common pattern of humans forming social connections via communities. Both sociologists emphasise the importance of community in fostering a sense of belonging and wellbeing among individuals.

Both theories explore the impact of change on the concept of community. Tönnies' theory focuses on the influence of industrialisation and the shift from traditional to modern societies, which led to changes in the type and structure of community. Maffesoli's theory explores how the evolution of information and communication technologies, along with changing social values, have impacted the formation of new types of communities.

Differences

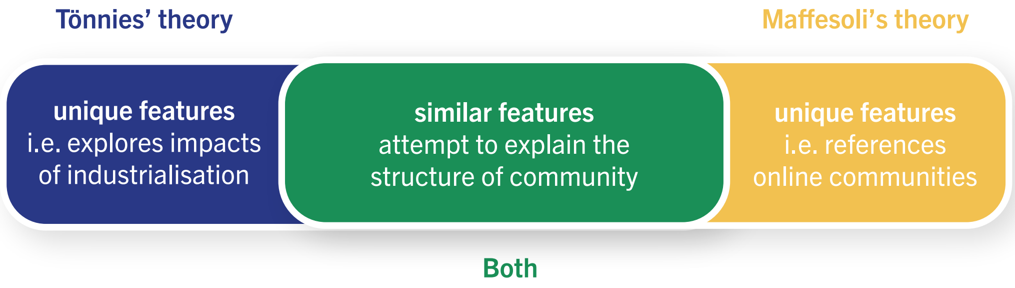
Tönnies' theory of Gemeinschaft focuses on traditional forms of community that are based on shared history, kinship, culture and geography. In contrast, Maffesoli's concept of neo-tribes reflects the postmodern, globalised world of the 21st century, where people are free to join groups based on their own interests and identities rather than historical or familial obligation.

Further, Tönnies' theory is structured around a dichotomy between Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, whereas Maffesoli's theory observes the fluidity and flexibility of neo-tribes. The concept of neo-tribalism reflects the diversity and complexity of contemporary societies, where individuals can form and dissolve communities based on their changing needs and preferences.

Finally, Tönnies' theory highlights the negative effects of modernisation on community connections, whereas Maffesoli's theory sees the potential benefits of neo-tribes for supporting people in modern, fast-paced societies. For example, neo-tribes can offer a sense of belonging and support to people who may feel disconnected from traditional forms of community.

Activity J – Comparing theories

1 Create a Venn diagram based on the model below to show how Tönnies and Maffesoli's theories differ in their views about the structure and purpose of community groups.


Tönnies' theory
Maffesoli's theory
unique features
i.e. explores impacts of industrialisation
similar features
attempt to explain the structure of community
unique features
i.e. references online communities
Both

2 Identify an interest-based community that you belong to. Justify which theory of community best explains the key features and experiences of this group.

The experience of community generally 4.1.2

Experience of community refers to how people feel and interact with a group of which they are a member, including their sense of belonging, social interaction and level of inclusion.

Earlier in this chapter we explored the concept of community. This involved developing our understanding about how community is defined, and how the notion of 'community' has changed over time. This section focuses on the **experience of community**, which is comprised of factors such as the level of inclusion an individual feels, the extent to which their needs are met, and their access to the skills and resources of the group.

Factors that influence feelings of belonging 4.1.2.1

A positive impact of community involvement is the creation of feelings of belonging among group members. As we learnt in the previous chapter, belonging refers to the emotional experience of feeling secure and supported within a group. It includes the feelings of acceptance and inclusion among members of a particular community.

Having a sense of belonging is critical for people's emotional wellbeing. When individuals feel that they belong to a group, they experience a sense of connection and acceptance that can enhance their happiness.

Feeling a sense of belonging to a community group can be a powerful and positive experience for individuals. Often, group members actively support and encourage those within the community. However, the level of connection can vary, and there may be times when additional support is needed.

Feelings of belonging in community groups can be nurtured in many ways, such as those described below.

Credit: Jérôme Decq. flic.kr/p/dRqB8r

- **Shared values and beliefs**: Communities are often formed around shared values and beliefs, such as religious or political beliefs, or cultural heritage. When people share these values and beliefs, they feel a sense of belonging and connection with each other.

  Example: A group of environmental activists share a common belief in the importance of protecting the environment and taking action to lessen climate change impacts. Within the community, members may share similar values, such as a commitment to sustainability and reducing their environmental impact, and they may work together to raise awareness and advocate for environmental policies.

- **Shared experiences**: Communities can also be formed around common experiences, such as attending the same school or participating in the same sports team. These shared experiences create a sense of shared identity and purpose.

  Example: Members of a local soccer team who have been playing together since primary school years would have shared experiences. Over time, they are likely to have faced personal challenges and victories on the field. By sharing their experiences and working towards a shared goal of winning matches, the team can build a feeling of friendship and a sense of teamwork.

- **Social support**: People tend to feel a sense of belonging when they know that they have others around them who can provide emotional and/or practical support.

  Example: A student who is new to a school might receive social support from a peer mentor or House buddy program. Facilitating connections between new students with a peer(s) who can offer guidance and support can be an effective way to nurture feelings of belonging within the community.

- **Inclusion**: Groups who are inclusive and welcoming to all people, regardless of their background, enhance a sense of belonging and connection within the group. When people feel accepted and valued for who they are, they are more likely to feel that they belong.

  Example: A student who is interested in music might find inclusion in a school-based music club that provides opportunities to connect with other students who share a passion for music, regardless of their skill level or experience.

- **Communication and interaction**: When people communicate and actively engage with each other they have a stronger feeling of belonging. The ability to share experiences, ideas and feelings helps to strengthen emotional connections.

  Example: A student who is interested in social justice issues might find opportunities for interaction in a school-based activism club that organises events and campaigns around social justice causes. The club might use social media and other digital tools to facilitate communication and connect with other students who are interested in getting involved.

Activity K – Brainstorming belonging

1. Undertake a brainstorming task using the following instructions.
   a. Consider a community to which you belong, where you feel a strong sense of connection and belonging; for example, your school, a sports team, a club or religious community.
   b. Brainstorm different strategies that could help create a sense of belonging within that community. You may like to complete this task in a small group.
   c. Once you have created a list of potential strategies, order them according to the most and least effective. Think about which strategies would have the biggest impact on creating a sense of belonging and which ones might be more difficult to apply or have a smaller impact.
   d. Compare your list with that of a classmate. Did they come up with the same strategies? Why or why not? What might this tell us about belonging?
2. Imagine that you are a community development worker who has been tasked with creating feelings of belonging in a geographic community located in the new suburb of Banksia Place, on the outer edge of suburban Melbourne. Since the residents have only recently moved into their new homes, they lack familiarity and social connections with each other. There are no communal activities or shared gardens, and the absence of built features further contributes to a lack of community connection. As a result, the elderly residents feel isolated and lonely, while the young children and teenagers are experiencing boredom and restlessness.
   a. Brainstorm different factors that are likely to compromise feelings of belonging in Banksia Place.
   b. Create a plan to increase the feelings of belonging in Banksia Place. Your plan should identify specific strategies that can help to encourage social connections and feelings of belonging.

The impact of information communications technology 4.1.2.2

There have been many different impacts on the experience of community due to the introduction and use of **information and communications technology (ICT)**. ICT refers to the equipment and machinery that is used to store and/or distribute information; for example, computers, mobile phones, the Internet and social media.

Information and communications technology (ICT) refers to the equipment and machinery that is used to store and/or distribute information; for example, computers, mobile phones, the Internet and social media.

Credit: Piyapong Saydaung. linktr.ee/Saydung89

Technological advancements have had a significant impact on the experience of community, by altering the way people interact and communicate with each other. For example, social media platforms have made it possible for people to connect across vast distances, fostering a sense of virtual community. While these technologies have created new opportunities for social connection, they have also introduced challenges and threats to the structure and nature of community. ICT has introduced challenges to community relationships, such as unequal access to technology, changing workplace dynamics, and the potential for individuals to misrepresent themselves online.

Positive impacts

Some of the positive impacts of ICT on the experience of community include the following.

- ICT, aided by the process of globalisation, has helped accelerate the growth of Gesellschaft (modern) communities with the introduction of new sports, hobbies and cultural groups. There has also been an increase in the range of interest-based communities due to the ease of communication and exposure to other cultures and ideas.
- The development of the Internet has led to the concept of community evolving. Online platforms – such as forums, social media groups and gaming communities – enable people with shared interests to connect and form virtual communities. These communities provide opportunities for individuals to engage with each other, share resources and develop a sense of belonging, even if they are physically distant from each other.
- The social support received from online communities helps to create a sense of belonging among community members regardless of whether they establish face-to-face contact. ICT can help provide support to marginalised groups, such as people with disabilities, LGBTIQA+ people or those living in remote areas. Online platforms can offer resources, advocacy and connections that might not be available in their local communities.
- New technologies expose communities to different activities, ideas, opportunities and values. ICT has expanded access to information and resources, making it easier for community members to learn, stay informed and access essential services. Online platforms can also be used to share local news, events and updates within a community, fostering engagement and participation.
- ICT has made it easier for people to stay in touch with community members through various platforms such as email, social media and messaging apps. This increased connectivity allows individuals to maintain relationships, share experiences and collaborate over long distances.

Negative impacts

Some of the negative impacts of ICT on the experience of community include the following.

- The exclusion of certain community members due to unequal access to ICT has resulted in a digital divide that can exacerbate existing social inequalities. Those without access to technology or the necessary digital literacy skills may struggle to participate fully in community life and access essential services.
- Insufficient education about safe online community participation can lead to potentially unsafe interactions, such as online grooming of children by predators. Additionally, the nature of ICT can lead to issues such as cyberbullying, online harassment and privacy concerns, creating a hostile environment that may discourage individuals from participating in online communities.
- Over the past three decades, the rapid expansion of ICT has resulted in a significant decline in face-to-face interactions, prompting concerns about the quality of social relationships. Historically, physical interactions have played an important role in establishing trust, cultivating empathy and creating meaningful relationships between group members. Advocates of in-person interactions argue that digital interactions alone may not provide the level of social interaction necessary for human wellbeing.

DIGITAL NATION

AUSTRALIA 2021

The pandemic has seen life, learning and work rapidly digitise in Australia. Digital inclusion is slowly improving in our nation, but some people are still being left behind.

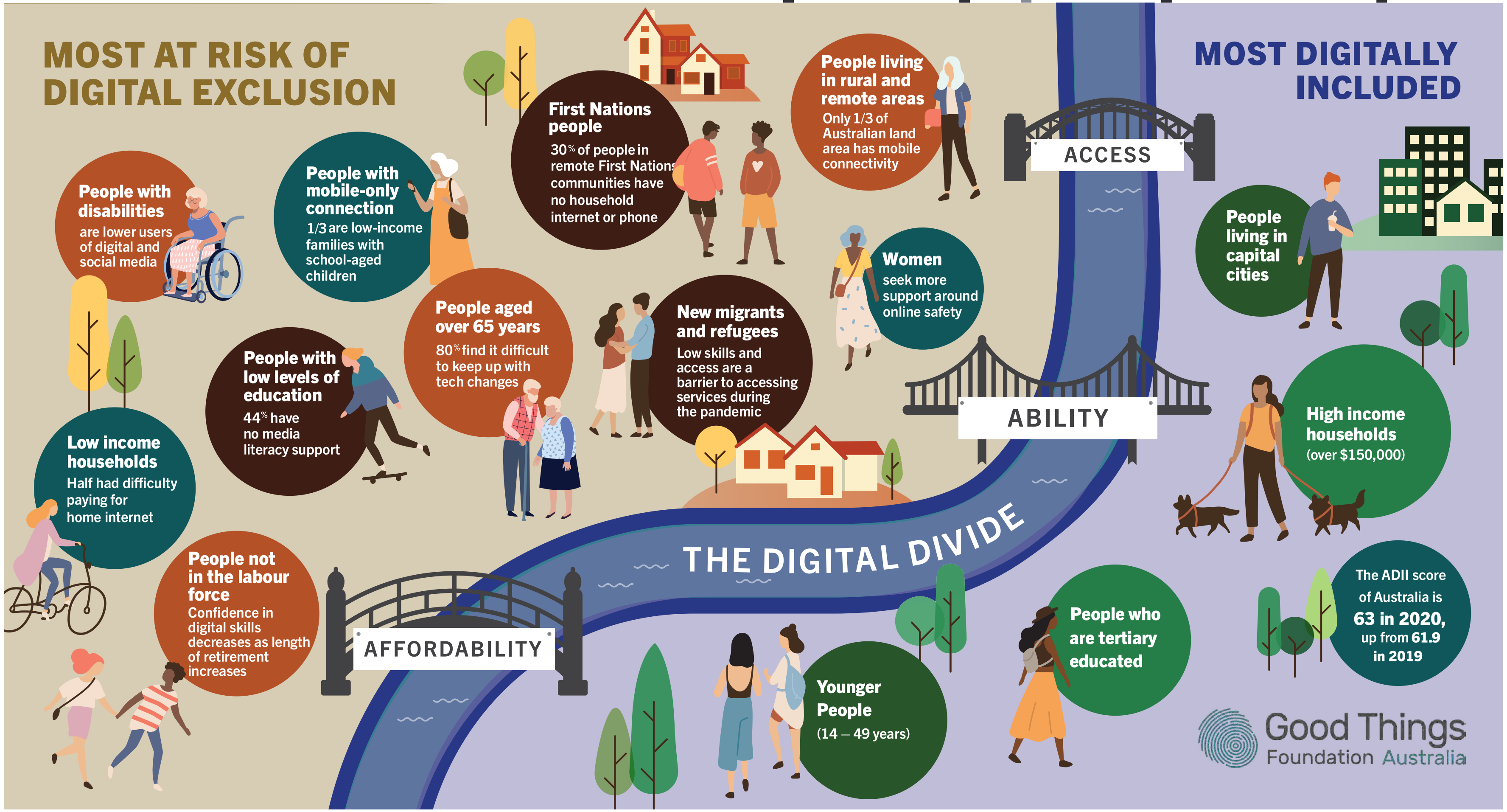
Less than 40% of Australians are confident they can keep up with tech

1% of people are completely offline, down from **10%**

87% of jobs require digital skills

77% of adults used apps to connect with others in 2020

61% lack confidence identifying misinformation online



MOST AT RISK OF DIGITAL EXCLUSION

People with disabilities are lower users of digital and social media

People with mobile-only connection 1/3 are low-income families with school-aged children

First Nations people 30% of people in remote First Nations communities have no household internet or phone

People living in rural and remote areas Only 1/3 of Australian land area has mobile connectivity

Low income households Half had difficulty paying for home internet

People with low levels of education 44% have no media literacy support

People aged over 65 years 80% find it difficult to keep up with tech changes

New migrants and refugees Low skills and access are a barrier to accessing services during the pandemic

Women seek more support around online safety

People not in the labour force Confidence in digital skills decreases as length of retirement increases

MOST DIGITALLY INCLUDED

People living in capital cities

High income households (over $150,000)

People who are tertiary educated

Younger People (14 – 49 years)

The ADII score of Australia is **63 in 2020,** up from 61.9 in 2019

Good Things Foundation Australia

Credit: Good Things Foundation Australia, 2021. goodthingsfoundation.org.au/news/digital-nation-australia-2021

Activity L – Exploring the impact of ICT on community

1. Describe one positive and one negative impact of ICT on communities. Provide specific examples to support your answer.
2. Based on your answer to question 1, conduct research to determine whether the positive or negative impact of ICT on communities is more significant. Use at least two sources to support your position.
3. Explain the relationship between feelings of belonging and the experience of belonging.
4. For each of the hypothetical communities outlined below, determine whether the statement about the impact of ICT is positive or negative, and explain why.
   a. The use of ICT has enabled lonely elderly residents in a nursing home to connect with their families and friends through video calls and social media, reducing social isolation and improving their mental health.
   b. The overreliance on ICT has led to a decrease in face-to-face interactions with customers, leading to a loss of personal connections and community spirit at a local suburban café.
   c. The use of ICT has enabled teenagers living with a visual impairment to connect with peers who share their interests through online forums and social media, helping them to build supportive communities and develop new skills.
   d. The use of ICT has enabled farmers in rural areas to access real-time information about weather patterns, crop diseases and market prices, helping them to make informed decisions and increase their yields. As a result, they have been able to stay in their regional community.
   e. The use of ICT has enabled a Little Athletics community in a small town to connect with other clubs from around Australia, providing access to new training methods and techniques, allowing them to remain competitive.

The effects of economic, social and political factors, and geographical characteristics 4.1.2.3

Communities are shaped by a range of features, including economic, social and political factors, and geographical characteristics. Understanding these factors can help group leaders and members create a more inclusive and supportive community. Each of these factors has an impact on the community experience and at times a combination of factors can affect a group. Recognising and addressing the influence of these factors can help groups to thrive.

The goal when exploring this area of the course is to consider the following points.

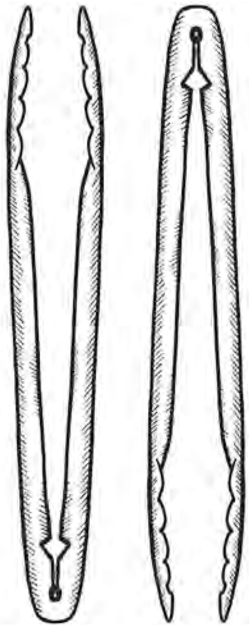
- What is the nature of the factor?
  - i.e. a new person in a group, the loss of government funding, a natural distance
- How has it impacted on the community group?
  - i.e. enriched the social experiences, led to a loss of community members, expanded the activities the members can participate in
- How does the factor impact on the ‘experience of community’?
  - i.e. is it positive, negative or both?
- Is this experience the same for all group members? Why, or why not?

Economic factors

Economic factors refer to a group's access to financial resources. These resources are influenced by many factors, such as group members' contributions, donations, government funding and insurance.

The experience of community is shaped by various **economic factors**, such as unemployment rates, income levels and access to government funding. Communities with high unemployment rates and low income levels may face greater financial hardships and social inequality, straining social relationships and eroding community cohesion. Conversely, communities with a strong local economy may have more resources available to invest in infrastructure, education and social programs, contributing to a stronger sense of community among its members.

For example, tourism is a significant economic factor that has impacted the community experience in Mallacoota. The town relies heavily on tourism, with visitors arriving during peak periods such as the summer holidays. During the 2019–2020 bushfires, which occurred over summer, Mallacoota was evacuated, and this resulted in significant economic losses for the town. This was followed by long periods of isolation due to COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. Nonetheless, the crisis brought the community closer together as locals supported each other, worked to rebuild and reopen businesses, and showed the town's resilience and community spirit (ABC, 2021).



Social factors

Social factors refer to elements within society that influence the behaviour, attitudes and beliefs of individuals and groups. Examples of social factors include culture, social norms, values, social trends and interpersonal dynamics.

Demographic changes, cultural diversity and social norms are just some of the **social factors** that play a significant role in the community experience. While cultural norms and social hierarchies can create a sense of belonging and shared identity in some communities, exclusionary practices can lead to social isolation and marginalisation in others.

Following the devastating bushfires that destroyed 120 buildings in Mallacoota in 2019–2020, the Waves of Wellness (WOW) healing group was established to help the wellbeing of traumatised teenagers. Joel Pilgrim, the CEO of WOW, organised surfing lessons and mental health conversations to help people 'reclaim the beach' and feel connected and safe in their town once again. By providing a group activity where people can talk about the trauma of the fires in a positive light and enjoy time with their loved ones, WOW's activities promote social relationships and support. The group's efforts reflect the community's social values of local support and mateship, highlighting how community initiatives can have a profound impact on the community experience during times of crisis (ABC, 2021).

Political factors

Government policies, regulations, structures and institutions are among the range of political factors that can influence the experience of community. Strong political representation and access to public services can positively impact communities by making them feel more connected and supported. Government funding can also provide crucial financial support for community programs and initiatives, while political support can offer recognition, which can increase public support. Alternatively, political changes can negatively impact communities by leading to funding cuts and increased regulation of community groups, limiting their ability to operate freely. Political support can also come with conditions, leading to a loss of independence for community groups.

In Mallacoota, a community-led political group has played a significant role in shaping the community experience. The desire for a locally driven recovery from the Black Summer bushfires resulted in the election and formation of the Mallacoota and District Recovery Association (MADRA). The 2022 ABC documentary *People's Republic of Mallacoota* revealed how this political organisation was established. They successfully campaigned for funding for local projects, such as short-term housing and regeneration initiatives. The formation of MADRA brought the community together and created a sense of empowerment as group members worked towards a shared goal of improving their town (ABC, 2022).

Laws and grants of funding to communities like Mallacoota emerge from bills introduced and passed in the Legislative Assembly, which sits within the Parliament of Victoria in Melbourne. Credit: new.parliament.vic.gov.au/about/history-and-heritage

The community of Port Niranda

One community that has been influenced by various factors is the small rural town of Port Niranda. Port Niranda is a closely connected community with a population of around 800 people, with a strong tradition of farming.

One factor that has influenced Port Niranda is the ageing population of the town. Many young people have left Port Niranda in search of employment opportunities in larger cities, leading to a decline in the town's population and a lack of young people to take over the farms and businesses. This has resulted in a sense of isolation for many of the older residents, who feel disconnected from the younger generation.

Another factor that has influenced Port Niranda is the recent closure of the local hospital. The hospital had been a significant source of employment for many residents, and its closure has resulted in a loss of jobs and a lack of access to essential health services. This has had a significant impact on the community's wellbeing, particularly for older residents who rely on regular medical care.

An additional factor that has influenced Port Niranda is the decline in the demand for wool. Port Niranda has a long history of wool production, but with the rise of synthetic fabrics and the increase in international competition, the demand for wool has declined significantly. This has resulted in a decline in the profitability of local farms and businesses, leading to financial difficulties for many residents.

One Port Niranda community group that has been particularly impacted by these factors is the Port Niranda Senior Citizens Association. The association is made up of older residents who come together for social activities and to advocate for the needs of the community's older population.

The ageing population of Port Niranda has had a significant impact on the association. There has been a decline in membership and fewer people are interested in volunteering to lead group activities. The closure of the hospital has also had an impact, with members struggling to access essential medical care. The decline in the wool industry has also had a financial impact on many members, with some struggling to afford the cost of living in the town.

Despite these challenges, the Port Niranda Senior Citizens Association has continued to work towards supporting the needs of the community's older population. They have advocated for increased access to healthcare services and have worked to create social events that bring together younger and older residents. They have also explored new economic opportunities, such as promoting eco tourism in the area, to help support local businesses and farms.

Activity M – Impacts of economic, social and political factors

1 Read the representation of the fictional community of Port Niranda provided and answer the questions that follow.

   a Describe one example each of a social, an economic and a political factor that has influenced the community of Port Niranda.

   b Explain how each of these factors has impacted the community experience for the Port Niranda Senior Citizens Association.

   c Explain how these factors influenced each other to influence the experience for the community.

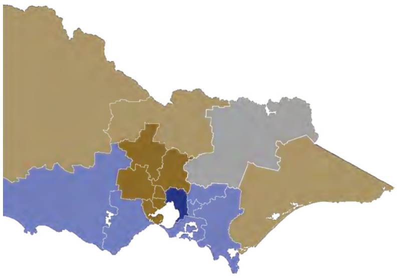
2 Identify a community group that you are a member of, or one that you know a lot about. Then describe:

a the name, history and purpose of the community group

b an economic factor that has impacted the group and explain how it has affected the experience of community

c a social factor that has impacted the group and explain how it has affected the experience of community

d a political factor that has impacted the group and explain how it has affected the experience of community.



Geographical characteristics

A vast range of **geographical characteristics** can influence a community's experience. Key examples include **proximity** and **accessibility**, **climate**, **scenic quality**, **landforms**, **natural resources**, and **built features** such as community centres. It is important to note that the impact of geographical characteristics is broader than these factors. Other examples of geographical factors that can impact community include (but are not limited to) soil quality, water availability, air quality, cultural heritage and demographics.

Geographical characteristics refer to a range of features, including proximity and accessibility, climate, scenic quality, landforms, natural resources, built features such as community centres or other relevant characteristics.

The VCAA geographical characteristics

Proximity refers to the closeness or distance between two places or objects. It can impact various aspects of life, such as transportation, accessibility and economic development.

Accessibility is the ease with which a place or location can be reached from other places. It is influenced by factors such as transportation infrastructure, proximity and physical barriers.

Climate refers to the long-term patterns of temperature, precipitation, humidity and other atmospheric conditions in a specific area.

Scenic quality refers to the visual appeal and attractiveness of a landscape or environment.

Landforms are natural features of Earth's surface, such as mountains, valleys, plateaus and plains.

Natural resources are materials and substances that occur naturally in the environment and can be used for economic gain, such as minerals, water and timber.

Built features are human-made structures and developments, such as buildings, roads, bridges and monuments.

Population refers to the number of people living in a particular area or region. It can be influenced by factors such as migration, birth rates and death rates.

The link between geography and the experience of community

Geographic features can have a significant impact on the experience of community, shaping how people interact, connect and access resources within their local environment.

- **Proximity**: When communities are near each other, it is easier for people to engage in shared activities and events. This can nurture social connections. For example, in urban areas where residential, business and recreational spaces are close together, people may have more opportunities to attend social gatherings, cultural events and community meetings, promoting a sense of belonging and shared identity. Similarly, if distance acts as a barrier to participation, a person's experience of community may be reduced.
- **Accessibility**: Helpful methods to assist accessibility (such as well-developed transportation infrastructure) can promote social inclusion and community cohesion. For example, a community with reliable public transport and accessible pedestrian areas can make it easier for members to assist and participate in activities. Likewise, if community spaces are inaccessible, community involvement is often reduced.
- **Climate**: Extreme or inhospitable climates can present challenges to community life, affecting social interactions, resource availability and the number of residents. For example, in remote areas with harsh climates, such as Coober Pedy, communities may face challenges in accessing essential services, maintaining infrastructure and sustaining long-term social connections within the challenging environment. However, the resilience required to survive in this climate can also strengthen friendships and connections.
- **Scenic quality**: The quality of the scenery in an area can have a significant impact on the community's experience. For instance, a town nestled in a valley surrounded by mountains may feel a sense of pride and connection to the environment. Likewise, a community located near a scenic natural landmark, such as a waterfall or a forest, can attract tourists, boost the local economy, and offer opportunities for outdoor recreation to residents. In both instances, people are likely to want to stay and actively participate in community activities.
- **Landforms**: Landforms can play an important role in shaping the experience of community. For example, a community located near a river may have developed a strong cultural and economic connection to the water, with fishing, transportation and other industries relying on its resources. Alternatively, a community situated in a hilly or mountainous region may have developed unique building and transportation methods to navigate the terrain.
- **Natural resources**: The presence or absence of natural resources can impact on a group's economic opportunities and therefore the experience of community. For example, a community located near a valuable mineral deposit may experience an economic boom, attracting new members and businesses. However, this can also lead to an increased demand for resources, potential environmental degradation and social conflict over land use and resource distribution, compromising the experience of the community.

- **Built features:** Built features such as halls, stadiums, libraries, train stations and religious buildings play a major role in shaping the community's experience. However, poorly planned urban development can lead to overcrowding, inadequate infrastructure and limited access to public spaces, which can negatively impact the community. For example, in densely populated cities with limited green spaces, it may be difficult for residents to access recreational areas, decreasing their connection with nature and potentially affecting overall wellbeing.
- **Population**: Population distribution can significantly influence the experience of community. For instance, an uneven age distribution in a suburban community can lead to challenges in meeting the needs of both young families and older residents. A community with an ageing population may struggle to provide adequate healthcare and social services, while a community with a younger population may experience pressure on its schooling and recreational facilities.

The community of Secret River

Credit: Marc Dalmulder, 2022. flic.kr/p/2n9piQN

Lena's deep connection to the ocean had always been a part of her life. Growing up in the small coastal town of Secret River in Victoria, she was surrounded by the spectacular landscape of a towering mountain range. As a child, she spent countless hours on the sandy beaches, swimming and exploring the rock pools for tiny creatures. As an adult, Lena came to appreciate the town's beautiful environment and mild climate, making Secret River a sanctuary for those who respected the beauty of the natural world and loved the outdoors.

Over time, however, Lena noticed a change in her hometown. The increased frequency and intensity of storms battered the coastline, eroding the beaches and cliffs, posing a constant threat to the once striking shoreline. Determined to respond, Lena became involved in the community's efforts to address these climate change consequences. She joined the local branch of a group known as Save Our Seas (SOS). They began building sea walls to protect the coastline and implementing sustainable coastal management practices. Unsurprisingly, the community established a sense of unity in their shared love of their home.

Lena also joined an SOS subgroup, which began turning to eco tourism to maintain the local economy, but to also be gentle on the land. Lena's dedication to her community and its environment had never wavered. She knew that Secret River's beauty and resilience would continue to inspire generations to come.

Activity N – Geographic characteristics in Secret River

1. Referring to the representation of the fictional community of Secret River, explain how the geographic location of Secret River has assisted in the residents' experiences of community.
2. Explain how the town has used natural resources to enhance the experience of community.
3. Identify and describe the impact of another geographical characteristic that has shaped the experience of the Secret River community.

Skill development: how to write an 'evaluate' response

When **evaluating**, you need to make a judgement and use the provided information, criteria and your own knowledge and understanding to consider a logical argument and supporting evidence for and against different points, arguments, concepts, processes, opinions or other information. Let's practise by exploring the following 'evaluate' question.

Question

Evaluate how an economic and a political factor have influenced feelings of belonging in a community that you have studied this year. Provide specific examples of the impact of these factors and consider how they may be interrelated.

Start with some KLC planning!

- **Key knowledge words**: economic factors, political factors, belonging, community, details about a specific community
- **Limiting words**: one example of each factor (as well as their interrelationship)
- **Command words**: evaluate

To effectively evaluate, consider the following points.

- Develop a clear **contention** to guide your judgement. For example:

  The impact of local government funding on the community has been positive, while economic factors have caused stress for community members.
- When writing your **body paragraphs**, remember to use the **TEEL structure**:
  - Begin with a clear topic sentence, explain your point with a critical lens (i.e. judge as per an evaluation), provide evidence to support your argument, and conclude with a linking sentence that connects your ideas to your overall contention.
  - **Sample topic sentence**: *Government policies aimed at addressing the effects of climate-change-related disasters in the community have contributed to a richer experience of community in the long term, despite the traumatic impacts on most members in the short term.*
  - **Sample linking sentence**: *This shows how the government policy on managing the effects of climate change has had a significant impact on the experience of community for all residents of Mallacoota.*
- In your **conclusion**, consider the following features:
  - Link back to your contention.
  - Write separate sentences for each factor/feature/concept explored.
  - When evaluating the concept, consider whether the definition has changed permanently or temporarily, and the nature of the change (profound, dramatic or minimal).
  - When writing about the community experience, make sure to comment on whether it is consistent across all members of the group and evaluate the nature and duration of its impact or change. For example, consider whether the impact is minimal, significant, positive or traumatic. Also consider factors such as age group, gender and other relevant characteristics when considering the impact of the factors explored.

Activity O – You be the judge

1 Read the student sample response to the question below.

Evaluate how an economic and a social factor have influenced the experience of a community that you have studied this year. Draw on material that you have studied this year for evidence to support your response.

The town of Mildura is a geographically based community of more than 30 000 people in north-western Victoria. The concept of community refers to a group of people who share social relationships through being geographically close to each other and/or being in regular contact with each other, and through having similarities such as mutual interests and/or shared ideology. An economic factor that has influenced the experience of the community in Mildura is the reliance on agriculture, while a social factor is the importance of richness of social connections in rural areas.

Mildura is a key agricultural region in Australia, with a significant reliance on the production of wine grapes, citrus fruits and vegetables. This has resulted in significant economic benefits for the region, including high levels of employment and income for those working in the agricultural industry. However, the region's reliance on agriculture has also made it susceptible to external factors such as climate change, drought and changes in global demand for agricultural products.

The social factor of community connection is also significant in the experience of the Mildura community. The town is in a rural area and, as such, community connection is essential for social support and wellbeing. The Mildura community has recognised the importance of community connection and has developed several initiatives aimed at promoting social inclusion and community wellbeing.

The experience of the Mildura community has been influenced by both economic and social factors. The region's reliance on agriculture has resulted in significant economic benefits, but has also made it susceptible to external factors. The importance of community connection in rural areas has been recognised by the Mildura community, with initiatives aimed at promoting social inclusion and community wellbeing.
The recognition of the importance of environmental sustainability is essential in ensuring the long-term sustainability and success of the Mildura community.

2 Use the following checklist to assess the quality of this response.

Introduction

- An outline of what is meant by economic and social factor
- Definition of community and experience of community
- A brief overview of the community group
- A clear contention linking the degree of impact the factors have had on the experience of community

Body paragraphs

- Two body paragraphs, each focused on a different factor
- Topic sentence linked to the contention
- A detailed exploration of how the factor has impacted on the experience of community
- Clearly signposted evidence; for example, the use of quotation marks, statistics and identification of the source of the evidence
- Linking sentence connected to the contention
- Presence of evaluative (judgement) language

Conclusion

- Two summative sentences
- Inclusion of evaluative statements

3 Rewrite this response.

The nature of a specific community 4.1.3

It is a requirement of this area of study to complete a primary and/or secondary investigation into a specific community. Any primary research of a community should be guided by the ethical guidelines established by The Australian Sociological Association (TASA) (discussed in Unit 3, Area of Study 2 – Ethnicity). Read on to see an example of how ethical methodology was applied in our Keysborough CFA community investigation.

It is often helpful to select a community that you have a personal connection with or have easy access to. Case studies could include sport clubs, social justice organisations, computer gaming forums and other small-scale communities such as a local church, synagogue, temple or mosque. When considering which group to study, consider whether you will be able to address all the key knowledge explored. In addition, it is important that the explicit use of evidence is used rather than general summaries – for example, the inclusion of direct quotes from community members. The use of secondary sources is also encouraged.

Selecting your community group

If you are considering studying a community group, it is important to keep in mind that online or virtual groups may not be the best option for your research. While these groups can certainly be considered communities, studying them may not allow you to fully explore the influence of geographical characteristics on community experiences. Online communities may be less impacted by physical factors such as proximity and accessibility, and more influenced by other factors such as social norms and values. Therefore, it is important to carefully consider your research question and the community you wish to study before deciding whether an online or virtual group is the best fit for your research.

Starting your research

Once you have selected a suitable case study and planned your ethical methodology, it is important to prepare interview questions for your research participants. To gain an accurate and detailed understanding of the group's experience of community, you should address a range of factors, including economic, social and political influences, as well as the impact of geographical characteristics. It is also important to consider the feelings of the group members, such as their sense of community and belonging.

The following types of questions could be used as a guide for conducting primary research.

1. Can you tell me about the history and purpose of your community?
2. Where is the community located and is it primarily made up of members from the surrounding area?
3. Approximately how many members are currently involved in the community?
4. What is the process for becoming a member and who is eligible?
5. Are there any relevant local, state or federal laws or regulations that have an impact on the community's activities?
6. Have there been any interpersonal or social challenges faced by the community? If so, can you describe them?

7 What social factors or initiatives have had a positive impact on the community and its members?

8 What economic challenges has the community faced?

9 Have there been any economic factors that have positively impacted the community?

10 Has the community faced any difficulties in terms of maintaining its physical infrastructure, such as buildings and meeting spaces?

11 How have geographic features, such as natural landmarks or climate, had a positive impact on the community?

12 Can you describe how the community promotes and maintains its membership?

13 Does the community use any forms of technology or online platforms to connect with members or to promote events? If so, how/which ones?

14 In your opinion, do all members of the community have the same level of emotional connection to the group? If not, why do you think this is the case?

Activity P – Writing your case study interview questions

1 Create your own set of interview questions modelled on the sample questions provided. Be mindful of the following points.
   a Familiarise yourself with the key knowledge dot points in the study design.
   b Use language that reflects your own and your research participants' vocabulary and experiences.

Case study: The Keysborough Country Fire Authority (CFA)

The nature of the Keysborough CFA community

Keysborough is a suburb located in the south-eastern suburbs of Melbourne. Historically, the area was primarily used for market gardens and poultry farming. In the 1950s and 1960s, there was a significant influx of post-war migrants to the area, which led to the development of numerous housing estates. The suburb continued to grow rapidly in the 1970s and 1980s, with the construction of new schools, shopping centres and community facilities.

Today, Keysborough is a culturally diverse geographic community, with a population of more than 30000 people according to the 2021 ABS Census. The area has experienced significant development in recent years, including the construction of new housing estates, shopping centres and recreational facilities catering to the needs of young families and teenagers.

This case study describes the experiences of a research participant. She is middle-aged, lives in Keysborough and is employed as a primary school teacher. In addition to her full-time employment, the participant volunteers with her local Country Fire Association (CFA). This report focuses on her personal experiences as a volunteer in that community and is supplemented with additional secondary sources of evidence (*see the reference list at the end of this section*).

How the Keysborough CFA can be classified as a community

The concept of **community** refers to a group of people who share social relationships through being geographically close to each other and/or being in regular contact with each other, and through having similarities such as mutual interests and/or shared ideology. The Keysborough CFA is a community with the shared interest of protecting their geographical community from fires and to assisting with rescuing people from car accidents and other distressing events. The CFA community, which is nearly 80 years old, is currently comprised of a group of more than '40 regular volunteers'. The group members train and work together each week. The participant noted that the group members are especially close with each other. She described them as her 'fire fam'.

Influences on the experience of the Keysborough CFA 4.1.4

Factors influencing feelings of belonging 4.1.4.1

The concept of **belonging** refers to the emotional experience of feeling secure and supported within a group. It encompasses the feelings of acceptance, inclusion and identity among members of a particular community. Belonging within the Keysborough CFA community is fostered through a commitment to social inclusiveness and regular connections with each other, as shown through different activities.

The participant shared that when she first moved to the area, she 'didn't know anyone'. She noted that she had not grown up in Keysborough. She observed that she 'didn't know [her] neighbours or anything [about the local geography]'. The participant drew on values taught to her as she was growing. She reported that her family valued 'volunteer work', noting that this had been 'instilled in me by my grandparents'. This value prompted her to explore the option of joining the Keysborough CFA. The participant noted that she 'saw the tiny tin shed down the road and thought I could help support them with their fundraising and barbecues'. This was her beginning. Since then, the participant has become a firefighter and participated in leadership roles in the community. She reported that being a part of this community has given her a sense of belonging. She noted that she had 'found a group of like-minded people who have become my local family'. She added that 'we look out for each other. During the Covid times, we would drop things off at each other's houses when people were sick. We offer help when someone needs a lift or assistance with something. It's not just about volunteering; it's about being a part of something bigger than myself'.

To help nurture a sense of belonging within the Keysborough CFA community, members try to connect with each other regularly. At their regular training and meeting nights, the participant stated that she 'chat[s] with everyone. I like to touch base to see how they are doing'. She described her desire to make sure that people felt included and welcome at their meetings, 'especially newer members who don't know everyone yet'. In her efforts to continually build connections, the participant noted that she would look for anyone who was 'standing alone or who may be feeling left out'. In the interview she noted that the community members met regularly, with weekly training sessions and small sub-group assignments. Additionally, the Keysborough CFA community has a WhatsApp chat group to keep in touch outside of training and meeting times. Through the range of communication opportunities, the participant felt they had created a strong sense of belonging within the group.

Information and communications technology 4.1.4.2

Information and communications technology (ICT) refers to the equipment and machinery used to store and/or distribute information; for example, computers, mobile phones, the Internet and social media. The use of ICT has positively impacted the experience of community within the Keysborough CFA in many ways. One method has been by using WhatsApp, which is the group's main social communication tool. Members use WhatsApp to share photos, express support and condolences during difficult times, and celebrate birthdays and funny moments. The participant noted that the use of WhatsApp is like 'family keeping in touch'. These feelings expressed online appear to have enriched the experience of community for many members of the group.

The Keysborough CFA community also uses social media platform Facebook to connect with the wider community, share information and 'maintain a solid number of volunteers'. The use of Facebook is particularly useful for promoting upcoming events and new initiatives, and for inviting people to join the community.

However, the use of ICT has also posed some challenges for the community, such as 'inappropriate timing of online communication'. It was reported that some members were sending messages at late hours, which affected others who needed to work long hours or get some sleep. To address this, the group had to put a limit on the use of WhatsApp 'between 10 pm and 6 am'. Despite potentially threatening the experience of community, the well-connected group was able to adapt and protect the group's social connections.

Economic, social and political factors, and geographical characteristics 4.1.4.3

Economic

The Keysborough CFA community is a volunteer-based association that relies heavily on fundraising to acquire new technology, equipment and wellbeing tools. Economic factors – including government funding, donations, insurance and group members' contributions – significantly influence the group's access to financial resources. The group's main source of funding is through fundraising activities, particularly the popular BBQs held at Bunnings.

However, more recently, profits from these fundraising activities have declined. This is in part due to stresses from the COVID-19 pandemic and cost-of-living pressures, which have seen reduced donations from companies and individuals. The cost of supplying the necessary items for the BBQs, such as bread, butter, sausages and drinks, has increased, including the cost of cleaning supplies, napkins, gloves, aprons, utensils and tomato sauce. The participant estimated this increase to be around $500, which consequently reduces the financial resources available to support community members. Nevertheless, the community's generosity has always been significant in helping the group reach its goals.

The community's willingness to support the Keysborough CFA fosters a positive experience of community.

One fundraising goal mentioned during the interview was the group's desire to acquire 'some rehabilitation chairs' for use after 'long haul jobs'. The participant noted that they would like to obtain 'some nice chairs that have ice packs around the arms, [which] helps to bring our core body temperatures down'. Aside from the chair's practical use, the participant liked the idea of thinking about the community volunteers' wellbeing. Using economic resources to support community members appears to have had a positive impact on the experience of the community.

Social

Social factors refer to elements within society that influence the behaviour, attitudes and beliefs of individuals and groups. Examples of social factors include culture, social norms, values, social trends and interpersonal dynamics. Since joining the Keysborough CFA, the participant has observed a significant increase in social change within the community. When she first started volunteering in 2016, there were only nine active members, mostly consisting of older Caucasian men, with only two females in the group. Over the last five years, she noted that 'the brigade has grown to 50 people, with 20 of them being females and 13 being firefighters'. The participant described this as a 'great and positive change' to the diversity of the CFA's membership and recruitment. She believes that others share this point of view and mentioned that she has made two female firefighter friends because of this diversity.

The participant also observed an increase in cultural diversity within the group over time. She described the community as being a very 'inclusive environment', which has helped to shape understanding and respect for all diverse backgrounds. The suburb of Keysborough has also benefited practically, with members who speak 'many different languages' and who understand 'cultural sensitivities'. This has improved how the CFA can assist people of all backgrounds, some of whom may be reluctant to call the fire brigade or have individual needs during an emergency response.

As demonstrated, the experience of the community has been positively changed because of these developments, which have promoted a more diverse and inclusive environment within the Keysborough CFA community.

Political

Political factors refer to the decisions and laws made by governments or formal bodies within society. The legislation or regulations produced by these social institutions influence communities in many ways, such as the provision of funding, policies relating to social inclusion and environmental protection. The participant noted that Keysborough CFA is supported by the 'Victorian Fire Brigade Volunteers', which is the voice for volunteers and acts 'a bit like a union'. The group has two representatives who attend their meetings every month and report back to the brigade. This appears to help improve the experience of community by providing a 'voice' for members of the group.

The participant also reported that the Keysborough CFA has a good Victorian State Government funding program to assist volunteers after they have attended a traumatic event. They have peer support, and if they attend a job where there has been a tragedy, 'a peer support person will meet them after the job'. She noted that 'a person will meet them at the station to talk through the situation'. The CFA program calls them 'within 12 hours after the job to check if they are okay'. It was clear that the political factor of policies relating to wellbeing has positively influenced the group's experience.

In addition, in 2023 the Premier of Victoria announced grants to help emergency services volunteers grow. The grants are to support volunteer groups, including the CFA, to develop and expand their skills and capabilities. This political factor positively influenced the group by providing them with the resources they need to improve their skills and capabilities. Also, the grants show that the government values the contributions of volunteer groups and is committed to supporting them. The participant was looking forward to applying for funds to access this resource.

Geographical characteristics

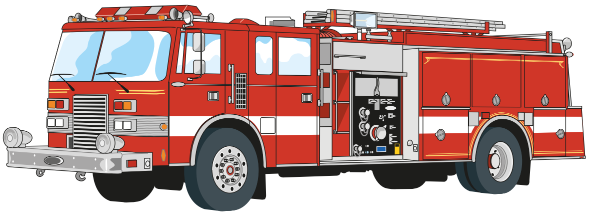
Geographical characteristics such as population and accessibility have impacted on the experience of the Keysborough CFA community. Population refers to the number of people living in a particular area or region. It can be influenced by factors such as migration, birth rates and death rates. Accessibility is the ease with which a place or location can be reached from other places. It is influenced by factors such as transportation infrastructure, proximity and physical barriers.

During the interview the participant reported that urbanisation has resulted in an increase in 'housing development and industrial estates' that has led to a surge in population growth in the suburb. In response, the Keysborough CFA community has been proactive in planning and staying aware of the impact of this urbanisation. They have expanded their building to accommodate new equipment and members and have 'purchased another fire truck'. However, the participant stated that the significant increase in urbanisation has placed a great deal of stress on CFA members. They 'worry about not being able to respond in time to fire and rescue incidents'. This was highlighted recently when someone in the geographic community had been 'intentionally lighting fires', which had understandably 'upset the community'. The participant's genuine and passionate concerns reflect the emotional connection the CFA has to the broader geographic community.

While the community has taken practical steps to continue to meet the needs of the growing population, there are still concerns about their ability to respond to emergencies in a timely manner. However, the sincerity and passion of their concerns reflects their deep emotional connection to the broader Keysborough community.

Interplay between these influences

The interplay between these influences refers to how the factors examined thus far interact to shape the experience of community for individuals and/or group members. For example, how might the provision of economic resources by a government body increase membership and enhance the sense of belonging within a community?



The sense of belonging within the Keysborough CFA community is shaped by various factors, including economic, social and political factors. For example, economic factors, such as fundraising and government funding, can impact the CFA's ability to access resources and equipment, which in turn affects the group's capacity to serve and protect the community. This can impact the sense of belonging and connection felt by members, as they may feel less supported and underequipped to carry out their duties. However, effective fundraising and government support can lead to a stronger sense of belonging and connection to the community.

Social factors, such as diversity and inclusion, also play a role in shaping the sense of belonging within the Keysborough CFA community. The increasing diversity of the local population has presented new challenges for the CFA, but also new opportunities to connect and engage with the community. By developing targeted outreach programs and building connections with community leaders, the CFA has been able to increase awareness and engagement among non-English-speaking residents. This has led to a stronger sense of belonging and connection among members, as they are able to better serve and connect with all members of the community.

Political factors, such as government policies and regulations, also impact the sense of belonging within the Keysborough CFA community. Government support and funding can help to strengthen the CFA's ability to serve and protect the community, while also fostering a sense of belonging and connection among members. In addition, government policies and regulations can impact the CFA's ability to carry out their duties effectively, which can also impact the sense of belonging felt by members. By advocating for policies and regulations that support the CFA's mission and goals, members can strengthen their sense of belonging and connection to the community.

Geographical characteristics, such as proximity and accessibility, also play a role in shaping the sense of belonging within the Keysborough CFA community. The rapid increase in urbanisation and population growth in the area has led to increased demand for the CFA's services, which can impact the sense of belonging and connection felt by members. Congested streets and longer travel times can create stress and frustration for members, which can impact their sense of connection and engagement with the community.

However, the CFA has been able to respond to these changes and maintain a strong sense of belonging and connection among members. By planning ahead and staying conscious of urbanisation, the CFA has been able to extend its building and purchase new equipment to meet the growing demands of the local community. In addition, the CFA's ability to respond and meet the needs of the community in a timely manner has helped to strengthen the sense of belonging and connection among members.

Overall, the combination of economic, social, political and geographical factors, as well as information and communication technologies, have impacted the sense of belonging and connection within the Keysborough CFA community. By exploring these factors and working together to overcome challenges, members can strengthen their sense of belonging and connection to the community, in line with their ultimate aim of better serving and protect the needs of all residents.

Different perspectives from within on the sense of community 4.1.4.4

A sense of community occurs when members actively participate and have an emotional connection with a group. One way that members connect with each other at the Keysborough CFA is through the connection they feel 'within ourselves', as explained by the participant. She noted that the sense of community within the Keysborough CFA is shaped by personal reasons for joining the group and the individual's social connections outside of the CFA community.

What is a sense of community?

The idea of a **sense of community** focuses on the feelings of belonging that members have if they are connected to a group. When present, individuals believe that their needs will be met through their participation in the group.

People might have a different sense of community within the same group for different reasons. Here are some reasons why this may occur.

Sense of community refers to positive feelings of belonging that occur when members actively participate in and have an emotional connection with a group.

- **Personal background and experiences**: Individuals come from diverse backgrounds and bring their unique experiences, cultural norms and values to a community group. These differences can influence how individuals perceive the community and their sense of community.
- **Personality traits**: People have different personality traits, which can affect their perception of community and interactions within a group. For example, introverts may find it more challenging to feel a strong sense of community in a group that places a high value on social events that are active and loud, while extroverts may thrive in such settings.
- **Level of engagement and participation**: The degree to which an individual actively participates in a community group can significantly impact their sense of community. Those who are more involved and contribute to group activities and discussions may feel a stronger connection to the community than those who remain passive or disengaged.
- **Social connections and relationships**: The quality and depth of relationships that individuals form within a community group can greatly influence their sense of community. People who develop close friendships and strong social connections within the group may feel a more profound sense of community compared to those who struggle to form such bonds.
- **Time and duration of membership**: The length of time an individual has been part of a community group can also influence their sense of community. Newer members may feel less connected or have a weaker sense of connection compared to long-term members who have built relationships and contributed to the group over time.
- **Personal values and goals**: Individuals may have different personal values and goals that influence their sense of community. If a person's values and objectives align well with those of the community group, they may feel a stronger sense of connection. In contrast, those who feel a misalignment between their personal values and the group's values may experience a weaker sense of community, or they may choose to leave the group.
- **Perception of the group's inclusiveness and openness**: People may perceive the level of inclusiveness and openness within a community group differently. Some might feel that the group is welcoming and supportive, leading to a stronger sense of community, while others may see the group as exclusive or judgmental, resulting in a weaker sense of community.

She stated that the level of connection varies depending on each person's situation. For some, the CFA community provides a new family or friend group, while for others, it may be a minimal connection due to existing commitments. However, for those with strong attachment to the group, the sense of community within the Keysborough CFA is deeply meaningful.

In the past, the participant noted that there had been a sense of division within the Keysborough CFA community between Victorian paid firefighters and their volunteers. This division influenced the sense of community for some group members. The participant explained that while both groups play vital roles in the CFA, firefighters often receive more support and recognition from the government. This disparity in recognition can lead to a perceived lack of value and appreciation for the contributions of volunteers. The participant's observation highlights the importance of recognising and appreciating the efforts of all members within the CFA, regardless of their status as firefighters or volunteers. Such recognition can result in a stronger sense of community and belonging within the Keysborough CFA.

Information on the Keysborough CFA was compiled from the following sources:

- ABS, 2021. 'Keysborough: 2021 Census all persons QuickStats'. abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/SAL21339
- Author interview with Gill Grigg, 2023.
- Marissa Calligeros, 2015. 'The faces of Melbourne: which migrants went to which suburbs'. The Age. theage.com.au/national/victoria/the-faces-of-melbourne-which-migrants-went-to-which-suburbs-20150507-ggw90s.html
- Country Fire Authority (CFA), 2022. 'Cultural Diversity Week: Mohini Sashindranath'. news.cfa.vic.gov.au/news/cultural-diversity-week-mohini-sashindranath
- Country Fire Authority (CFA), 2023. 'Volunteer with CFA'. cfa.vic.gov.au/volunteers-careers/volunteer-with-cfa
- Geordie Cowan, 2016. 'Keysborough CFA targets multicultural community to bolster ranks ahead of summer fire threat'. Herald Sun. heraldsun.com.au/leader/south-east/keysborough-cfa-targets-multicultural-community-to-bolster-ranks-ahead-of-summer-fire-threat/news-story/8d3f042e77d4564db7a47840e00d0e70
- State Government of Victoria, 2022. 'Grants to help emergency services volunteers grow'. premier.vic.gov.au/grants-help-emergency-services-volunteers-grow
- Victorian Places, 2015. 'Keysborough'. victorianplaces.com.au/keysborough
- Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria, 2023. vfbv.com.au

Interview questions used for this report

1. Why does the Keysborough CFA feel like a community?
2. What factors help to create feelings of belonging? How do these factors make people feel?
3. How has ICT helped or hindered the members of the Keysborough CFA community?
4. How has an economic factor influenced the experience of your community?
5. How has a social factor influenced the experience of your community?
6. How has a political factor influenced the experience of your community?
7. How have geographical characteristics such as population size, location or climate impacted on the experience of your community?
8. Do you believe that all people have the same level of emotional connection to the community? Please explain.
9. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Ethical methodologies 4.1.5

Refer to the exploration of ethical research methodology provided in the previous chapter, along with guidelines published on TASA's website – these should also be used when undertaking your community case study.

How ethical methodologies were applied in this case study

At the beginning of research for the Keysborough CFA community case study, the participant was given a consent form to sign (see the following sample). It included an explanation about the key features (including the purpose) of the study, as well as an overview of how the information gathered would be used and protected. The participant was informed that their data, such as their name and address, would be kept securely before being shredded at the end of the school year.

The confidentiality of data was achieved in two ways. First, the research notes were contained in a password-protected document and laptop. Second, the participant was informed that the research information related to them would be permanently deleted at the end of the VCE assessment period.

When reporting the information from the case study interview, the participant's name and address were not revealed. In the body of the report, they are referred to as 'the participant'. This allows anonymity to be maintained.

The participant signed the consent form, which showed that they understood the purpose and risks associated with the study and were happy to participate. Their right to refuse to participate and/or to withdraw from the study at any time without having to give a reason was explained to them.

Sample ethics consent form

Title of study: The experience of community at the Keysborough CFA

Researcher: [*insert student name*]

School: [*insert name of school*]

Purpose of study: The purpose of this study is to understand how the experience of community is formed and maintained in the Keysborough CFA.

Participant information: You are invited to participate in this study. The study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate. If you choose to participate, you will be asked to complete a 30-minute interview. You will be asked a series of questions that will be recorded and used for a VCE Sociology assessment report.

Confidentiality: All information gathered will be kept confidential and anonymous. No personal identifying information will be collected during the study.

Risks: There are no known risks associated with participating in this study.

Benefits: The results of this study may help us better understand how to support community groups.

Consent: By participating in this study, you agree to the following:

1. I understand the purpose of this study and what will be expected of me.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I may choose to withdraw from the study at any time.
3. I understand that all information collected will be kept confidential and anonymous.
4. I understand that there are no known risks associated with participating in this study.
5. I understand that the results of this study will be used for a VCE assessment task.

You are welcome to contact my teacher, [*insert teacher name*] ([*insert teacher email address*]) should you have any concerns about this study.

Please sign below to indicate your consent to participate in this study.

[participant signature]

[participant name]

[date]

Revision questions

Short-answer questions

1. Explain what is meant by ‘community’. In your explanation, refer to a community that you have studied this year.
2. Explain how Ferdinand Tönnies’ ideas of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft differ.
3. Outline the similarities and differences between Tönnies’ and Maffesoli’s theories of community.
4. Describe two factors that can help to shape a person’s feelings of belonging to a community.
5. Provide an example of how an economic factor has impacted a community group.
6. Provide an example of how a political factor has strengthened and/or weakened the experience of community.
7. Identify a recent social issue/event that has had a significant impact on a community that you have been involved with, or that you have studied this year. Briefly describe the impact of this factor.
8. Provide an example of how a geographical characteristic has impacted on the experience of community you have studied this year.
9. What factors contribute to a sense of community among people?
10. What are two benefits experienced by community because of information and communication technology?

Extended response questions

1. Explain how Ferdinand Tönnies’ community types can be used to describe the characteristics and dynamics of a specific group as a community.
2. Compare Ferdinand Tönnies’ and Michel Maffesoli’s theories of community. Use specific examples and theoretical references to support your response.
3. Evaluate how a social and a political factor have impacted on the experience of a community studied this year.

Representation analysis

The Men's Shed

The Australian Men's Shed program is a national network of more than 1000 community-based men's health initiatives. Established in 1996 as a pilot project, the program provides men with a supportive environment where they can socialise and engage in activities that promote their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. The program's success can be attributed to its focus on practical activities that promote men's mental and physical health, as well as its ability to bring men of all ages and backgrounds together. The program has received funding from the Australian Government since 2007 and has an estimated membership of more than 200 000 men.

The Australian Men's Shed Association (AMSA) is the national governing body for the Men's Shed program. It provides support and resources to individual Men's Sheds across Australia, with a primary focus on promoting men's health and wellbeing through community engagement and education. The program offers a range of activities – including woodwork, metalwork, gardening and community projects – that provide men with a sense of purpose, achievement and belonging. Men's Sheds also provide men with opportunities to socialise and connect with others, and access health and wellbeing information and resources.

The Victorian Government's Community Support Fund (CSF) program provided financial assistance to community groups impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including Men's Sheds in Victoria. The CSF program provided funding to Men's Sheds to help them purchase equipment and materials, maintain their facilities, and cover other expenses related to their activities and operations. The program has had a significant impact on Men's Sheds in Victoria, allowing them to continue their activities and operations during a challenging time, and promoting men's health and wellbeing in the community. One example is the Camperdown and District Men's Shed, which received a grant of $4000 to purchase equipment and upgrade their facilities to comply with COVID-19 guidelines.

A less-than-formal Men's Shed gathering. Credit: Mark Thomson, 1999. w.wiki/6n8d

Wellbeing

Men’s sheds are non-profit local organisations that provide a space for craftwork and social interaction. The movement originated in Australia around the 1980s to improve the health and wellbeing of older men. Research by the community supports the value of Men’s Sheds to the ‘shedders’ themselves. A 2007 survey of shedders across Australia found that the following percentages of shedders agreed or strongly agreed with these statements (Golding et al., 2007):

- 99.5%: ‘I feel better about myself’
- 97%: ‘I have a place where I belong’
- 97%: ‘I can give back to the community’
- 97%: ‘I am doing what I really enjoy’
- 90%: ‘I feel more accepted in the community’
- 79%: ‘I get access to men’s health information’
- 77%: ‘I feel happier at home’.

Case study compiled using information from the following sources:

- Barry Golding et al., 2007. ‘Men’s sheds in Australia: Learning through community contexts’. National Centre for Vocational Education Research. ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/mens-sheds-in-australia-learning-through-community-contexts
- Camperdown Community House, 2022. ‘Camperdown Men’s Shed’. camperdownch.com.au/activities/camperdown-mens-shed
- State Government of Victoria, 2022a. ‘Funding to support Victorian Men’s Sheds’. dffh.vic.gov.au/news/funding-support-victorian-mens-sheds
- State Government of Victoria, 2022b. ‘2022–23 Men’s Shed funding program: Grant guidelines’. providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-05/2022-23-Mens-Shed-Funding-Program-Grant-Guidelines.docx

Response questions

1. Is the Men’s Shed a ‘community’? Justify your position using evidence from the representation.
2. How can the nature of the Men’s Shed community be best explained, in relation to Ferdinand Tönnies’ or Michel Maffesoli’s theory?
3. Evaluate the impact of a selected social, economic or political factor and a specific form of information and communication technology on the experience of community. Draw on the representation and other materials studied this year to support your response.

Further resources

For more resources relevant to this area of study, access the online resource library associated with this textbook: sev.asn.au/textbook-resources/soc34

Articles

Simon Dawes. 2016. ‘Introduction to Michel Maffesoli’s ‘from society to tribal communities’’. *The Sociological Review*, vol. 64, pp. 734–8.

Franck Iovene. 2014. ‘Sociologist: Descartes created the crisis of modernity, and ‘urban tribes’ will fix it’ (interview with Michel Maffesoli). Insider. businessinsider.com/afp-urban-tribes-thriving-in-modern-society-2014-10

Margaret Simpson. 2018. ‘Inside the collection: Industrial Revolution in Australia – impact on manufacturing in the 1800s’. Powerhouse Museum. maas.museum/inside-the-collection/2018/08/29/industrial-revolution-in-australia-impact-on-manufacturing-in-the-1800s

Mengying Zhang. 2019. ‘What is a neo-tribe?’ Medium. medium.com/@Mengying.Zhang_May/what-is-a-neo-tribe-93f5948834db

Books

Michel Maffesoli, 2002. ‘Society or community: tribalism and feelings of belonging’ (pp. 237–45). In *Thinking at Crossroads: In Search of New Languages*. (Ed: Eduardo Portella). UNESCO.

Dan Woodman and Steven Threadgold. 2021. *This is Sociology: A Short Introduction*. Sage Publications.

Websites

The Australian Sociological Association (TASA). 2023. ‘Sociology’. tasa.org.au/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=671860&module_id=357877

National Museum of Australia. 2023. ‘Australia’s defining moments digital classroom: Industrial revolution defining moments, 1750–1914’. digital-classroom.nma.gov.au/learning-modules/industrial-revolution-defining-moments-1750-1914

References

Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). 2021. ‘Back to Mallacoota’. *Back Roads* [TV program]. iview.abc.net.au/show/back-roads/series/7/video/RF2027V008S00.

Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). 2022. *People’s Republic of Mallacoota* [TV program]. iview.abc.net.au/show/people-s-republic-of-mallacoota.

Giddens, A. and Sutton, P. W. 2021. *Essential Concepts in Sociology* (3e). John Wiley & Sons, UK.

Macionis, J. J. 2021. *Sociology* (17e). Pearson.

Maffesoli, M. 1996. *The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society*. Sage Publications.

Maffesoli, M. 2016. ‘From society to tribal communities’. *The Sociological Review*, vol. 64, pp. 739–47.

4.2

Unit 4, Area of study 2:

Social movements and social change

“Area of study 2: Social movements and social change

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse the nature and purpose of social movements and evaluate their influence on social change.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

1 the concepts of social movement and social change

2 the nature and purpose of social movements
  - 2.1 alternative, redemptive, reformative and revolutionary types of social movements
  - 2.2 the stages in social movements of emergence, coalescence, bureaucratisation and decline
  - 2.3 how power is used by a social movement and its opposition
  - 2.4 influences of social movements on social change, with reference to the work of Erica Chenoweth

3 the nature and purpose of one specific social movement and an understanding of the following interrelated components:
  - 3.1 the social movement as alternative, redemptive, reformative or revolutionary
  - 3.2 how power is exercised by the social movement
  - 3.3 the current stage of the social movement
  - 3.4 how power is used by the social movement’s opposition in an attempt to prevent it from achieving its desired social changes
  - 3.5 the influences of the social movement on social change, with reference to the work of Erica Chenoweth.

Key skills

i explain and apply sociological concepts

ii analyse the nature and purpose of social movements

iii analyse how power is used by social movements and by their opposition

iv evaluate the influence of social movements on social change

v gather and use a variety of relevant source materials to support observations and analysis

vi evaluate sources and critically reflect on their own and others’ approaches to understanding the social world

vii synthesise evidence to draw conclusions.

Preface

In this area of study, students investigate the sociological concept of power. There are many forms of power used by social movements and their opposition(s). These include reward, coercive, referent, legitimate, expert and informational power. Students undertake a general exploration of the meaning, nature and purpose of social movements and their ability to achieve social change. When assessing the success of social movements, students draw upon the work of Erica Chenoweth. Chenoweth's research has shown that non-violent forms of civil disobedience are more effective in achieving desired social change. When exploring the nature and purpose of social movements, students draw on brief illustrative examples.

Students must also investigate one specific social movement in detail. The social movement selected for study may be operating at a local, national or international scale. Although the social movement may have a history, it should be examined in its current context and be at a stage where its impact on social change has been commented on in a range of sources. Students should investigate the way this social movement uses power in their attempt to achieve social change, for example through campaigns and the use of social media platforms, as well as identify the means used by the opponents of the social movement to prevent this change from occurring.”

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA). 2023.
‘VCE Sociology Study Design, 2024–2028’.
vcaa.vic.edu.au/documents/vce/sociology/2024sociologysd.pdf

Social movements and social change

The concepts of social movement and social change 4.2.1

Have you ever signed a petition, gone to a protest or shared something related to an issue on social media? If you have, you have already engaged in **social movements**. You have seen something in the world that you believed should be different and advocated for social change.

Social movements involve a group engaged in an organised effort to achieve social change.

> “Social movements can influence the way an entire nation lives. They can alter national government policy. They can change the way citizens view themselves, society, or the world around them. They can even destroy a society. Social movements make history.”
>
> Bryan Turner, Nicholas Abercrombie and Stephen Hill (eds), 2005.
> *The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology*.

This chapter will help you to explore social movements and their influence on social change. It will help you understand the ways we can comprehend social movements and their ability to achieve social change, through classifying them, tracking their progression and unpacking factors that support success.

Societies are in a constant state of flux, which means we are constantly experiencing and responding to social changes. The world today has been shaped by these changes and continues to shape all our lived experiences. During the past few years in Australia:

- inflation rates have been the highest in three decades, causing a cost-of-living crisis for many, due to increasing energy prices and a lack of affordable housing and health care
- there has been a public debate about introducing an Indigenous Voice to Parliament
- there was a push to outlaw the public use of the Nazi salute in Victoria.

These **social changes** might seem conceptual or outside your realm of experience, so it might be easier to think about something a little more concrete. In the past few years, the world has seen vast amounts of social change in response to the COVID-19 public health crisis.

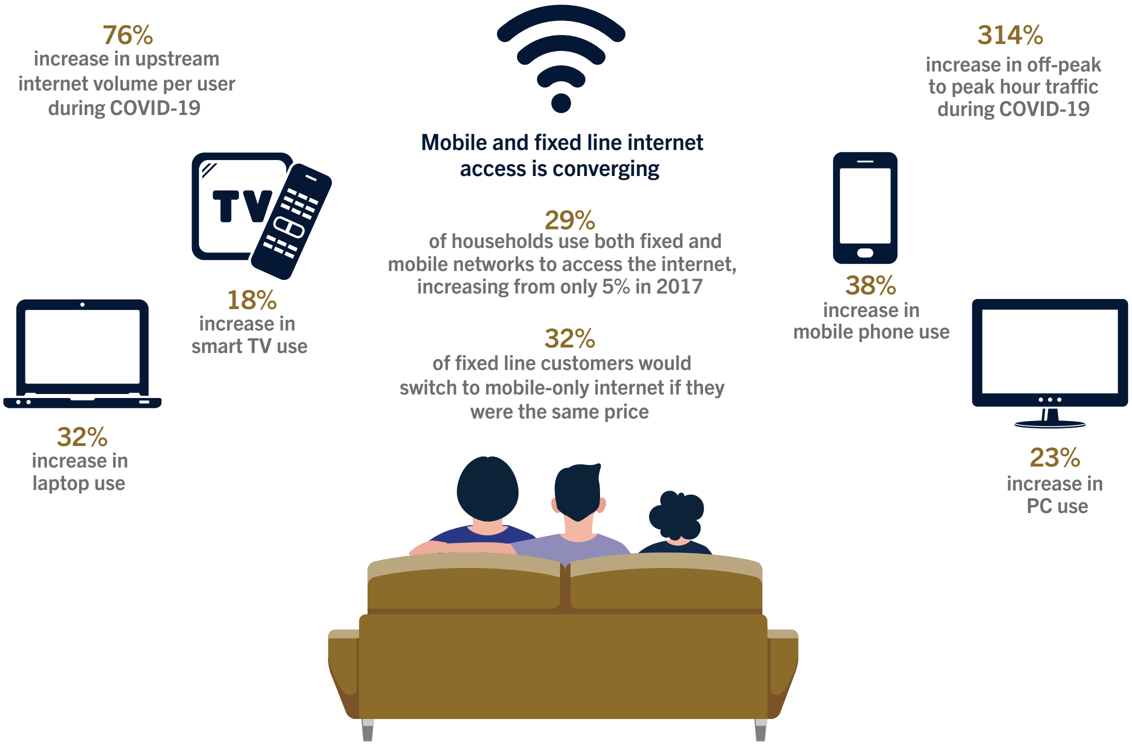
Social change refers to adjustments and fluctuations in views, values, norms and structures in society in response to various factors such as laws, the actions and interests of specific groups of people, government policies, available resources and the way society is organised.

1. It’s very likely that you experienced online learning during lockdowns to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. This led to changes in the way education was experienced for students, teachers and parents as we adapted to new ways of learning and teaching.
2. The way we use technology changed as a result of social distancing measures introduced during COVID-19. During lockdowns we were not able to see loved ones in person, and as a result we relied much more heavily on technology for communicating with them. This led to an increase in the use of video conferencing tools, social media and other digital platforms.

3 During the height of the pandemic, wearing face masks became an everyday occurrence for many of us when we left the house. We were required to wear these in shops, on public transport and at school. While initially there may have been some resistance, as the case numbers grew this became common practice. During this time it would have been considered odd to see someone in one of these settings without a mask.

4 The way we work changed. Remote working arrangements, introduced initially as a public health measure due to lockdowns and social distancing arrangements, continued. Many people now work from home full-time or have hybrid working arrangements (working some days in the office and others at home). A 2022 analysis from Ai Group, which collated and compared responses to surveys conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics from before and during the pandemic, estimated that approximately 30 per cent of Australians with a job worked mostly from home in April 2022, contrasting with just 8 per cent in 2008. The number of people who reported having worked from home ‘at all’ almost doubled (from 24 to 46 per cent) over the same fourteen-year period.

Some of these changes will be long-lasting, while others were short-term and are changing back in line with pre-COVID patterns of behaviour, values and norms.


76%
increase in upstream internet volume per user during COVID-19
Mobile and fixed line internet access is converging
29%
of households use both fixed and mobile networks to access the internet, increasing from only 5% in 2017
32%
of fixed line customers would switch to mobile-only internet if they were the same price
314%
increase in off-peak to peak hour traffic during COVID-19
TV
18%
increase in smart TV use
32%
increase in laptop use
38%
increase in mobile phone use
23%
increase in PC use

Changes in technology use due to COVID-19. Adapted from Australian Broadband Advisory Council, 2020. ‘Riding the digital wave: Report on COVID-19 trends and forward work program’. infrastructure.gov.au/media-centre/publications/riding-digital-wave-report-covid-19-trends-and-forward-work-program

Which historical events influenced us the most?

Australian researchers Paul Ashton, Paula Hamilton and Anna Clark surveyed more than 2000 Australians aged 18 to 93 about which historical events have had the largest influence on the country. Frank Bongiorno and Darren Pennay summarised the results as follows.

> “For this group of older Australians, and even more for the Baby Boomers (born after 1945), events that epitomised the transformations of the 1960s and 1970s matter greatly. So, the boomers had the Vietnam War first (28%), the Dismissal second (27%), and the moon landing fourth (21%), just after same-sex marriage.
>
> Generation X was the only one to rank 9/11 first, with 35%. But we might perhaps rename Australian GenXers ‘the winged-keel generation’, for they seem especially impressed with national esteem, especially in connection with sporting achievement and spectacle. They ranked the Sydney Olympics fifth (16%) and the America’s Cup sixth (15%).
>
> Younger people – millennials (aged 23–37 in 2017) and Gen Z (aged 18–22 at the time of the survey) – rated same-sex marriage and Gillard’s election considerably more highly than their elders, and were particularly likely to nominate terrorist events. The younger generations seem more impressed than others by the impact of Donald Trump’s election.”

Frank Bongiorno and Darren Pennay, 2018. ‘Australians rate the most significant events in their lifetimes – and show the ‘fair go’ is still most valued’. The Conversation. theconversation.com/australians-rate-the-most-significant-events-in-their-lifetimes-and-show-the-fair-go-is-still-most-valued-90453

Activity A – Social change

1. Australian society has changed in significant ways since you were born. List the social changes that you are aware of. How did these social changes come about?
2. Society has changed rapidly since the end of World War II (1945). Talk to someone in an older generation about the social changes they have lived through. How did these social changes occur? How did they feel about them at the time? How do they feel about them now?
3. In the post-pandemic era, Australia has experienced low economic growth. The last time this happened was during the recession of 1990–91. Research the social changes that resulted from that recession. Compare these to the social changes that are taking place now. What are the similarities? What are the differences?
4. Refer to the case study ‘Which historical events influenced us the most?’ provided and answer the following questions:
   - a What social changes emerged from the events identified in Ashton, Hamilton and Clark’s research?
   - b Which of these social changes have had a lasting impact on your life?
   - c Do you believe there is evidence that any of these social changes are threatened?
   - d Based on your understanding of previous social changes in Australia, what social changes do you think should occur in modern Australia? What aspects of society do you think should continue unchanged?

Social change can come about through a variety of means:

1. **Legal and policy changes** create new frameworks and regulations that shape attitudes and behaviour. For example, the introduction of the *Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Act 2022* in Victoria made it an offence to display the Nazi symbol in public.
2. **Technological changes** create new ways of doing things. The previous chapter covered how the Industrial Revolution led to huge social changes. Today, the advent and implementation of artificial technologies is changing our landscape through machine technology completing work previously done by humans, increasing surveillance (both online and offline), improving health outcomes and changing how education is both delivered and experienced.
3. **Economic changes** lead to new opportunities or challenges for individuals. One of the biggest economic changes influencing young Australians is the prevalence of 'buy now, pay later' schemes. These schemes have led to increased consumer debt as well as changing attitudes towards credit.
4. **Conflict**, such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine (2022–), can also lead to global social changes, such as shifts in migration due to displacement, increases in gas prices and changes in international relations.

Throughout this area of study, we focus on the ways that social movements work to either resist or enact social change. A social movement is defined as a group engaged in an organised effort to achieve social change. It covers a variety of forms of collective action aimed at social change. The aims of social movements can be broad (such as overthrowing the existing government) or narrow (such as installing traffic-calming measures in a suburban street).

> “Often when a person argues for social change, they are called 'naive'. The exact opposite is the truth. It's naive to think that we as citizens can do nothing, and leave the powerful to do whatever they want . . . There's nothing naive about believing that concentrated democratic campaigning can change the world. As anthropologist Margaret Mead said it's the only thing that ever has.”
>
> Johann Hari, 2022. *Stolen Focus: Why You Can't Pay Attention*. Bloomsbury.

Activity B – Social movements

1. Using the sociological definition of social movements provided above, list all the social movements you already know about.
2. What social movements might you consider starting?

The nature and purpose of social movements 4.2.2

Today, thanks to the Internet and social media, it is easier than ever for people to find out about the inequalities, injustices and oppressions that are occurring in the world. People are sharing, in real time, these inequalities, injustices and oppressions on TikTok, Instagram, Threads and Twitter. Just seeing these atrocities does not mean that a social movement will emerge; people need to take meaningful action to address the inequality, injustice or oppression. The best way to get people to take action is to ask.

> “On the first day it was just Greta and a sign that read SCHOOL STRIKE FOR THE CLIMATE. But on the second day she was joined by another protestor. As Greta put it, ‘The step from one to two is the hardest step, once you’ve taken that step you’re not far from creating a movement.’ Word of this simple, defiant protest quickly spread across social media. Before the end of 2018 more than twenty thousand students from around the world, in Japan, Australia, Belgium and the United States, were following her example and choosing protest over school.”
>
> Todd Hasak-Lowy, 2020. *We Are Power: How Nonviolent Activism Changes the World*. Abrams Books for Young Readers.

The introduction of social media has made it easier than ever to start or join a social movement, and research shows that young people (like you) are taking up metaphorical arms by getting involved to help enact or resist social change. Research looking at online activism by US adults, conducted by Brooke Auxier (2020), found that 54 per cent of social media users aged 18 to 29 used these platforms to find information about rallies or protests happening in their area. Auxier also found that people under 30 are more likely to use a hashtag related to a political or social issue to encourage others to take action.

The study design asks you to learn and ‘analyse the nature and purpose of social movements’. When discussing the **nature** of a social movement, you are asked to provide the context for a social movement. You need to define the type of movement (alternative, redemptive, reformative or revolutionary), its current stage (emergence, coalescence, bureaucratisation or decline), the way the movement and its opposition use **power** and how this has influenced the social change achieved, with reference to the work of Erica Chenoweth.

The goal or aim of a social movement is referred to as its **purpose**. This purpose often shapes the type of movement it is, the power it possesses and how it chooses to use that power. It will also influence who its opposition is, how much power they have, how they employ their power and, ultimately, the extent to which social change is achieved.

Nature of a social movement is the context of the social movement and includes the type and stage of the movement as well as why it has come into being.

Power is the ability to impose one’s will on others, even if they resist in some way.

Purpose of a social movement is its aims or the goals it wants to achieve.

Types of social movements 4.2.2.1

One way to help us understand the nature and purpose of social movements is to categorise them. However, these categories are only descriptive in nature – not all movements fit perfectly into these. In VCE Sociology (Units 3 and 4) we are directed to use cultural anthropologist David F. Aberle's 1966 framework to categorise social movements. Aberle classified movements based on two questions:

1 How much change is being advocated for?

2 Who is the movement asking to change?

You can see below how answers to these questions shape the type of movement.

	Advocacy for change is limited in scope	Advocacy for change is broad in scope
	Alternative	**Redemptive**
Targeting the individual	Who is the movement asking to change? Individuals Type of change? Limited change How do they get change? By influencing social attitudes, lives or behaviours	Who is the movement asking to change? Individuals Type of change? Major/radical change How do they get change? By helping people 'redeem' or completely remake their lives/lifestyles
	Reformative	**Revolutionary**
Targeting groups and/or society	Who is the movement asking to change? Large groups/society Type of change? Limited changes How do they get change? By working within existing political systems to promote moderate change	Who is the movement asking to change? Large groups/society Type of change? Major/radical changes due strong dissatisfaction within an existing society How do they get change? Through applying a specific ideology/belief system to change the fundamental structure or practices of a society

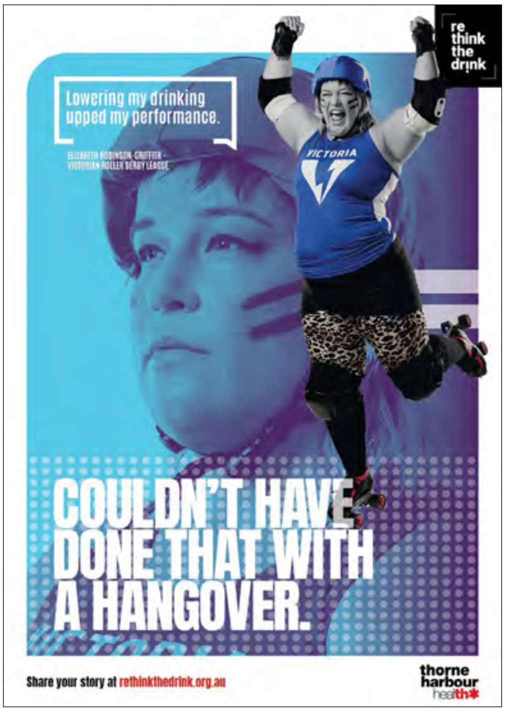
Alternative

Alternative movements seek to achieve limited change(s) within the individual. These movements do not aim to change existing social and political systems; they work within the existing systems to influence social attitudes, lives or behaviours. Therefore, they are the least threatening to the status quo and the fundamental power structures of society, as they only want certain people to change in very specific ways.

Alternative movements seek to achieve limited change(s) within the individual.

Thorne Harbour Health's 'Rethink the Drink' campaign seeks to challenge and change the prevailing attitudes and behaviours around alcohol consumption in Australia. It promotes the benefits of reducing alcohol consumption through encouraging individuals to make healthier choices. Hence, it can be considered an alternative movement, as the campaign is targeting individuals to make minor changes to their social attitudes and therefore behaviours around alcohol consumption.

Other examples of alternative movements include 'Skip a Straw, Save a Turtle', MADD (Mothers Against Drink Driving) and the Cancer Council's 'Slip, Slop, Slap, Seek, Slide' campaign.


re think the drink
Lowering my drinking upped my performance.
ELIZABETH ROBINSON-GRIFFIN · VICTORIAN ROLLER DERBY LEAGUE
VICTORIA
COULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT WITH A HANGOVER.
Share your story at rethinkthedrink.org.au
thorne harbour health

Promotional image for Thorne Harbour Health's 'Rethink the Drink' campaign. rethinkthedrink.org.au

Redemptive

Redemptive movements advocate for major or radical change within an individual. Aberle believed a defining feature of redemptive movements is that they wish to help people 'redeem' or completely remake their lives or find a new inner state. Many religious movements can be classified as redemptive.

Redemptive movements advocate for major or radical change within an individual.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is a self-help organisation that aims to provide support and resources to individuals who struggle with alcohol addiction. It can be considered a redemptive movement because it focuses on helping individuals overcome their addiction to achieve redemption from the negative consequences they experience as a result of addiction. It is considered a reformative movement rather than an alternative one because it requires people to completely reform their lives by improving their physical and mental health, attending therapy to address the underlying causes of their addiction and engaging in spirituality to help overcome it.

Other examples of redemptive movements include True Love Waits, which advocates for sexual abstinence outside marriage, and Prison Fellowships, which aims to reform prisoners through religion.

Reformative

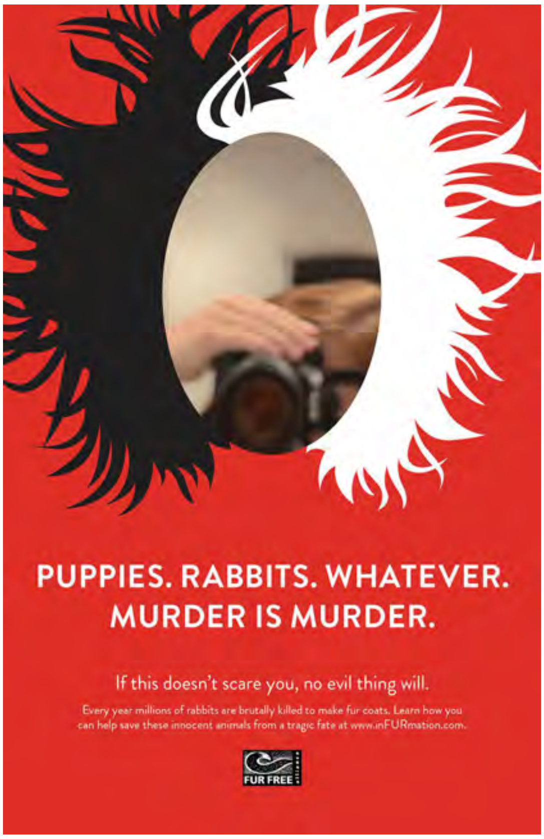
Reformative movements seek to change a specific group or society in a limited way, focusing on a particular facet of the social structure to reform society as a whole. These movements generally work within the confines of existing systems to create change from within the system. Reformative movements often aim to address injustices and inequalities in the world. They are common in democratic countries such as Australia.

Reformative movements seek to change a specific group or society in a limited way, focusing on a particular facet of the social structure to reform society as a whole.

Reformative movements are one of the more common types of social movements you will study in Units 3 and 4 Sociology.

The Fur Free Alliance (FFA) is a global coalition of animal welfare organisations that aim to end the use of animal fur in the fashion industry. The FFA works within the existing framework of the fashion industry, encouraging fashion brands and retailers to adopt fur-free policies. By targeting specific companies and promoting the benefits of fur-free fashion, the FFA aims to change industry practices and shift consumer attitudes towards animal fur. The movement is focused on specific policy changes (minor change) within the fashion industry (group).

Other examples of reformative movements include ‘Fight for the Bight’, #StopAdani and the Sunrise Movement, which are all explored in this chapter.


PUPPIES. RABBITS. WHATEVER.
MURDER IS MURDER.
If this doesn’t scare you, no evil thing will.
Every year millions of rabbits are brutally killed to make fur coats. Learn how you can help save these innocent animals from a tragic fate at www.inFURmation.com.
FUR FREE

Poster from a series endorsing the Fur Free Alliance’s campaign against the use of rabbit fur. Credit: Katherine Strickland, 2013. behance.net/gallery/13399083/Design-Against-Fur/modules/136016157

Revolutionary

Revolutionary movements are the most extreme social movements. These movements openly advocate for a reorganisation of society as a whole. Typically, supporters believe the system itself is the problem and therefore work to replace it with an improved system.

Revolutionary movements advocate for a reorganisation of society as a whole, through seeking radical change to society.

These types of movements have occurred throughout history and include:

- the Russian revolution (1917), in which local assemblies of workers and soldiers sought to supplant and eventually overthrow the tsarist monarchy
- the American revolution (1765–91), when a dispute over taxes paid to the distant British parliament eventually led to colonists seeking total independence from the British Crown
- the Chinese revolution (1911), in which the Qing dynasty’s inability to prevent foreign incursions led to nationalists and reformers overthrowing the monarchy in favour of a presidential republic.

Due to their radical nature and other complex reasons, revolutionary movements may not be as common in the modern world. One recent example is the Arab Spring (2010–12), in which reformers sought a fundamental change in political and economic systems across the Arab world. This led to the removal of long-term dictators in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, and therefore lasting reorganisation and social changes in these countries.

Challenges of classification

Social movements can also have more than one goal, which can lead to the movement being classified in multiple ways. #DropCroc has several goals:

1. for individuals who buy fashion items made from crocodile skin to stop doing so
2. for the fashion industry to no longer use crocodile skin in its products
3. for the Northern Territory government to change crocodile farming laws.

HERMÈS
HERMÈS: BIN CROCODILE SKIN
PETA
ANIMALS DIE FOR EXOTIC SKINS
PETA
CRUELTY TO CROCS UNMASKED
PETA

#DropCroc protests outside Hermès in Melbourne, 2021. Credit: peta.org.au/news/hermes-protest-crocodile-skin

Looking at just its first goal, #DropCroc could be classified as an alternative movement, because it is targeting individuals' behaviour and seeking to make minor changes. However, if we look at its second and third goals, this movement looks much more like a reformative movement. With these goals, the movement is seeking to target groups – the fashion industry and Northern Territory government respectively – but still only looking for minor changes.

Classifying social movements is subjective – that is, it can be influenced by the classifier's opinions or interpretation of a movement and its aims, as well as by other contextual factors such as time and place. Sometimes a movement that is considered reformative in one nation may be seen as revolutionary in another, depending on the social norms and values of each society. For example, the American Black Lives Matter movement, which emerged to advocate for justice and equality for African Americans, may be seen as reformative in societies that already acknowledge racial disparities. However, in societies where systemic racism persists, the movement might be viewed as revolutionary, as it challenges ingrained power structures.

Another factor is that social movements themselves often evolve and change over time and may have different goals or strategies at different stages. For example, a movement may begin to address a specific issue, but as it gains momentum it may evolve into a broader movement seeking more significant social or political changes.

One example of how movements change is the feminist movement (which you might remember from Unit 1). The feminist movement initially aimed to secure women's suffrage and political rights through achieving equality between men and women. As it progressed, second-wave feminism, in the mid-20th century, sought to challenge traditional gender roles, fight against gender-based discrimination and address issues such as reproductive rights, workplace equality and sexual harassment. The most recent wave of feminism focuses on addressing the unique experiences and challenges faced by marginalised women, seeking to address systemic sexism, advocating for inclusive and diverse representation and promoting body positivity.

Activity C – Classifying social movements

1 Using your understanding of Aberle's four types of social movements, classify the following movements as either alternative, reformative, redemptive or revolutionary.

Remember to ask yourself the following questions:

a How much change is being advocated for?

b Who is the movement asking to change?

- #MeToo movement

  This movement emerged in 2017 as a response to allegations of sexual misconduct by high-profile individuals, and quickly spread across social media platforms. It called for greater awareness and accountability around issues of sexual harassment and assault and led to a wave of public discussion and policy changes.

- Black Lives Matter (BLM)

  This movement emerged in response to a series of high-profile incidents of police violence against Black people in the United States. It called for an end to systemic racism and police brutality, and mobilised protests and activism around the world.

- Occupy Wall Street

  This movement emerged in 2011 as a response to economic inequality and the power of corporate and financial interests in the United States, highlighted by their involvement in creating the recent global financial crisis (2008–09). It occupied public spaces and organised protests to call attention to the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of the elite few.

Exam mindset: comparing social movements

In the exam you may be asked to **compare** the purpose of different types of social movements. In this instance, you need to be able to identify both a similarity and a difference in the purposes of social movements. You can use Aberle's two questions to help you. How much change is being advocated for? Who is the movement asking to change?

A possible question could be as follows (example from the VCAA's 2020 Sociology exam, from the previous study design): 'Social movements can be described as alternative, redemptive, reformative or revolutionary. Compare the purpose of alternative and redemptive social movements. Provide examples to support your response.' (6 marks)

Here's our suggested answer:

> Alternative movements advocate for limited changes in individuals' actions, choices and beliefs, operating at an individual level, whereas redemptive movements advocate for radical shifts at an individual level. The 'Slip, Slop, Slap, Seek, Slide' campaign is alternative because it seeks to shift individual sun safety habits, while the 'National Tobacco' campaign is redemptive because it seeks to change ingrained behaviours and habits of individuals (a more radical and significant individual change). Both movements operate at an individual level and relate to the beliefs and behaviours of individual people. However, alternative movements seek limited shifts compared to redemptive movements, which seek more radical shifts.

Comparison words

Similarities

Differences

Aberle's question – how much change is being advocated for?

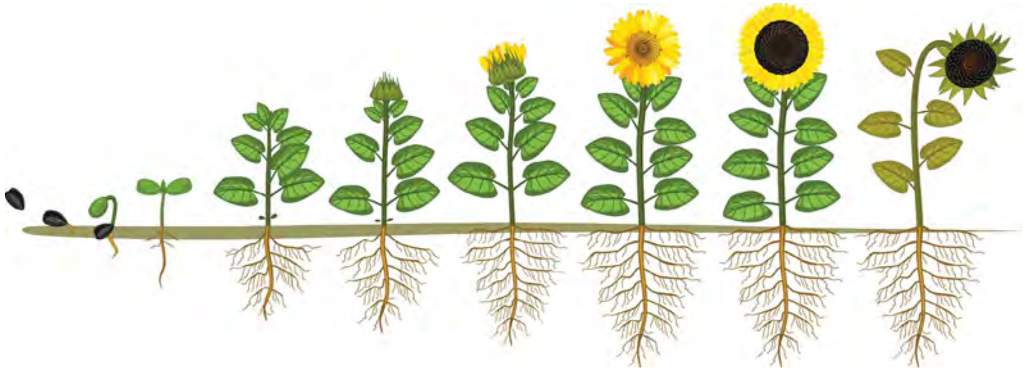
Aberle's question – who is the movement asking to change?

Stages in social movements 4.2.2.2

The identification of an issue in and of itself does not mean that a social movement will necessarily develop. If this were the case, we would all have started several social movements by the time we arrived at this section of our textbook. The difference between identifying an issue and starting or joining a social movement is *intent*. Social movements require concerted human action, drive and resources, and that's all before they can reach a stage where they can start to exert influence and create social change. To understand how social movements move from identifying an issue to achieving actual social change, it's important for us to develop our understanding of the life cycle of a social movement.

In his 1969 work *Symbolic Interactionism – Perspective and Method*, Herbert Blumer introduced the idea that social movements move through stages as they grow and gain momentum. In this analysis, social movements are not static entities, but rather dynamic processes that evolve over time in response to changing social, political and economic conditions. His ideas have since been refined, and today sociologists typically refer to social movements going through four stages: emergence, coalescence, bureaucratisation and decline.

One potentially helpful way to visualise this process is to think of a flower growing from a seed.



Emergence	Coalescence	Bureaucratisation	Decline
The first stage of the movement. There is widespread discontent but little to no organisation.	The second stage of the movement. Membership grows and strategies are formulated.	The third stage of the movement. High levels of organisation, with strategy carried out within formal structures.	The final stage of the movement, where the movement ends, either having achieved or failed to achieve its goals.

Adapted from J. Christiansen, 2009. 'Social movement and collective behavior: Four stages of social movement'. EBSCO Research Starter, 1–7. Sunflower life cycle image courtesy of dreamstime.com

Emergence

During **emergence**, the first stage of a social movement, people begin to become aware of an issue and discontent develops and spreads. A shared concern or outrage drives people to take action, although this may often be at an individual rather than collective level. For example, people might comment to their friends or family, or write to their local newspaper or political representative about their dissatisfaction.

Emergence is the first stage of a social movement. In this stage there is widespread discontent but little to no organisation.

The decentralised nature of the movement at this stage often results in a lack of unified messaging or defined strategies for achieving its goals. Consequently, participants' actions may not be strategically effective or collectively determined.

Coalescence

During **coalescence**, a movement typically develops a more definite sense of what the discontent is about and who is responsible. The membership of the movement starts to grow and it morphs from a group of discontented individuals to a group that is more organised and strategically aware. Individuals who may have previously been acting independently become more aware of allies who share their goals and they may be able to coordinate more effectively as the movement gains traction.

Coalescence is the second stage of a social movement. During this stage membership grows and strategies are formulated.

At this stage, leadership groups typically begin to emerge. These groups determine tactics and build morale. However, the key driver is the recruitment of new participants in the movement. This might be achieved through community organising, holding rallies or demonstrations, and through awareness-raising about the issue, the movement and its goals.

Partnerships and alliances with value-aligned organisations may also occur during this stage, helping the movement to secure more resources and greater accomplishments.

Bureaucratisation

In sociology, bureaucracy refers to a form of administration in which the division of labour is clear, tasks are distributed as official duties, and there is a hierarchal structure with clearly defined leadership positions.

During the **bureaucratisation** stage, social movements become increasingly formal in character. With a high degree of organisation, there may be fewer direct actions, protests and rallies, particularly when movement leaders see opportunities to negotiate and develop relationships with elites within formal institutions of power in order to pursue their goals.

Bureaucratisation is the third stage of a social movement. This stage is characterised by high levels of organisation, with strategy carried out within formal structures.

During this stage, it is far more common to see paid staff employed to help implement strategies determined by the leadership. Staff are allocated specialised roles, such as fundraising, communications or administering the day-to-day operations of the organisation(s) that make up the movement. Such staff are also crucial to ensuring the movement's continuing momentum when it becomes difficult for volunteers to maintain the levels of emotional energy seen in the previous stages.

At this stage in a movement's life cycle, a movement has generally already experienced some degree of success in raising awareness of the issue and consequently increased its membership. Sometimes additional recruitment efforts beyond this point are less fruitful, as the pool of potential supporters is exhausted. The movement typically reaches the peak of its political power at this point, with increases in its access to media, officials and political bodies.

Decline

Decline is the final stage of a social movement, where the movement ends, either having achieved or failed to achieve its goals.

Most social movements end at some point. The final stage of any social movement is **decline**, but the nature of this stage can vary wildly depending on the extent to which the movement succeeds in its stated goals. In cases where the movement achieves its goals, there is no reason for it to continue, although supporters may shift their energies and resources to similar causes. Often, though, movements fail to achieve their goals, which in turn fuels their decline – however, this is not always a failing of the movement. The different ways movements can decline are explored below.

Success	A movement can decline due to achieving its goals. In some cases, movements that achieve their goals reorient to new goals that allow the original concern to continue to be addressed. Miller (1999) found that movements with more targeted or specific goals may be more likely to achieve success.
Failure	Movements that decline through failure are said to end due to failures within the organisation of the movement. This could be poor leadership, loss of momentum, members losing interest, inadequate financial resources or internal conflicts over goals, tactics and strategies.
Repression	Repression occurs when authorities set out to control or destroy a social movement through either violent or legal measures, such as passing laws to intimidate members of a movement.
Co-optation	In some instances, movements that are dependent on centralised authority or on charismatic leadership can see the movement decline through co-optation when the leader is recruited by the opposition with promises that they will be able to make changes from the inside. Co-optation can also occur if promises of money or prestige are accepted at the expense of the goals of the movement.
Establishment with the mainstream	If a movement's goals or ideologies are adopted by the mainstream, there is no longer a need for the movement – the concerns that lead to the movement become part of the zeitgeist.

Adapted from J. Christiansen, 2009. 'Social movement and collective behavior: Four stages of social movement'. EBSCO Research Starter, 1–7.

Activity D – Declining movements

Using your understanding of the different ways that movements can decline, classify the following movements as declining through success, failure, repression, co-optation or establishment with the mainstream.

1 The civil rights movement in the United States (1954–68) emerged in response to segregation and discrimination against African Americans, with a focus on protests, boycotts and other forms of direct action. It achieved significant victories in advancing the rights of African Americans.

2 The Arab Spring movement achieved some initial successes in challenging authoritarian governments and promoting democracy but was met with government-sanctioned violence that led to its decline.

3 The Anti–Vietnam War movement (1964–72) faced significant opposition and backlash from government officials and supporters of war, which eventually caused it to lose momentum and decline.

4 The Occupy Wall Street movement (2011–12) gained widespread attention and inspired similar movements around the world, but eventually lost momentum and faced criticism for lacking concrete goals and strategies.

5 The Tea Party movement (2009–16) achieved successes in promoting its political agenda, but eventually faced challenges and criticism from opponents and within its own ranks that lead to its decline.

6 The RSPCA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals), established in 1824, sought to eradicate the suffering of animals. In recent years the RSPCA has been more involved with working with farmers and industry groups to improve animal welfare standards in livestock production.

7 The environmental movement of the 1960s and '70s emerged as a response to the degradation of the natural environment and the negative impacts of industrialisation. In Australia, the Greens Party emerged as a political expression of these movements in the 1990s.

8 The Australian Marriage Equality (AME) social movement advocated for same-sex marriage to be recognised under law in Australia after the wording of the marriage legislation was changed in 2004 to exclude it. This movement was successful in having the legislation amended in 2017 after a nationwide postal survey in which a majority of Australians voted 'yes' to legalising same-sex marriage.

Limitations of the 'stages' model

While some social movements fit neatly into this framework, it's important to remember that social movements are dynamic and changeable entities, and not all social movements will correspond well with the 'stages' model set out on the preceding pages. Indeed, many social movements develop in a way that isn't linear – they may skip stages completely or regress to 'earlier' ones.

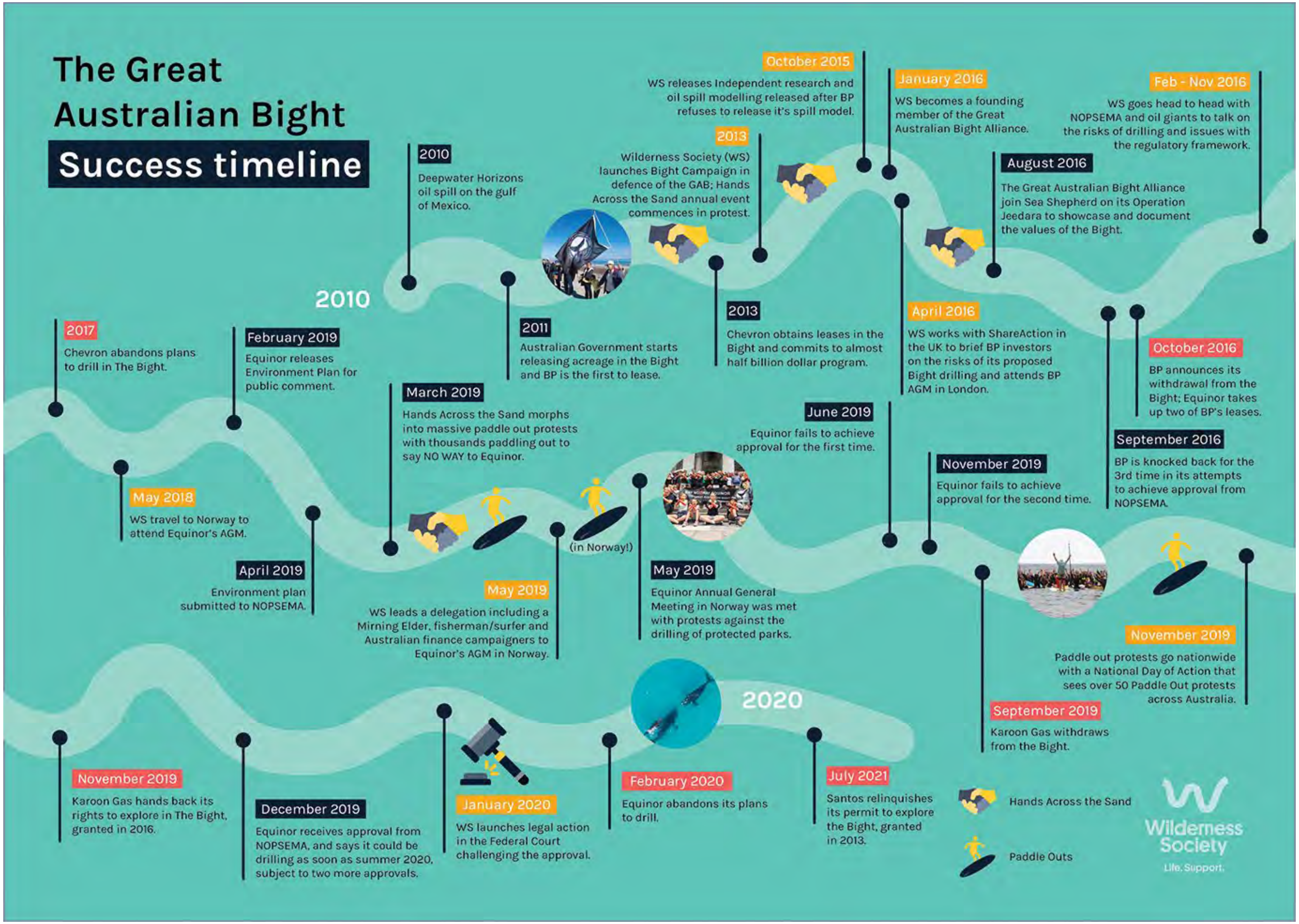
This can be seen in the March For Our Lives movement. This movement emerged in response to the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, in February 2018. The shooting sparked widespread outrage and renewed calls for gun control measures in the US. Due to the urgency and visibility of the movement, March For Our Lives was able to gain substantial attention and support from key stakeholders, including celebrities, politicians and advocacy groups. This enabled it to move quickly from emergence to bureaucratisation. The movement now has formal structures, including a national organisation and local chapters in place to advocate for social change.

The development of new technologies has meant that, in some social movements, members no longer feel they need to develop formal organisations (bureaucratisation) because they are able to communicate, coordinate and engage online.

It is generally accepted that most movements reach the stage of coalescence, as this is when groups begin to engage in the typical behaviour of social movements. However, it appears that many movements do not move beyond this stage, never developing into formal organisations.

One handy way to remember these stages is the following (dual-purpose) mnemonic:

Every	**C**hange	**B**egins with	**D**iscontent
Emergence	**C**oalescence	**B**ureaucratisation	**D**ecline



The Great Australian Bight

Success timeline

2010
Deepwater Horizons oil spill on the gulf of Mexico.

2011
Australian Government starts releasing acreage in the Bight and BP is the first to lease.

2013
Wilderness Society (WS) launches Bight Campaign in defence of the GAB; Hands Across the Sand annual event commences in protest.

2013
Chevron obtains leases in the Bight and commits to almost half billion dollar program.

October 2015
WS releases Independent research and oil spill modelling released after BP refuses to release it's spill model.

January 2016
WS becomes a founding member of the Great Australian Bight Alliance.

April 2016
WS works with ShareAction in the UK to brief BP investors on the risks of its proposed Bight drilling and attends BP AGM in London.

August 2016
The Great Australian Bight Alliance join Sea Shepherd on its Operation Jeedara to showcase and document the values of the Bight.

Feb - Nov 2016
WS goes head to head with NOPSEMA and oil giants to talk on the risks of drilling and issues with the regulatory framework.

October 2016
BP announces its withdrawal from the Bight; Equinor takes up two of BP's leases.

September 2016
BP is knocked back for the 3rd time in its attempts to achieve approval from NOPSEMA.

2017
Chevron abandons plans to drill in The Bight.

February 2019
Equinor releases Environment Plan for public comment.

May 2018
WS travel to Norway to attend Equinor's AGM.

April 2019
Environment plan submitted to NOPSEMA.

March 2019
Hands Across the Sand morphs into massive paddle out protests with thousands paddling out to say NO WAY to Equinor.

May 2019
WS leads a delegation including a Mirning Elder, fisherman/surfer and Australian finance campaigners to Equinor's AGM in Norway.

(in Norway!)

May 2019
Equinor Annual General Meeting in Norway was met with protests against the drilling of protected parks.

June 2019
Equinor fails to achieve approval for the first time.

November 2019
Equinor fails to achieve approval for the second time.

September 2019
Karoon Gas withdraws from the Bight.

November 2019
Paddle out protests go nationwide with a National Day of Action that sees over 50 Paddle Out protests across Australia.

November 2019
Karoon Gas hands back its rights to explore in The Bight, granted in 2016.

December 2019
Equinor receives approval from NOPSEMA, and says it could be drilling as soon as summer 2020, subject to two more approvals.

January 2020
WS launches legal action in the Federal Court challenging the approval.

February 2020
Equinor abandons its plans to drill.

July 2021
Santos relinquishes its permit to explore the Bight, granted in 2013.

Hands Across the Sand
Paddle Outs

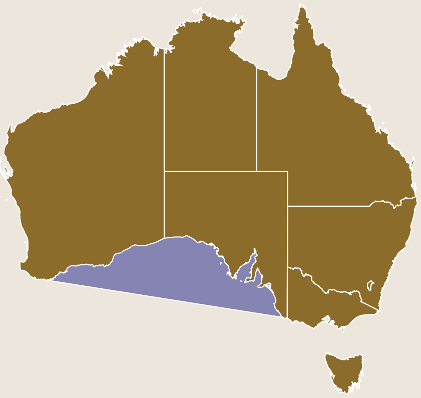
The Great Australian Bight success timeline. Credit: Wilderness Society, 2021. wilderness.org.au/iconic-places/great-australian-bight

Fight for the Bight

To understand the stages of social movements in context, let's examine a real movement in detail. Fight for the Bight is a social movement that set out to protect the Great Australian Bight from oil and gas exploration and extraction. It can be classified as a reformative movement because it seeks to reform the current systems of regulation and decision making around gas and oil exploration and extraction in Australia, working within the existing legal and regulatory frameworks.

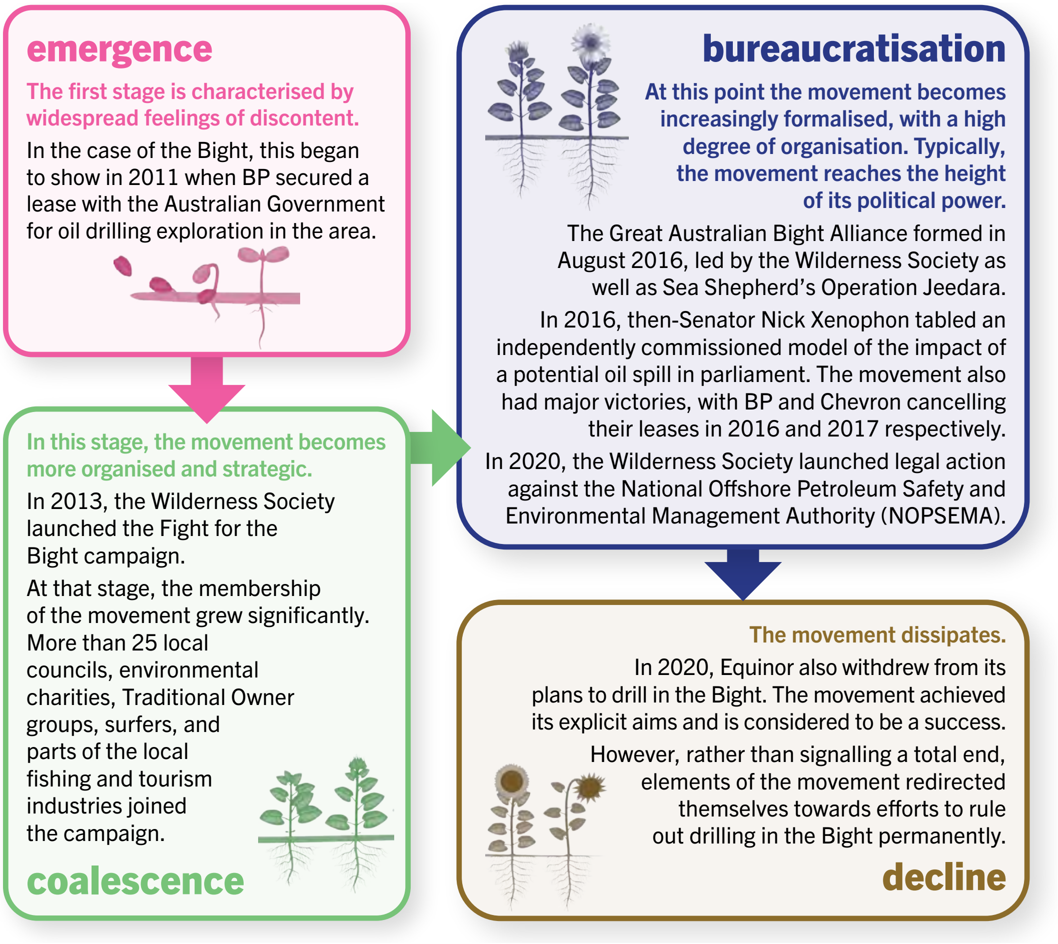
Before reading on, consider watching the Wilderness Society's (12 min) video 'Fight for the Bight – Taking on Equinor and winning!'

youtu.be/RGlYxf1AOvl



The Great Australian Bight is the large open bay off the central and western stretches of the south coast of the Australian mainland.

The diagram below shows the progression of the 'Fight for the Bight' movement from emergence to decline.



emergence

The first stage is characterised by widespread feelings of discontent.

In the case of the Bight, this began to show in 2011 when BP secured a lease with the Australian Government for oil drilling exploration in the area.

In this stage, the movement becomes more organised and strategic.

In 2013, the Wilderness Society launched the Fight for the Bight campaign.

At that stage, the membership of the movement grew significantly. More than 25 local councils, environmental charities, Traditional Owner groups, surfers, and parts of the local fishing and tourism industries joined the campaign.

coalescence

bureaucratisation

At this point the movement becomes increasingly formalised, with a high degree of organisation. Typically, the movement reaches the height of its political power.

The Great Australian Bight Alliance formed in August 2016, led by the Wilderness Society as well as Sea Shepherd's Operation Jeedara.

In 2016, then-Senator Nick Xenophon tabled an independently commissioned model of the impact of a potential oil spill in parliament. The movement also had major victories, with BP and Chevron cancelling their leases in 2016 and 2017 respectively.

In 2020, the Wilderness Society launched legal action against the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA).

The movement dissipates.

In 2020, Equinor also withdrew from its plans to drill in the Bight. The movement achieved its explicit aims and is considered to be a success.

However, rather than signalling a total end, elements of the movement redirected themselves towards efforts to rule out drilling in the Bight permanently.

decline

To learn more, check out the Fight for the Bight Alliance's website and the Wilderness Society's website.

fightforthebight.org.au

wilderness.org.au/iconic-places/great-australian-bight

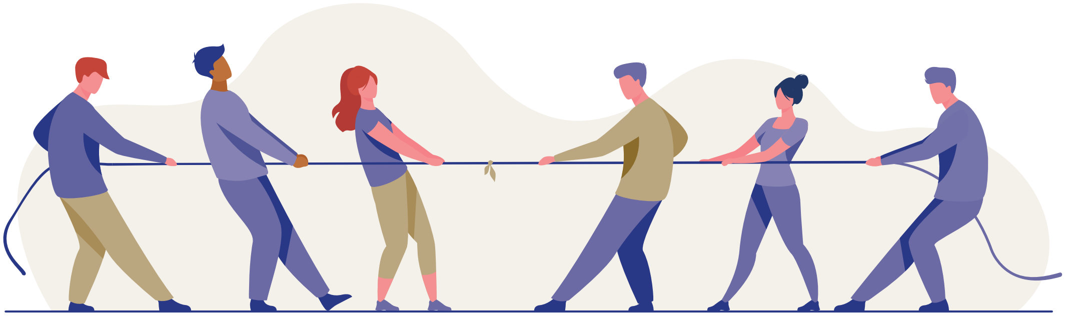
How power is used by a social movement and its opposition 4.2.2.3

Think about a time at school when you asked your teacher to go the bathroom and they said no. Who had the power in this situation? Why? Where did this power come from?

We all have a lived experience of what it means to have power and what it means to be deprived of power. Society is based on power or, more specifically, power imbalances. Many theorists characterise power as a *zero-sum game* – in other words, for one person to gain power, it must be at the expense of someone else. Those who hold greater power use it to further their own interests to the detriment of those who are subject to that power, because they have less.

Commonly, sociologists define power as the ability to impose one's will on others even if those others resist in some way. It is generally understood that social movements with more power have better access to resources and are therefore more likely to achieve the social change they seek. The same can be said of those opposing a social movement; individuals or organisations with more power are more able to resist or repress the actions of the social movement.

The power of a social movement stands in opposition to the power of those who oppose its aims, which can include individuals, organisations or governments whose interests are challenged by the change being advocated for or resisted.



One way to imagine how social movements and their opposition use power is to picture a tug-of-war. As power is finite in this example (one side can only make gains at the expense of another), the movement and its opposition will engage in any number of strategies to increase their relative power, which in turn improves their chances of achieving their respective goals. The 'balance' of power can be influenced by several things, such as public support, media coverage, legal and policy changes, alliances, economic factors, and the ability to access resources and effectively communicate goals.

Power can manifest in many ways. In 1959, social psychologists John French and Bertram Raven identified five types of power: **reward**, **coercive**, **referent**, **legitimate** and **expert**. In 1965 Raven added a sixth form: **informational**. These sources of power can also be grouped into 'formal' or 'informal' types. Formal power comes from recognised or sanctioned positions of authority, whereas informal power is the ability to lead or direct without any official authority.

The table below sets out these different types of power and maps them against the #DropCroc movement explored earlier in this chapter, along with its opponents in the fashion industry, the Northern Territory government and notable consumers and promoters of crocodile-skin fashion products such as Kylie Jenner and Jamie Chua.

Type of power		Definition	The #DropCroc movement	#DropCroc’s opposition
FORMAL	Reward	Based on the ability to provide a positive incentive (reward) for compliance	Supporters offer incentives to fashion brands and designers to stop using crocodile skins in their products, and channel public attention and publicity to brands that choose not to use animal products in their fashion lines.	The Northern Territory government relies on taxes and other benefits of economic activity created by the crocodile farming industry, which turns over more than $1.7 million a year in Australia.
	Coercive (to use force or threats)	Based on the ability to provide a consequence for non-compliance	Supporters name and shame fashion houses that continue to use crocodile skin in their products, sometimes via direct action or protests that cause disruption to ‘business-as-usual’, making it difficult for staff and customers to enter stores. Supporters also showcase the effects of the mistreatment of crocodiles in crocodile farms.	Industry groups threaten to take legal action against activists involved in collecting hidden camera footage of crocodile farms in the Northern Territory.
	Legitimate	Based on the belief that a person has the formal right to make demands	Andy Meddick of the Animal Justice Party tabled his concerns about the mistreatment of crocodiles in factory farms for the fashion industry in the Victorian Legislative Council in 2021. You can see his address here: youtu.be/3yfgZ44gHXs “PETA bought stocks in Hermès, which provided the animal rights group with legitimate power, as they now have formal rights to make demands as shareholders. PETA will be campaigning outside the company, and, as a shareholder, also working from the inside to demand a ban on exotic animal–skin accessories, including crocodile-skin bags and alligator-skin watchband.” Tracy Reiman, Executive Vice President of PETA, 2015.	Crocodile farms are following and sometimes even exceeding the code of practice set out by the Northern Territory government to promote the humane killing of crocodiles.
INFORMAL	Referent	Based upon identification with, attraction to, or respect for the leader. This can include people with large followings or strong reputations: for example, having a celebrity add their voice (and resources) to a social movement.	“A number of online influencers and other celebrities have already shown support for this campaign, condemning the cruel treatment of crocodiles in fashion. Harry Potter actress Evanna Lynch posted an image of herself holding a sign reading ‘#DropCroc’ to her Instagram account and Ellen DeGeneres shared information about the campaign to her Instagram story. It’s amazing to see influential people using their platforms to create positive change in the world.” Alex Livingstone, Campaign Director, The Kindness Project, 2021. You can see some of The Kindness Project’s work here. [Content warning: this video shows the mistreatment of crocodiles in factory farms in the Northern Territory.] vimeo.com/592530128	Kylie Jenner and Jamie Chua promote crocodile-skin bags made by Hermès.

Type of power		Definition	The #DropCroc movement	#DropCroc's opposition
INFORMAL	Expert	Based on the belief of superior insight, knowledge or abilities: for example, having an expert speak on behalf of the movement	Chris Darwin (a renowned conservationist) and Alexi Lubomirski (a prominent fashion photographer) both joined the #DropCroc campaign, seeking to speak out and educate the public against the use of crocodile skins in fashion. See some of their work here: kindnessproject.org.au/campaigns/hermes-crocodile-cruelty-exposed/ Dr Mehr Gupta used her expertise to conduct research and provide recommendations and guidance to policymakers on the viability of phasing out the Northern Territory crocodile industry. Read the report here: kindnessproject.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Crocodile-Transition-Plan-final.pdf	Federal Member for Kennedy Bob Katter owns several crocodile farms and has spoken publicly about these farms adhering to the code of practice set out by the Northern Territory government.
	Informational	Based on the ability to control the information others need to accomplish their goals	The campaign undertook undercover surveillance of crocodile farming in the Northern Territory to expose unethical practices, to help raise awareness of the issue. This footage was shared on the campaign's website, on social media and most widely via its airing on Channel 10's *The Project*, watched by more than 450 000 Australians every evening. You can see *The Project*'s segment here [Content warning: this video shows the mistreatment of crocodiles in factory farms in the Northern Territory.] vimeo.com/708477777	The fashion industry and professionals, including designers, stylists and fashion editors, can shape consumer preferences and influence trends through their use of crocodile-skin products in their fashion lines, photo shoots and promotional materials. This helps to promote the sense of luxury associated with these products.

Activity E – How social movements and their oppositions use power

1 Identify the type of power being used in the following scenarios:

  a a civil rights group threatening to boycott a company if it does not stop discriminatory practices (such as slave labour)

  b a group of scientists publishing research on the dangers of a particular chemical, influencing policymakers to regulate it

  c a social justice movement sharing information and raising awareness about an issue (such as youth homelessness), inspiring people to take action

  d an anti-gun-violence group staging protests outside the offices of politicians who refuse to support gun control legislation

  e an LGBTIQA+ rights group gaining support from celebrities who publicly declare their support for the cause

  f an animal rights group offering a discount to customers who buy products from companies with ethical supply chains g a group of First Nations elders holding a sacred ceremony on the steps of a government building to protest the construction of an oil pipeline through their ancestral land; they argue that the government must respect their treaty rights and consult with them before approving any development on their land

h a group of activists with expertise in renewable energy successfully persuading a city council to invest in solar power

i a racial justice movement using social media to share videos of police brutality, prompting nationwide protests and demands for reform.

2 Watch the following video (17 min) telling the story of the #StopAdani social movement.

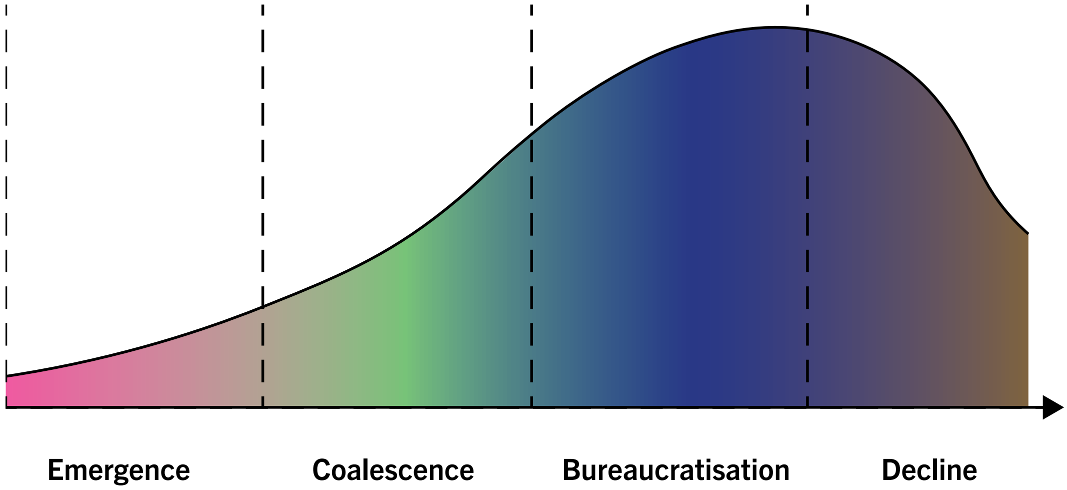
vimeo.com/458812323

a Identify the goals of the movement.

b Classify this movement as either alternative, reformative, redemptive or revolutionary. Remember to ask yourself the following questions:

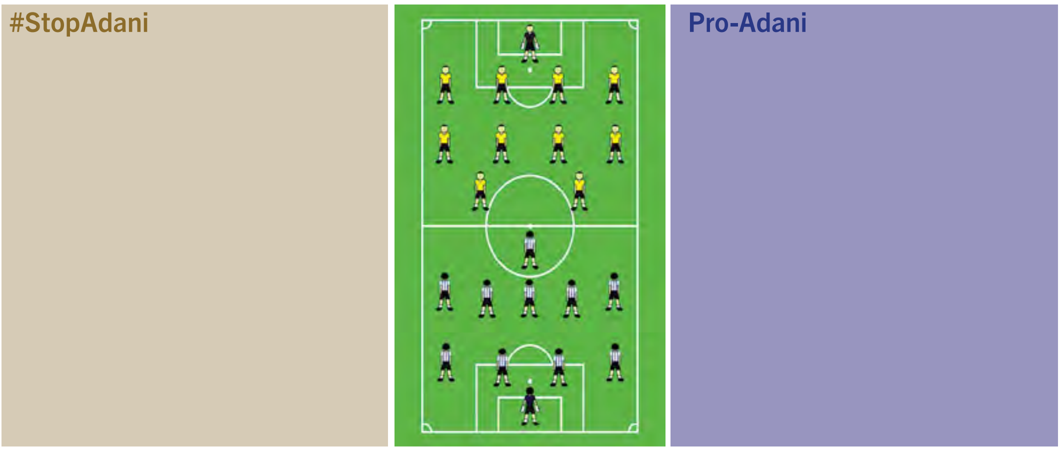
  - How much change is being advocated for?
  - Who is the movement asking to change?

c Map the life cycle of the movement using the headings below.



d Research what is happening in the movement now.

e Chart the power of the movement and its opposition by drawing a diagram in your notebook similar to that shown below.



f Classify the power you identified in part **e**.

Influences of social movements on social change 4.2.2.4

When we talk about social change, we are referring to the adjustments and fluctuations in the views, values, norms and structures of society. You must be able to discuss this change using evidence from more than one credible source.

As we have seen, there are many barriers to social movements achieving social change. Not all movements are able to achieve all their objectives, in part due to the power and influence of the opposition. According to political scientist Hahrie Han (2022), the difference between movements that can achieve social change and movements that can't is the way they respond to shows of power from the opposition.

Han argues three conditions have been present in all successful movements. She calls these the three Ps:

- possible – makes it easy for ordinary people to participate
- probable – so people want to participate non-violently
- powerful – creates a scaffolding or vehicle through which people can realise their own power.

Erica Chenoweth (they/them) speaking at the Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan, 2015. Credit:flic.kr/p/xvaPY9

The work of Erica Chenoweth

Erica Chenoweth is one of the world's leading scholars on the use of **violence** and its alternatives to create political change. Since the late 2000s they have conducted research into movements that used violent or non-violent tactics and analysed their success and failures.

Violence is the use or involvement of physical force intended to hurt, damage or kill someone.

Activity F – Violence and non-violence

1 Before you continue to read about Chenoweth's work, take a moment to think about whether you believe violent or non-violent tactics are more likely to be successful. What evidence can you provide to support your belief?

2 List all the violent and non-violent tactics you can think of.

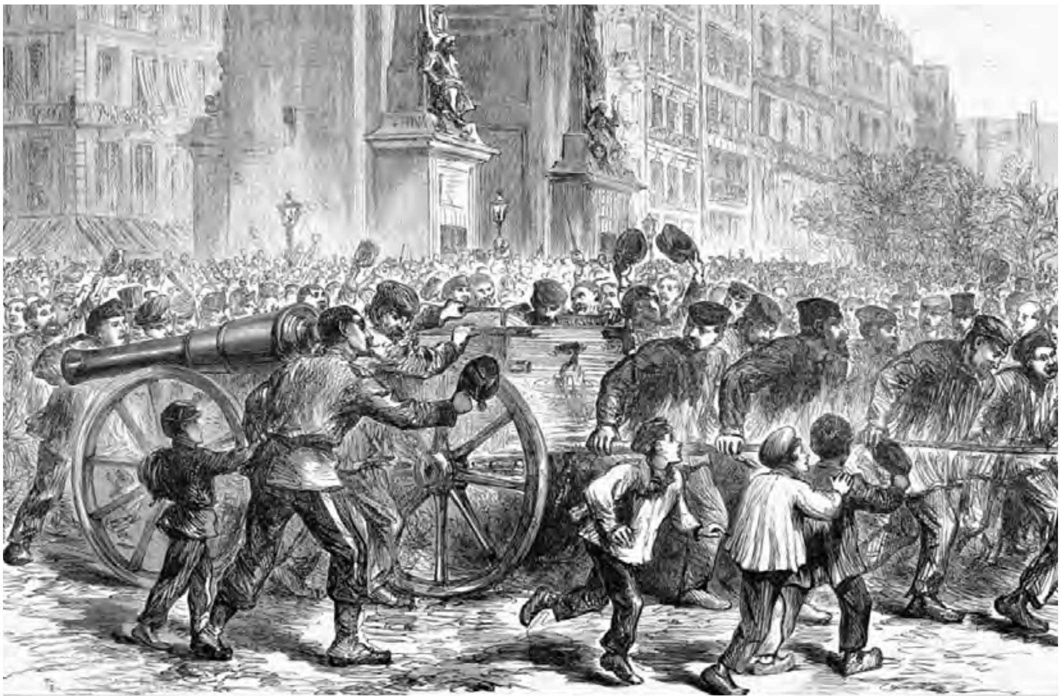
3 As a class, discuss whether you were able to list more violent or non-violent tactics. Which types of action were more creative? Which would allow for more people to be included in the action?

Violent action
A police officer is attacked by protesters during clashes in Kyiv, Ukraine, 2014. Credit: w.wiki/6kaZ

Non-violent action
'Yellow Jacket' protestors stage a sit-in in Tours, France, 2019. Credit: w.wiki/6kaL

A note on violence

Violence is considered to be the use or involvement of physical force intended to hurt, damage or kill a person (or people) – that is, violence cannot be done to property or 'things'. This is an important distinction to be aware of, as it's common to see acts of intentional property damage (particularly looting or mass vandalism) being characterised as 'violence'. While the loss of property can have serious implications, it's important that we use the term 'violence' correctly. This allows us to avoid conflating the actions of different members of social movements, or minimising the actions of their opposition. Opposition may include agents of the state such as the police or military, who may routinely employ violence.



A mob of revolutionaries seize weapons from the National Guard during the revolution of the Paris Commune, 1871 (this illustration was published in a contemporary English newspaper). Credit: grangeracademic.com/results.asp?txtkeys1=0087067

Non-violent resistance is a method of struggle in which unarmed people confront adversaries by using collective action – including protests, demonstrations, strikes and non-cooperation.

Chenoweth's most comprehensive analysis (conducted with their colleague Maria J. Stephan, 2011) looked at 323 violent and **non-violent resistance** campaigns from 1900 to 2006 and found that those movements that employed non-violent resistance achieved success at twice the rate of violent resistance movements – 53 per cent of the time, compared to 26 per cent. Their research further demonstrated that non-violent campaigns – which focused on public support, media coverage, legal and policy changes, building alliances, economic factors, the ability to access resources and effective communication of their goals – were six times more likely to achieve 'full' success in spite of crackdowns by an opposing regime. Success was defined as achieving the goals of the movement within two years, and with reasonable evidence that the actions of the movement led to the goals being met.

You can listen to Chenoweth talk about their analysis and conclusions about non-violent resistance in their own words by following the links below:

- 'The success of nonviolent civil resistance: Erica Chenoweth at TEDxBoulder', 2013 (12 min). youtu.be/YJSehRIU34w
- 'Why civil resistance works', Harvard Kennedy School, 2021 (8 min). youtu.be/aCms5ZNw0TI
- 'A civil resistance expert on the protests in China and Iran' – All Things Considered, NPR, 2022 (7 min). npr.org/2022/12/01/1140163827/a-civil-resistance-expert-on-the-protests-in-china-and-iran

A protestor offers a flower to military police during a non-violent anti–Vietnam War demonstration, outside the Pentagon (headquarters of the US Department of Defense) in Virginia, 1967. Credit: w.wiki/6hek

As we explore Chenoweth's work and its relevance to social movements, keep in mind that it can often be difficult to discern whether a movement is violent or non-violent in nature. In many cases, a movement will employ both violent and non-violent methods of resistance at different points in its life span. It's also common for different branches within the same movement to engage differently, with one branch choosing violent tactics and another opting for non-violent tactics.

> “Nonviolent resistance is a method of struggle in which unarmed people confront an adversary by using collective action – including protests, demonstrations, strikes, and non-cooperation – to build power and achieve political goals. Sometimes called civil resistance, people power, unarmed struggle or nonviolent action, nonviolent resistance has become a mainstay of political action across the globe.”
>
> Erica Chenoweth, 2020. 'The future of nonviolent resistance'. *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 31, iss. 3, p 69–84.

Chenoweth did not approach their research with an assumption that nonviolence was an effective tactic to create political change. In fact, before conducting their research they believed the opposite: that violence was a necessary tool to achieve political change. What they concluded from their research was that campaigns that use violent means were inherently exclusive, which reduced the number of participants and therefore their chance of success. The success of movements that employ non-violent tactics comes down to their inclusivity.

Exclusive and inclusive movements

There is no one-size-fits-all model for non-violent campaigns. That said, throughout their research Chenoweth found again and again that movements that employed non-violent tactics were more inclusive. This inclusivity meant that movements were intentionally seeking the involvement and representation of a diverse range of individuals or groups, which led to larger participant bases.

Social movements that employ violent tactics were inherently exclusive because they required participants to be capable of engaging in violent tactics, tending ‘to lean on the support of physically fit young men’ (Robson, 2019). In doing so, they alienated potential participants who may have agreed with the broad goals of the movement but did not want to engage in violent acts, either because they were physically less likely to be able to do so (such as older people, or those with disabilities), because they objected to violent tactics on moral grounds, or because they were averse to the risks that came with violent action.

On the other hand, Chenoweth and Maria Stephan (2011) found that non-violent movements allowed for participants to maintain a ‘moral high ground’, and ‘present(ed) fewer obstacles to moral and physical involvement, information and education and participator commitment’. In doing this they created opportunities for participation from larger cross-sections of society. The broader and more diverse the participants, the more social power the social movement typically had. This engagement with a broader coalition of forces within society also appeared to lend itself to winning over support from elements of the police or military, who were more often agents of the opposition (Robson, 2019).

Non-violent resistance typically takes place ‘out in the open’, unlike violent resistance, which often involves a level of secrecy and operates ‘underground’. Visibility can be a big advantage for non-violent movements because more people may become aware of the movement and how they can get involved with it.

Demonstration of the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) in 1998 in Peshawar, Pakistan. Credit: w.wiki/6hi5

A demonstrator glares at a riot policeman during protests in Santiago, Chile in 2016. Credit: Carlos Vera/Reuters

Mass mobilisation

Mass mobilisation refers to the organised efforts of bringing together a large number of people to actively participate in a movement.

Chenoweth considers **mass mobilisation** a key component of successful movements. They found that all the successful movements they analysed had been able to achieve active participation or support from an estimated 3.5 per cent of the relevant population. This suggests that this might be the threshold for securing desired political change. Extrapolating this theory to contemporary Australia, with a population of 26 million as of 2023, Chenoweth's theory would suggest that fewer than 1 million people would need to become actively involved to achieve political change. To contextualise it differently, this would suggest that in a school of 1500 students, you might only need 53 active students to achieve your goal, which doesn't seem insurmountable.

Due to their more inclusive nature, it follows that non-violent movements may find it much easier to reach active participation of 3.5 per cent of the population. Of the movements analysed in Chenoweth's initial research, non-violent campaigns were found to have attracted more than four times as many participants (200 000) than violent campaigns (50 000).

The sheer number of participants can also influence the response of opposition forces. As Robson (2019) notes, 'during a peaceful protest of millions of people, the members of the security forces may also be more likely to fear that their family members or friends are in the crowd – meaning that they fail to crackdown on the movement'. The opposition may re-evaluate its ability to win and therefore 'come to the conclusion that the ship has sailed, and that they don't want to go down with the ship' (Chenowith via Robson, 2019).

> “Mobilising ordinary people in nonviolent direct action still remains the most effective way to create social change.”
>
> Almira Tanner, 2021. 'The rule of 3.5% has been broken. What does this mean for DxE?'. *Direct Action Everywhere.* directactioneverywhere.com/theliberationist/chenoweth-blog

ARE
WELCOME
HERE
NO BAN
MUSLIMS
NO BAN
NO WALL

Boston (US) demonstrators protesting in January 2017 then president Donald Trump's executive order barring citizens of certain countries from travelling to the US.
Credit: John Hilliard, 2017. flic.kr/p/Qt38H8

In employing non-violent tactics there is a range of creative ways in which social movements can purse their goals. Chenoweth suggests that to be successful 'campaigns need to be able to have more than just protests; there needs to be a lot of variation in the methods they use' (Nicholasen, 2019). In 1973 American political scientist Gene Sharp categorised 198 different non-violent techniques that movements may use to help achieve their goals. Below is a small sample of some of the strategies identified.

Protests and persuasion

- **Group representations**
  - 13. Deputations
  - 14. Mock awards
- **Withdrawal and renunciation**
  - 51. Walkouts
  - 52. Silence
  - 53. Renouncing honours
  - 54. Turning one's back

Economic boycotts

- **Actions by consumers**
  - 71. Consumers' boycott
  - 72. Nonconsumption of boycotted goods
  - 73. Policy of austerity
  - 74. Rent withholding
- **Action by owners and management**
  - 81. Traders' boycott
  - 82. Refusal to let or sell property

Strikes

- **Ordinary industrial strikes**
  - 106. Industry strike
  - 107. Sympathetic strike
- **Restricted strikes**
  - 112. Reporting 'sick' (sick-in)
  - 113. Strike by resignation

Political noncooperation

- **Rejection of authority**
  - 121. Refusal of public support
  - 122. Literature and speeches advocating resistance
- **Citizens' noncooperation with government**
  - 123. Boycott of legislative bodies
  - 124. Boycott of elections
- **Action by government personnel**
  - 143. Blocking of lines of command and information
  - 144. Stalling and obstruction

Interventions

- **Physical intervention**
  - 170. Nonviolent invasion
  - 171. Nonviolent interjection
- **Social intervention**
  - 174. Establishing new social patterns
  - 175. Overloading of facilities
- **Economic intervention**
  - 183. Nonviolent land seizure
  - 184. Defiance of blockades
- **Political intervention**
  - 195. Seeking imprisonment
  - 196. Civil disobedience of 'neutral' laws
  - 197. Work-on without collaboration
  - 198. Dual sovereignty and parallel government

See the full list at the Commons Social Change Library:

commonslibrary.org/198-methods-of-nonviolent-action

You can see 10 newer, digital methods proposed by researchers Mary Joyce and Patrick Meier as additions to Sharp's original list here:

commonslibrary.org/198-nonviolent-methods-upgraded

Chenoweth acknowledges the power of traditional non-violent resistance, such as protest and strikes, stating that general strikes are probably one of the most powerful, if not the most powerful, single methods of non-violent resistance.

Narrative can be used as a creative form of non-violent action. Extinction Rebellion demonstrators pose in front of the Reichstag in Berlin, 2019. Credit: Stefanie Eisenschenk. flic.kr/p/2hi91G

Drawbacks of these methods may include those which have been more likely to have been met with violent repression. Chenoweth contends that more successful movements use methods that safely allow for maximum participation while achieving the most disruption possible through ‘creative and imaginative variation in methods of resistance beyond mass protest’ (Renalli, 2019).

Some of these more creative methods may include:

- stay-at-home strikes, where protestors bang pots and pans while remaining indoors
- using symbolism to spread your message: for example, Avaaz (an activist group) placed 7000 pairs of shoes across the lawn at the US Capitol, with each pair representing a child killed by gun violence since the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in 2012
- narratives, such as the funeral processions held by Extinction Rebellion
- creatively displaying their message: in Morocco, instead of displaying the banners of the national flag on the street, protestors ‘released scores of Marrakesh’s infamous stray cats – whose fur had been dyed in patriotic colours’ (Renalli, 2019)
- mass civil disobedience – refusing to follow the demands of a government or those in power – creating disruption and gaining attention for the goals of the movement.

You can explore that most significant antigovernment protests worldwide since 2017 on the Global Protest Tracker site:

carnegieendowment.org/publications/interactive/protest-tracker

Check out Amnesty International US’s list of 50 creative ways to take action here:

amnestyusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/50-Ways-to-Take-Action.pdf

Find an example of successful civil disobedience here:

rebellion.global/blog/2020/11/03/civil-disobedience-examples

The Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston has a ‘guide to creative protest’ here:

icaboston.org/articles/mini-guide-creative-protest

Potential limitations and criticisms of Chenoweth's analysis

While the VCE study design does not explicitly require students to evaluate Chenoweth's work, it's important to be aware of its potential limitations.

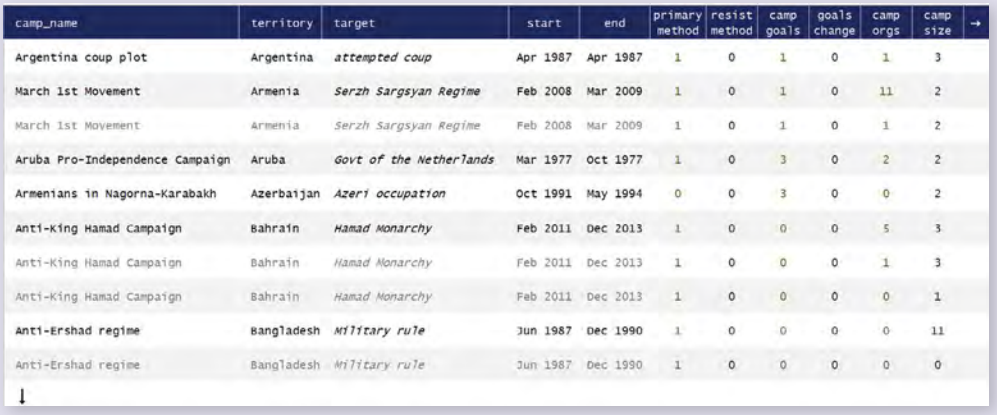
Chenoweth's research has focused on autocratic governments (where power is held by only one person), and have explicitly excluded data about movements in liberal democracies. This may limit the applicability of their findings to societies like Australia, the United States and Canada.

All movements included in their initial research were 'maximalist' campaigns; that is, revolutionary movements whose aim was to overthrow a dictator or gain political independence.

The categorisation of movements as being either 'violent' or 'non-violent' may oversimplify a distinction that is better represented by a scale; for instance, movements that started as violent may be grouped together with movements that only became violent in response to state violence.

Similarly, some critics claimed that Chenoweth's analysis overlooked the possibility of elements within social movements adopting violent methods in ways that complemented the non-violence of other elements, enhancing their strategic flexibility and their ability to achieve shared goals. (This phenomenon is sometimes referred to the 'violent flank effect'.) Nonetheless, Chenoweth and Schock (2015) published updated research for campaigns between 1945 and 2013 which sought to incorporate the existence of violent flanks into their data and found no clear correlation – that is, they could not establish whether the existence of a violent flank either helped or hindered a movement's chance of success.

Their work primarily examines the success or failure of social movements in achieving concrete policy change within a particular window of time and in a particular area. Critics fear that these constraints may lead Chenoweth's analysis to ignore broader or long-term effects of particular campaigns, such as their capacity to raise awareness, to expand the spectrum of acceptable viewpoints on policy (this is sometimes referred to as 'shifting the Overton window') and to inspire future activism.



camp_name	territory	target	start	end	primary method	resist method	camp goals	goals change	camp orgs	camp size	→
Argentina coup plot	Argentina	*attempted coup*	Apr 1987	Apr 1987	1	0	1	0	1	3	
March 1st Movement	Armenia	*Serzh Sargsyan Regime*	Feb 2008	Mar 2009	1	0	1	0	11	2	
March 1st Movement	Armenia	*Serzh Sargsyan Regime*	Feb 2008	Mar 2009	1	0	1	0	1	2	
Aruba Pro-Independence Campaign	Aruba	*Govt of the Netherlands*	Mar 1977	Oct 1977	1	0	3	0	2	2	
Armenians in Nagorna-Karabakh	Azerbaijan	*Azeri occupation*	Oct 1991	May 1994	0	0	3	0	0	2	
Anti-King Hamad Campaign	Bahrain	*Hamad Monarchy*	Feb 2011	Dec 2013	1	0	0	0	5	3	
Anti-King Hamad Campaign	Bahrain	*Hamad Monarchy*	Feb 2011	Dec 2013	1	0	0	0	1	3	
Anti-King Hamad Campaign	Bahrain	*Hamad Monarchy*	Feb 2011	Dec 2013	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Anti-Ershad regime	Bangladesh	*Military rule*	Jun 1987	Dec 1990	1	0	0	0	0	11	
Anti-Ershad regime	Bangladesh	*Military rule*	Jun 1987	Dec 1990	1	0	0	0	0	0	
↓											

A small excerpt from 'second generation' of the data informing Chenoweth's analysis.
It features 2717 'camps', with room to track 132 coded variables for each.

Erica Chenoweth and Christopher Wiley Shay, 2019. 'Nonviolent and Violent Campaigns and Outcomes (NAVCO) Dataset' Version 2.1. Dataverse. dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/navco

Spotlight on Australia

Australia has a long history of non-violent actions, including:

- women's rights activists and suffragettes in the early 1900s
- 'Day of Mourning' protests by Indigenous activists since 1938
- anti-war demonstrations in the 1960s and '70s
- second-wave feminist demonstrations in the 1960s and '70s
- the gay rights movement of the 1970s that led to Mardi Gras
- the Aboriginal Tent Embassy established in the 1970s
- equal marriage campaigns in the 2010s
- the Change the Date protests of the 2010s and 2020s.

Unlike many other jurisdictions in the world, Australians do not have a legally protected right to protest. It is not embedded in our legal system or constitution, which in turn means protestors may rely on anti-discrimination legislation in some cases (Naser, 2022).

Some state governments have introduced laws that have applied some limitations on the conduct of protestors. For instance, in Victoria, laws were passed in 2022 that increased the minimum jail term for activists hindering, obstructing or interfering with timber harvesting operations to 12 months, along with fines of more than $21 000.

In New South Wales, laws were introduced in 2022 that allowed for activists to be jailed for two years or fined up to $22 000 if they protest on public roads, rail lines, tunnels, bridges or industrial estates. In 2022 Tasmania also instituted new penalties for protestors who obstructed a workplace, allowing them to be jailed for up to 12 months.

> “The right to protest means very little if it doesn't include the right to disrupt. Interruption has long been at the heart of effective protest strategies. Some of the most successful and celebrated non-violent protests in history have focused on economic disruption – from lunch counter sit-ins in the USA during the 1960s civil rights movement, to economic sanctions imposed on South Africa during the 1980s in the struggle to end apartheid.”

Luke McNamara, in Amal Naser, 2022. 'Explainer: What are your rights to protest in Australia?'. humanrights.unsw.edu.au/research/commentary/explainer-what-are-your-rights-to-protest-australia

You can read about how protests in Australia can differ from those around the world in Madeleine Wedesweiler's 2023 analysis for SBS – 'Why aren't millions of Australians marching in the streets like the French?':

sbs.com.au/news/article/why-arent-millions-of-australians-marching-in-the-streets-like-the-french/0uotl5nk5

You can read the 2023 Al Jazeera article 'Pushback in Australia against increasingly draconian protests laws' to see how activists have responding to recent reforms aimed at penalising some types of civil resistance in Australia:

aljazeera.com/news/2023/3/21/australian-activist-challenges-draconian-protest-laws

Activity G – Non-violent actions

1 a Referring to the information provided in the ‘Spotlight on Australia’ box, why do you think Australian governments are introducing laws to deter non-violent activism?

  b How do you think these laws will impact social movements in Australia?

2 Pick one of the movements already explored in this chapter, or one you are otherwise interested in.

  a Investigate the different forms of non-violent actions participants in this movement may have used.

  b Choose one of the non-violent actions from Sharp’s list, and plan how the movement you have investigated could employ this action.

  c Compare the non-violent action plan you have prepared with that of a classmate.

3 Read the article ‘Can a polite sign lead to political change? What kinds of protest work?’ by Aiden Ricketts in The Conversation:

  theconversation.com/can-a-polite-sign-lead-to-political-change-what-kinds-of-protest-work-166023

  a How do Ricketts’ arguments support Chenoweth’s assertion that creative disruption is an important part of non-violent resistance?

  b Compare the effectiveness of disruptive and non-disruptive acts of non-violent resistance.

  c Explain why relying on disruptive action ‘by itself’ may not be effective.

  d Outline strategies that might be combined with disruptive action to maximise the effectiveness of a campaign.

Technologies at the frontier of non-violent action

Technologies such as the Internet, smartphones and social media have changed the way social movements and their opposition wield power.

> “Smartphone footage and social media have made it easier than ever for activists to document injustices and stage attention-getting confrontations with the powerful, driving public attention to issues and shaping the national agenda. And while it’s easy for critics to deride so-called hashtag activism as mere virtue signalling, Wasow points out the protest is performance. ‘All politics is in some ways a form of theatre,’ he says, ‘and every activist is engaged in a strategic effort to get attention for their cause.’”
>
> Molly Ball, 2022. ‘What more do we need to do to win?’
> A controversial climate group rethinks its strategy’. TIME.
> time.com/6158322/sunrise-movement-climate-activism-struggles

Social media is highly prevalent in the modern world and, as a result, it makes sense that social movements have sought to harness this technology to help fight for or resist social change. One of the ways this is happening is through bypassing traditional media to get their message out, spread public awareness and organise. Traditional media may be prone to shaping or manipulating reporting to reflect or promote their own interests by controlling whose stories are told and how they are framed. Social media ‘allows people to communicate their grievances broadly, across audiences of thousands or even millions. It gives organisers outlets for mass communication that are not controlled by mainstream institutions or governments’ (Chenoweth, 2020).

Revolution Tools:
~~AK-47~~
~~Machete~~
Twitter ✓
Facebook ✓

Social media has emerged as a crucial tool for social movements in the 21st century.
Credit: Steve Rhodes, 2012. flic.kr/p/do8KCP

Another way that social media has been employed by social movements is to highlight the actions of the opposition. Video streaming on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok have allowed for members of social movements to show what is happening on the ground at protests and demonstrations in real time – in particular, by sharing footage of police or military brutality towards protestors. Before these platforms became widely accessible such interactions were often hidden. In other words, social media allows what was once invisible to come to light.

Increased awareness has also meant that the way movements organise has also changed – peer-to-peer organising has helped to make contemporary movements much better at assembling participants en masse at short notice. However, the ease with which movements can now organise and coordinate does not necessarily mean more success for these movements. Chenoweth (2020) contends that movements who use these tactics are often 'less equipped to channel their numbers into effective organisations that can plan, negotiate, establish shared goals, build on past victories, and sustain their ability to disrupt a regime' compared to 'offline' movements. This may be due to differences in relationships compared to more 'offline' movements, where participants know each other and have ongoing relationships and the chance to develop trust. For this reason, Chenoweth argues that more successful movements can build sustainable followings by not relying exclusively on digital organising.

One movement that relied heavily on technology for organising was the Occupy Wall Street movement (2011–12). This movement aimed to address income inequality and corporate influence on politics. It relied heavily on technology to mobilise and communicate with its participants. The Occupy movement ultimately declined through failure due to its inability to translate its online presence into mass mobilisation.

Online participation in social movements allows for more inclusivity in movements, in part because many forms of offline action may exclude those who are not physically able to participate.

As with many artforms, social movements often experience the most success when they effectively incorporate and blend different elements (including those that might otherwise be thought to 'clash').

> The Internet has challenged ableist definitions of political 'action' and made it easier for those long excluded from public space to make their demands known.
>
> Dana L. Cloud, 2019. 'Progressive social movements and the Internet'. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Communication and Critical Cultural Studies*.

We've seen the impact of this inclusion in movements such as #StopAdani, referred to earlier, where people who may not have been able to physically participate in protests and direct action were still able to participate in online zoom strategic meetings, phone action and other virtual actions and therefore contribute to the goals and aims of the movement.

Scholars agree that movements are most effective when they can combine their online and offline activism.

> I would say that social media by itself is not enough but it does help you so long as you have other elements in place.
>
> Stephen Zunes, quoted in Portia Ladrido, 2017. 'How social media is used as an effective tool for nonviolent civil resistance'. Inkline.
> the-inkline.com/2017/02/07/how-to-use-social-media-as-an-effective-tool-for-nonviolent-civil-resistance/

Non-violence may not beget non-violence

A movement being non-violent does not mean that it will not be met with violence from its opponent. However, this can play to the advantage of the non-violent activists, because it helps to build support from the public for the cause.

> The unnecessary and sometimes excessive use of force by police against protesters exhibits the very systemic racism and impunity they had taken to the streets to protest. The research shows that people who were simply exercising their human right to peacefully protest were met with such violence that they lost eyesight, survived brutal beatings, and suffered seizures and severe wounds.
>
> Ernest Coverson, Amnesty International USA's 'End Gun Violence' campaign manager, in 'Amnesty International Documents 125 Incidents of Police Violence Against Protesters'. 2020.
> amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2020/08/usa-law-enforcement-violated-black-lives-matter-protesters-human-rights

Making judgements about social movements

This area of study requires you to be able to evaluate the influence of social movements on social change. To do this successfully, you need to be able to weigh up the evidence and make a judgement.

As we've learnt, even social movements that experience decline are nonetheless able to achieve *some* social change. Social movements generally begin seeing some social change achieved as early as the coalescence stage, with most social change occurring during the bureaucratisation stage. Therefore, when discussing the social change accomplished by a movement, it can be helpful to structure your response around whether the social movement failed to achieve change, achieved partial change, continues to influence change or achieved its goals and subsequently declined due to its success.

It's also important that you can discuss the reasons for the change achieved or not achieved. As explored earlier in this chapter, the power of a movement, as well as the power of its opposition, can influence the extent of social change achieved by the movement. If the movement has enough power, it can achieve its goals despite resistance from the opposition. Another factor that influences the social change achieved by a movement can be the types of tactics it uses when using its power to pursue its goals.

We are also asked to incorporate an understanding of Chenoweth's research, which found that historically movements that engaged in non-violent actions were twice as likely to achieve their goals as those who relied on violence.

Content warning

The following case study discusses systemic racism and police violence directed towards African Americans and people of colour, which have led to injury or death.

Black Lives Matter, social media and non-violent resistance

The Black Lives Matter movement can be considered a reformative movement. It is **seeking limited change**: reforms to the criminal justice system that address systemic racism and police brutality against Black people. The movement is not targeting individuals; rather, it is **targeting groups** – specifically the government at federal, state and municipal levels, and related entities, particularly in relation to policing and criminal justice systems.

Black Lives Matter emerged in July 2013, after George Zimmerman was acquitted of the shooting death of Black teenager Trayvon Martin. Founded by three Black female activists – Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi – the movement aims to address systemic racism and police brutality against Black people in the United States.

The movement was born online. After the acquittal of George Zimmerman, Alicia Garza posted on Facebook, 'Black people. I love you. I love us. Our lives matter.' Patrisse Cullors read this post and replied with the first use of the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter. The hashtag was used a further 47 times that day.

A year later, on 9 August 2014, the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag went viral after Darren Wilson, a white police officer, shot and killed Mike Brown, an unarmed Black teenager. The police left Brown's body on the road for hours in the summer heat. Activists used the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag to attempt to hold the police department to account and encourage them to cover up Brown's body 'out of respect for his humanity' (Chang, Richardson and Ferrara, 2022).

The use of the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter soared from that point onwards. From its initial appearance in mid-2013 through March 2016, the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter appeared on Twitter almost 11.8 million times.

The #BlackLivesMatter hashtag became the rallying cry for activists and community members who were outraged by the systemic racism and police brutality harming Black people in the United States. The phrase and hashtag were quickly employed by grassroots activists and protestors across the country.

As of 2023, Black Lives Matter can mostly be characterised as a decentralised movement. Rather than having a hierarchical leadership structure, each chapter of the movement contributes independently and interdependently with other chapters. This means that there is no one person or persons organising each protest; rather, the Black Lives Matter organisation provides resources, support and scaffolding for new activists. These activists harness social media to publicise their actions to a wide audience, therefore allowing the online conversations to directly influence the offline growth of the movement.

May 2020 saw a resurgence of the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag after the murder of an unarmed civilian, George Floyd, by a police officer was caught on film by 17-year-old Darnella Frazier. Frazier livestreamed the footage in real time via Instagram, creating a record of the murder of Floyd.

> “Bystanders now document assaults on cell phones and share news and outrage worldwide almost instantaneously. Social media helps movements to mobilize people and produce international surges of protests at lightning speed.”
>
> Aldon Morris, 2021. ‘From civil rights to Black Lives Matter’. Scientific American. scientificamerican.com/article/from-civil-rights-to-black-lives-matter1

Outrage over the murder of Floyd (which was made public due to social media) was the catalyst for widespread protests against police brutality and racial inequality, using a shared rallying cry of ‘Black Lives Matter’. The subsequent protests were hailed as the largest and broadest mass mobilisation in American history, with over half a million people in attendance at Black Lives Matter demonstrations in more than 500 locations on 6 June 2022.

Remember – if we apply Chenoweth’s 3.5 per cent threshold for a successful social movement, 500 000 people is much less that the 11 or so million people that would have made up this proportion of the total American population.

The people who attended these protests came from diverse backgrounds, highlighting the inclusive nature of the movement and their use of non-violent tactics. Had the movement been employing violent tactics, this may have led to a much less diverse participant base.

Compiled using information from the following resources:

- Gene Demby, 2016. ‘Combing through 41 million tweets to show how #BlackLivesMatter exploded’. NPR. npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2016/03/02/468704888/combing-through-41-million-tweets-to-show-how-blacklivesmatter-exploded
- Monica Anderson, 2016. ‘The hashtag #BlackLivesMatter emerges: Social activism on Twitter’. Pew Research Center. pewresearch.org/internet/2016/08/15/the-hashtag-blacklivesmatter-emerges-social-activism-on-twitter/

BLACK LIVES MATTER
THIS IS A REVOLT AGAINST RACISM
DEFUND THE POLICE
CHANGE JUSTICE
COLOR IS NOT A CRIME
DEFUND THE

Black Lives Matter protests following the murder of George Floyd in 2020.
Credit: Ted Eytan, 2020. flic.kr/p/2j9ojzd.

In 2022, Ho-Chun Herbert Chang, Allissa Richardson and Emilio Ferrara analysed 1.3 million social media posts that were shared during the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020 and found that participants who shared movement-related news were able to successfully educate casual observers that had previously conveyed ‘awe and disbelief at the violent police reactions to the Ferguson protests’ or ‘conservative admissions of police brutality’. This demonstrates the significant role that social media played in raising awareness of systemic racism and police brutality against Black people in the United States, in turn leading to greater support, more participants and more capacity for action.

In addition to the inherently non-violent nature of online participation in the movement, almost all the demonstrations (96.4 per cent) conducted by BLM during this period were non-violent in nature. In 97.7 per cent of the protests, no injuries were sustained by participants, police or bystanders (Chen, 2021). Despite these figures, the mainstream media widely reported that the protests were ‘violent’, citing instances in which some protestors engaged in vandalism, property damage and looting.

Black Lives Matter was able to achieve some success in forcing social and political change, particularly in regards to police reforms, including:

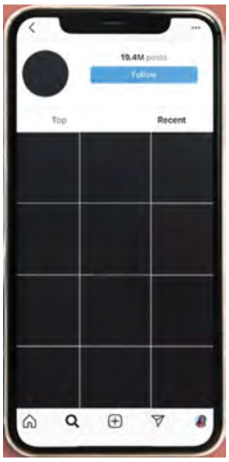
- budget cuts for police departments in more than a dozen US cities (including major population centres such as New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia and Austin)
- the introduction of Breonna’s Law banning ‘no-knock’ search warrants in many states
- increased ‘duty to intervene’ policies to strengthen police intervention when officers use excessive force.

You can read more about the changes achieved by Black Lives Matter here:

‘Black Lives Matter protests: What’s been achieved so far’. DoSomething.org.
dosomething.org/us/articles/black-lives-matter-protests-whats-been-achieved-so-far

> “It looks, for all the world, like these protests are achieving what very few do: setting in motion a period of significant, sustained, and widespread social, political change ... We appear to be experiencing a social change tipping point – that is as rare in society as it is potentially consequential.”
>
> Professor Douglas McAdam (Stanford University), quoted in Larry Buchanan, Quoctrung Bui and Jugal K. Patel, 2020. ‘Black Lives Matter may be the largest movement in U.S. history’. The New York Times.
> nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/03/us/george-floyd-protests-crowd-size.html

Another social media intervention that emerged after the murder of Floyd was #BlackOutTuesday, where people posted a black square as a gesture of solidarity with the protests. More than 28 million black squares were posted on Instagram and other online services such as Spotify and Apple music.



#BlackOutTuesday

Chang, Richardson and Ferrara (2022) found that #BlackOutTuesday had an altogether different impact to #BlackLivesMatter. In their analysis, they contend that the posting of the black square was primarily performative and did not appear to lead to direct participation in the movement. This interpretation was further supported by interviews with 20 wellness influencers who admitted to sharing the square as a way of ‘maintaining credibility with their following base’.

Furthermore, researcher Jolynna Sinanan (2020) found that there was some evidence to suggest these posts actually interfered with the work of #BLM, as they disrupted access to the types of posts and content activists would have engaged with to stay informed about protests, document violence and evidence of racial biases in the police, as well as obstructing posts facilitating donations to help the cause.

Activity H – Influence of social movement on social change

1 Select the #DropCroc, #StopAdani or Fight for the Bight movement, or any other movement you have explored in this section.

Individually, collect evidence of changes to the views, values, norms and structures of society achieved by the movement. For each type of change, note how it occurred, (using multiple pieces of evidence) and provide an assessment of the scale of the change (i.e. did not achieve change, achieved some change, is still influencing change, achieved its goals and declined as a result of its own success, etc.).

2 Create a table with the following headings to organise your work.

Social movement name:			
Change to . . .	**How did it change?**	**Evidence**	**Scale of change**
Views			
Values			
Norms			
Social structures			

3 Pair up with a classmate looking at the same movement and discuss the changes you identified and your assessment of the scale of change achieved.

a Did you identify the same changes?

b Did you believe the changes were of the same scale? If not, why not?

c Were you able to use your evidence to convince your partner of your point of view? Were they able to use their evidence to convince you of their point of view?

If you're interested in finding out more about successful non-violent activism, you could borrow a copy of Todd Hasak-Lowy's 2020 book *We Are Power: How Non-violent Activism Changes the World* from your local library. Further information is also available from the author's website:

toddhasaklowy.com/we-are-power

Sudan's 'improbable revolution' of 2019

Adapted from Stephen Zunes, 2020. 'How the people of Sudan pulled off an improbable revolution'. The Conversation. theconversation.com/how-the-people-of-sudan-pulled-off-an-improbable-revolution-132808

One of the world's most brutal dictatorships – in power for more than 30 years – was overthrown in 2019 in a massive non-violent civil insurrection involving millions of Sudanese.

Conditions in Sudan were not auspicious for a successful pro-democracy civil resistance movement. The regime was oppressive, entrenched, and had been successful in its divide-and-rule tactics over the large and ethnically heterogeneous nation.

Starting in December 2018, a movement emerged that eventually brought millions of Sudanese onto the streets. By April 2019, General Omar al-Bashir was overthrown by fellow military officers. Protests continued and, although there were hundreds of deaths, by August the military stepped down in favour of a civilian-led transitional government.

Ingredients of success

Several factors contributed to the success of the uprising. These included the regime's weaknesses, as well as the tactics used by the opposition forces. When it came to the movement itself, factors that strengthened its efforts and made them more effective included:

Scope and scale: While some civil insurrections take place in a capital with mostly middle-class support, the Sudanese revolution took place all over the country, in all regions, with diverse class and ethnic participation. Popular resistance committees were active in even the poorest neighbourhoods. The Sudanese Professionals Association, an alliance of professional trade unions, played a key leadership role. Building such a broad coalition of forces was vitally important, given the size and complexity of the country.

National unity: For decades, the regime had tried to divide Sudanese between North and South, Arab and non-Arab, Muslim and non-Muslim. The pro-democracy protesters recognised that national unity was critical and consciously resisted efforts to divide-and-rule.

At the beginning of the uprising, the regime tried to blame the uprising in Khartoum on Furs, the people indigenous to the Darfur region. In response, the largely Arab but multi-ethnic protesters began chanting 'We are all Darfur'. In solidarity, protesters in Al Fashir, the Darfur capital, started chanting 'We are all Khartoum!'

The role of women: Strong leadership from women increased the numbers of protesters as they encouraged other women to join the protests. It also lent credibility to the protests and provided a positive popular perception of the movement and its goals by challenging notions that they were violent and dangerous.

Non-violent action: Perhaps the single most important factor was the decision to stress non-violent action.

The Sudanese opposition had, on previous occasions, engaged in violent struggles. For example, in 1993 an armed guerrilla movement operating out of bases in Eritrea was launched. But it failed to provoke a more widespread popular uprising and was formally disbanded in 2006. Similarly, protesters turned violent during the civil insurrection of 2013. The uprising was crushed within days after scores of civilian deaths.

The choice of peaceful protests, sit-ins and strikes made it difficult for the regime to depict the movement in a negative light. Additionally, non-violence meant the movement attracted sympathy it would have lost through violent tactics. This swelled the number of people coming out onto the streets.

Activity I – Non-violent resistance

1 Watch Jamila Raqib's 2016 TED Talk, 'The secret to effective nonviolent resistance' (9 min).
youtu.be/OlpgrZ8yS-Q
  a Take note of the different non-violent techniques she discusses.
  b Create a persuasive text (i.e. letter to the editor, speech, advertising campaign) to support a movement to use non-violent techniques, rather than violent ones.

2 Use the case study 'Sudan's 'improbable revolution' of 2019' as a starting point to research the revolution in Sudan.
  a Identify the goals of the movement.
  b Classify this movement as alternative, reformative, redemptive or revolutionary. Remember to ask yourself the following questions to help:
  – How much change is being advocated for?
  – Who is the movement asking to change?

c Identify the types of power used by the movement and its opposition.
d Explain the role that non-violent resistance played.

3 The emergence of new technologies, particularly social media, has transformed the dynamics of social movements, impacting how movements and their oppositions use and maintain power. To find out more, watch Zeynep Tufekci's TED Talk 'How the Internet has made social change easy to organise, hard to win' (16 min) and answer the questions below.

https://youtu.be/Mo2Ai7ESNL8

a How has social media changed social movement tactics?
b What reasons does Tufekci outline for these movements not achieving their aims?
c What are the benefits of slow and sustained movements (movements without Internet assistance) that Tufekci outlines?

4 Read or listen to the 2017 article '8 massive movements when hashtag activism really worked', available on the Global Citizen website:

globalcitizen.org/en/content/hashtag-activism-hashtag10-twitter-trends-dresslik

a How were these movements able to use social media to not just mobile, but organise?
b How can these actions be considered non-violent?
c What can we learn from how these movements used technology?

5 Read the 2023 article 'The existential question for climate activists: have disruption tactics stopped working?', by Jack Shenker for The Guardian:

theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/mar/06/british-eco-activists-disruption-extinction-rebellion

a Using the information provided, identify the disruption tactics used by Extinction Rebellion, Just Stop Oil and Insulate Britain.
b Classify these tactics as violent or non-violent.
c The disruption tactics employed by these groups have led to a loss of public support and membership. How does this support the work of Erica Chenoweth about the importance of inclusive movements and role of mass mobilisation?

Activity J – Skill building: synthesis

When you are asked to synthesise, you are required to combine various elements to make an overall point. Let's look at how we might do this when unpacking an extended response question.

1 Erica Chenoweth argues that non-violent resistance is more effective than violent resistance in achieving social change. Evaluate this statement using evidence from social movements you have studied this year.

Let's use the KLC framework to help us unpack the question:

Key terms Limiting words Command term

To address this question, we will need to explore two case studies through the lens of Chenoweth's work. This will require the use of synthesis. In order to successfully do this, you need to develop a deep understanding of:

- Chenoweth's research, findings and arguments relating to the effectiveness of non-violent resistance
- two social movements, including one that you can use to support Chenoweth's perspective, and one that can be used to refute it.

For this example, we will be using the Black Lives Matter movement as our case study, which we have explored, along with the Black Panther movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

2 Before proceeding, watch NBC News Learn's brief (4 min) video explainer about the Black Panthers on YouTube, and answer the questions that follow. This will help us to develop our understanding of the movement before planning our extended response to the question above.

youtu.be/uZlnZCpXfpQ

a When did the Black Panther movement emerge?

b What were the goals of the Black Panther movement?

c How would you classify the Black Panther movement (was it alternative, redemptive, reformative or revolutionary)?

d What tactics did the Black Panther movement employ to achieve its goals? Can we classify these as either violent or non-violent?

e How did the tactics of the FBI lead to the repression of the Black Panther movement?

f The Black Panther movement declined in the 1980s. Identify which type of decline it experienced.

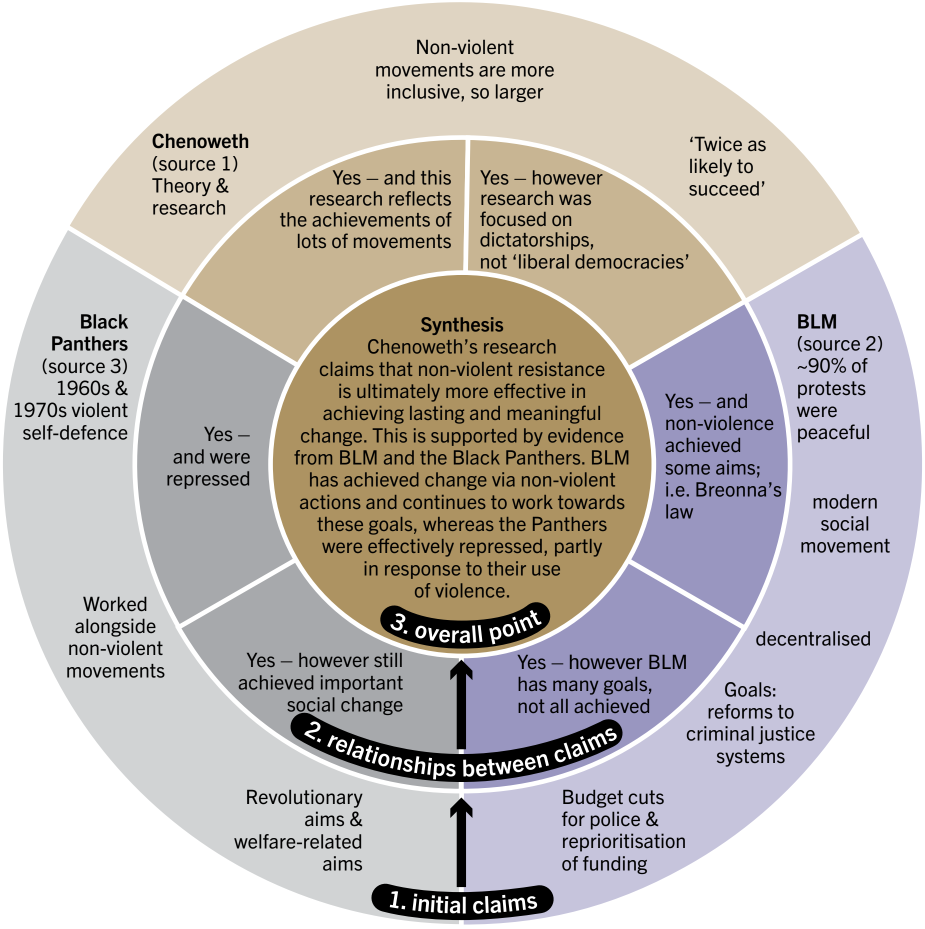
Despite its decline, the Black Panther movement still achieved some significant social change, as well as paving the way for future movements (including the Black Lives Matter movement). Some of the changes it achieved include:

- providing social services to impoverished Black communities, such as free breakfast programs for children, free health clinics and community education programs
- instituting its 'police watch' programs, which monitored police activity and responded to incidents of police violence against Black people.

You might like to visit the website of the National Museum of African American History and Culture to learn more:

nmaahc.si.edu/explore/stories/black-panther-party-challenging-police-and-promoting-social-change

3 To help you synthesise your research, you can use a tool called 'the circle of synthesis' provided.


Non-violent movements are more inclusive, so larger
Chenoweth (source 1) Theory & research
'Twice as likely to succeed'
Yes – and this research reflects the achievements of lots of movements
Yes – however research was focused on dictatorships, not 'liberal democracies'
Black Panthers (source 3) 1960s & 1970s violent self-defence
Yes – and were repressed
BLM (source 2) ~90% of protests were peaceful
modern social movement
Yes – and non-violence achieved some aims; i.e. Breonna's law
Synthesis
3. overall point
Worked alongside non-violent movements
Yes – however still achieved important social change
Yes – however BLM has many goals, not all achieved
decentralised
Goals: reforms to criminal justice systems
2. relationships between claims
Revolutionary aims & welfare-related aims
Budget cuts for police & reprioritisation of funding
1. initial claims

Chenoweth's research claims that non-violent resistance is ultimately more effective in achieving lasting and meaningful change. This is supported by evidence from BLM and the Black Panthers. BLM has achieved change via non-violent actions and continues to work towards these goals, whereas the Panthers were effectively repressed, partly in response to their use of violence.

The circle of synthesis

a In the first, outer layer, you can lay out your **initial claims**. In this case these will be in reference to Chenoweth's work, the Black Lives Matter movement and the Black Panther movement.

b In the second layer, you interrogate these claims to determine the **relationships between the elements** in the first layer:
  - How are the case studies related to Chenoweth's work?
  - Is Chenoweth's hypothesis supported or challenged by the case studies?
  - You can do this through applying 'yes, and …' for complimenting aspects or 'yes, however' for conflicting aspects as a questioning scaffold.

c In the final layer, you draw together the information from the second layer to your final, **overall point**.

A sample answer for the question, constructed using the tools provided, is set out below.

The Black Lives Matter movement emerged in 2013 in response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman, who fatally shot Trayvon Martin, an unarmed African American teenager. The movement aims to raise awareness of systemic racism and police brutality against Black people in the United States. It can be classified as a reformative movement as it is seeking limited change and targeting a group, American politics. The movement has used various forms of non-violent resistance (methods of struggle in which people confront adversaries by using collective action), including protests, sit-ins, and other forms of direct action to bring attention to their cause.

Erica Chenoweth, a political scientist, argues that non-violent resistance is more effective in achieving social change. This argument is based on their study of social movements throughout history, where they found that non-violent resistance campaigns were twice as likely to achieve success as violent ones. Moreover, non-violent campaigns tend to achieve more long-lasting and peaceful outcomes. Chenoweth attributes this success to several factors, such as the ability of non-violent movements to mobilise larger and more diverse groups of people, the moral and emotional power of non-violent actions, and the reduced likelihood of state repression and escalation.

The Black Lives Matter movement has largely adhered to non-violent resistance tactics, such as peaceful protests, civil disobedience and boycotts. These tactics have allowed the movement to gain widespread support and attention, both nationally and internationally. For instance, the murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer in May 2020 sparked a wave of protests in the United States and around the world, which were almost completely (97.7 per cent) peaceful. The protests drew attention to systemic racism and police brutality and led to significant policy changes, such as the banning of chokeholds and reimagining of policing in some cities.

In contrast, other movements that have used violent resistant tactics, such as the Black Panther Party in the 1960s and 1970s, faced significant repression and often failed to achieve their goals. The Black Panther movement was a revolutionary movement, which sought radical change from the American Government. This movement actively engaged in violent tactics, such as armed self-defence (openly carrying weapons for protection), as well as non-violent tactics such as education and advocacy. While violence can sometimes be an effective means of self-defence or a last resort when all other options have been exhausted, it can also alienate potential allies and undermine the moral legitimacy of a movement.

While violent resistance may seem appealing in some contexts, Chenoweth's research states that non-violent resistance is ultimately more effective in achieving lasting and meaningful change. This assertion is further supported when analysing the Black Lives Matter movement and the change achieved through non-violent actions.

Case study: The Sunrise Movement 4.2.3

> “The Sunrise Movement is a youth movement to stop climate change and create millions of good jobs in the process. We’re building an army of young people to make climate change an urgent priority across America, end the corrupting influence of fossil fuel executives on our politics, and elect leaders who stand up for the health and wellbeing of all people.”
>
> Sunrise Movement, 2023. sunrisemovement.org/about

First devised in 2016 by a group of six young climate activists, the Sunrise Movement specifically advocates for the signing off and implementation of the ‘Green New Deal’, a comprehensive proposal for addressing the climate crisis and promoting economic justice. It aims to eliminate the United States’ reliance on fossil fuels and non-renewable energy sources by moving to a 100 per cent clean and renewable energy sector within 10 years.

The movement has gained significant attention in recent years for is innovative and effective organising strategies, which have included large-scale protests, direct actions and grassroots advocacy campaigns.

Since 2017 the Sunrise Movement has achieved significant success, including the election of climate champions to Congress. With its powerful message, innovative strategies and commitment to justice, the Sunrise Movement is poised to continue making significant contributions to the global fight for a sustainable and just future.

BACK THE DEAL
NO MORE EXCUSES
DO YOUR JOB
SUNRISE MOVEMENT
GREEN NEW DEAL
BACK THE DEAL
NO MORE EXCUSES

Young activists of the Sunrise Movement line the halls of Congress to push for a Green New Deal.

To learn more about the Sunrise Movement, watch:

youtu.be/an5GbckznRQ

Read ‘The new face of climate activism is young, angry – and effective’ by Vox:

vox.com/the-highlight/2019/9/10/20847401/sunrise-movement-climate-change-activist-millennials-global-warming

And explore:

sunrisemovement.org/

Watch the following Vox ‘Explained’ (7 min) video from 2019 to learn more about the Green New Deal:

youtu.be/GxIDJWCbk6I

GREEN
NEW DEAL

New York representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (centre) speaks on the Green New Deal in front of the Capitol Building, Washington, 2019. Credit: Senate Democrats. w.wiki/6j2n

Use your skills!

Before continuing with our case study, a note on the interrelated nature of these components. The study design requires you to demonstrate your understanding of the following interrelated components:

1. the social movement as alternative, redemptive, reformative or revolutionary
2. how power is exercised by the social movement
3. the current stage of the social movement
4. how power is used by the social movement’s opposition in an attempt to prevent it from achieving its desired social changes.

This requires you not only to correctly identify discrete parts of the movement, such as its type or stage, but also to analyse and evaluate the influence of each of these components on each other. For instance:

- How does the power generated by a movement influence the opposition’s use of power?
- Does this change throughout the lifespan of the social movement?

This will require you to use your synthesis skills, as explored in the previous section.

Type of social movement 4.2.3.1

When determining how to classify the Sunrise Movement, it is important to use Aberle’s questions to determine this.

How much change is being advocated for?

The Sunrise Movement is advocating for political change through the adoption of the Green New Deal to help transition America to green energy. From this we can determine that the Sunrise Movement is **seeking limited change** – changes to policy approaches to the problem of human-induced climate change.

Who is the movement asking to change?

As the Sunrise Movement is aiming for political change, it becomes clear that this movement is not targeting individuals, rather it is **targeting a group** – governments, primarily, at the federal and state levels.

Through asking these questions we can confidently rule out the Sunrise Movement:

- as an alternative movement, because while this type of movement also advocates for limited change, it targets individuals
- as a redemptive movement, because this type of movement advocates for radical change targeted at individuals
- as revolutionary movement, because although this type of movement also targets groups it seeks radical/major change.

Thus, we can determine that this movement is best classified as **reformative**: that is, a movement advocating for limited change from a group.

It's also important to think about the ways the Sunrise Movement seeks to promote the changes it seeks. As this movement is working within existing political systems (we will explore this in more depth when we look at the way the movement and its opposition use power), this is further evidence that it fits a reformative classification.

Use of power 4.2.3.2

When it emerged, participants in the Sunrise Movement were under no illusion about the limited power that they had. William Lawrence, one of the co-founders of the Sunrise Movement, discussed this in his article 'Understanding Sunrise, Part 1: Strategy' and acknowledged that at the start the movement had very little power and needed a lot of it quickly:

convergencemag.com/articles/understanding-sunrise-part-1-strategy

The founders of the Sunrise Movement understood the power of numbers, and knew that in order to successfully achieve their goals they needed to develop a strategy that would maximise the reach and political leverage of a small group of activists. Using the momentum from early successes, they could multiply their reach and grow their numbers.

From this initial basis and with a lot of hard work the movement was able to expand its influence and increase in strength, as it progressed through coalescence to the bureaucratisation stage. At this point, the movement worked to design 'demands, narratives and political alliances to be maximally disruptive to the political establishment' (Lawrence, 2022), using strategies such as sit-ins, protests and narrative. Remember: Chenoweth suggested that non-violent actions that cause disruption are particularly effective, as these work to build awareness and therefore increase the numbers of a movement.

> “We understood that there's the supermajority of Americans who understand climate change is happening and want the government to do something about it. So we have tons of passive support for this issue. Now we need to translate that into *active* support – people who are actively participating in our movement.”
>
> Ezra Klein, 2019. 'How to topple dictators and transform society'.
> vox.com/podcasts/2020/1/3/21048121/ezra-klein-erica-chenoweth-nonviolence-topple-dictators

In the course of its bureaucratisation, the Sunrise Movement has structured itself around three core strategies: building people power, political power and a 'people's alignment'.

The Sunrise Movement's three core strategies

People power involves developing an active base of public support. This is achieved through participants having personal conversations with the people in their networks, including friends, family, neighbours and communities. These conversations help to raise awareness of the issue and support them to take meaningful action through moral protest.

Political power is achieved through engaging in formal democratic processes to vote out corrupt politicians and replace them with representatives who fight for a shared vision.

People's alignment is about building an extensive network of movements and groups who share the movement's vision of justice and dignity in government policy.

Adapted from Sunrise Movement, 2023. 'Who we are'. sunrisemovement.org/about

At the risk of confusing you, these three strategies (all starting with 'p') can also be plotted neatly against Han's (2022) 'three Ps':

- The Sunrise Movement makes it **possible** to take action by encouraging and supporting ordinary people to participate**.**
- Through its use of personal conversations, it's able to make personal connections that makes it more **probable** people will want to participate.
- The movement understands how to leverage power to achieve its goals, and in doing so provides structures to help people realise how **powerful** their vote is.

Before continuing, watch Varshini Prakash's (9 min) video 'Youth Power and Building a Broad Climate Movement: The Next Wave', in which she discusses the context and developing power of the Sunrise Movement:

youtu.be/Pmj0g1uXU6k

Some of the strategies employed by the Sunrise Movement to build power include protests, strikes, town hall meetings, sit-ins, hunger strikes, civil disobedience, wide awake actions, school walkouts and electoral organising.

Next we explore the specific forms of power these actions exemplify.

Strategies employed by the Sunrise Movement

Electoral organising

The Sunrise Movement's electoral organising included direct community outreach via doorknocking and 'cold-calling' to build relationships and inform voters about the movement and its priorities. They also provided information about which candidates supported the movement's priorities (and who had been endorsed by the movement), as well as advising which candidates were not supportive of their goals.

> “1 We support candidates who, if elected, would represent a significant break with the status quo for their district.
>
> 2 We support politicians who will represent us, not the fossil fuel industry.
>
> 3 No permanent friends. No permanent enemies.”
>
> Sunrise Movement, 2023. 'Sunrise Political Endorsements'.
> sunrisemovement.org/political-endorsements

Electoral organising can be considered **referent power** as it relies on the power of personal influence and charisma to motivate individuals to vote for a particular candidate or party.

Endorsing particular candidates is an example of **reward power** because it incentivises politicians supporting pro-climate policies. In their own words, the Sunrise Movement saw itself as helping to 'catalyse a critical mass of enthusiastically supportive public officials who will fight for our shared vision of a just future'. In particular, offering endorsements to candidates who supported Green New Deal policies provided incentives to candidates who gained a group of climate-conscious voters who could lend support in the form of voting and campaign donations.

Referent power is based on identification with, attraction to or respect for the leader. This can include people with large followings or strong reputations: for example, having a celebrity add their voice (and resources) to a social movement.

Reward power is based on the ability to provide a positive incentive (reward) for compliance.

Watch the Sunrise Movement's (3 min) endorsement of Bernie Sanders in 2020 here:

youtu.be/hVZujmrWAlw

A full list of candidates currently endorsed by the movement can be found here:

sunrisemovement.org/political-endorsements

Withholding endorsement from candidates and therefore potentially depriving them of votes could also be considered an example of **coercive power**, because it imposes a negative consequence or penalty in return for not supporting the movement and its goals. To quote the movement, they 'vote out corrupt officials and vote in real leaders who side with us'.

Coercive power is power based on the ability to provide a consequence for non-compliance.

> “When it came to the presidential election, Sunrise endorsed Sanders in the Democratic primary and gave Biden an 'F–' rating on his climate plan.”
>
> Ruairí Arrieta-Kenna, 2021. 'When the unstoppable activists met their match'. Politico.
> politico.com/news/magazine/2021/11/05/sunrise-movement-manchin-climate-activism-democratic-washington-518558

Protests and demonstrations

The Sunrise Movement organised several strikes (often with theatrical elements), including a large demonstration in September 2019 that took place across several cities in the United States.

These strikes were designed to provoke a sense of crisis, forcing onlookers to feel like they had to take a side. They also featured many prominent speakers, including:

- environmentalist and author Bill McKibben
- author and activist Naomi Klein
- writer and activist Julian Brave NoiseCat
- actor Joaquin Phoenix.

Protests can be considered coercive because they disrupt everyday life, and the implied physical power of a large crowd of people gathering with a common goal can be taken as a 'show of force' or even interpreted as a threat.

Having prominent speakers at these protests enhances the **expert power** of the movement. They can influence others based on their knowledge, skills and expertise of the climate emergency and the importance of the Green New Deal. This, in turn, can lend credibility to the movement's message, which can make it more persuasive to others.

Expert power is power based on having superior insight, knowledge or abilities: for example, having an expert speak on behalf of the movement.

In this example, having Bill McKibben, Naomi Klein and Julian Brave NoiseCat speaking at protests and explaining the urgency of addressing climate change deploys the expertise and credibility from their respective backgrounds (environmentalist, author, activist) and adds this to the movement's power.

Having Joaquin Phoenix speak at protests can also be considered a form of **referent power**, because while he has no specific expertise in fields directly relevant to the protests he has a large following as a prominent actor, which can be used to help raise awareness of the movement and its goals.

BANK & INVEST
ALLY
UMP
ASE
OUR HOUSE IS ON FIRE BECAUSE IT IS
FROM CHASE
TOP BANKER OF FOSS
WELLS FA
CLIMATE STRIKE
STRIKE FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE
PROTECT
WATER, CLIMATE
GLOBAL CLIMATE STRIKE
SUNRISE MOVEMENT

The Sunrise Movement demonstrate at the San Rafael climate strike.
Credit: Fabrice Florin, 2019. flic.kr/p/2hWHTuJ

Direct action

Direct action includes sit-ins, in which adherents simply sit down (typically on the floor) en masse in a particular location as a means of disrupting business as usual and drawing attention.

In November 2018, the Sunrise Movement facilitated a sit-in at House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office, demanding that congressional Democrats do more to prioritise addressing climate change. The sit-in included more than 200 activists sitting in Pelosi's office wearing shirts with slogans such as 'we have a right to good jobs and a liveable future'.

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, recently elected as representative for New York's 14th district, also attended the sit-in in support of the Sunrise Movement and its goal of pushing for implementation of the Green New Deal.

You can see Ocasio-Cortez speak about her support by viewing this ad for the Sunrise Movement (4 min):

youtu.be/rzcKMEVarFQ

This (3 min) video from The Guardian shows Ocasio-Cortez speaking at a 2020 rally for action on the climate crisis:

theguardian.com/us-news/video/2020/nov/20/dollars-dont-vote-ocasio-cortez-and-the-squad-rally-for-action-on-climate-crisis-video

This sit-in could fall under the category of **coercive power** as it disrupted 'business as usual' for Pelosi and created logistical and optical problems for her office as a consequence for her lack of commitment to the goals of the movement.

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez attending the sit-in can be considered **legitimate power** because of Cortez's status as an elected official; she had the formal right to make corresponding demands as a member of the legislature.

Legitimate power is based on the belief that a person has the formal right to make demands.

> "We were saying all the same shit on November 12 as we were on November 13, but having Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez saying it with us really did change everything."
>
> Sunrise cofounder Sara Blazevik, quoted in Ruairí Arrieta-Kenna, 2019. 'The Sunrise Movement actually changed the Democratic conversation. So what do you do for a sequel?'. Politico. politico.com/magazine/story/2019/06/16/sunrise-movement-boot-camp-227109

Informational power is based on the ability to control the information others need to accomplish their goals.

The media coverage these actions gained also serves as an example of **informational power**, as it provides the movement with access to a wide audience and platform to communicate their message and raise awareness about their cause. By receiving widespread media coverage, the activists are able to leverage the power of the mainstream media to disseminate their message and influence public opinion. In 2021, the Rapid Transitions Alliance said: 'Mainstream news outlets like *The New York Times* now consider the movement to a be a force to be reckoned with and a dominant influence on the Democratic Party's environmental policy'.

The media attention resulting from these strategies can also provide the movement with access to information about the response of politicians and other important key stakeholders to their actions, allowing them to strategise and adjust their approaches accordingly. This information allows the movement to be reflective and led to the launch of Sunrise 2.0 in 2022.

> “Political work doesn’t have to be unpleasant, it should be a joyful process. It should be a process of coming together, of raising our voices in unison, and singing is one expression of that fact. Being a part of a social movement doesn’t always have to be difficulty and pain and anguish; it can be joy and community as well.”
>
> Varshini Prakash in Niloufar Haidari, 2019. ‘A future world’. Dazed.
> dazeddigital.com/politics/article/44394/1/sunrise-movement-founder-varshini-prakash-green-new-deal-interview

To learn more about the development of the Sunrise Movement’s methods and strategies, you can read further reflections from co-founders William Lawrence and Dyanna Jaye in ‘Understanding Sunrise, Part 2: Organising methods’ in Convergence Mag (2020):

convergencemag.com/articles/understanding-sunrise-part-2-organizing-methods

Activity K – The Sunrise Movement's power

1. Research one of the strategies employed by the Sunrise Movement that has not been explored in this text. Identify the different forms of power (reward, coercive, referent, expert, informational, legitimate) it could embody.
2. Classify the strategies employed by the Sunrise Movement as violent or non-violent. With reference to Chenoweth's research, how might the Sunrise Movement's strategic choices have helped or hindered their chances of achieving their goals?

Stages 4.2.3.3

Stage and description	Application to the Sunrise Movement
2013 –2015 | Emergence *The first stage of the movement. There is widespread discontent and little to no organisation.*	The co-founders of the Sunrise Movement (Evan Weber, Matthew Lichtash, Michel Dorsey, Varshini Prakash, Sara Blazevic, Dyanna Jaye and William Lawrence) were dissatisfied with the political response to the climate crisis and wanted to create a movement that would address the urgent need for action on climate change and engage young people in the political process. “[Sunrise] started out, in many ways, as a small group of people who were trying to figure out: how do we make climate justice matter in our politics?” Varshini Prakash, executive director and co-founder of the Sunrise Movement, in Ezra Klein, 2019. ‘‘No permanent friends, no permanent enemies’: Inside the Sunrise Movement's plan to save humanity’. Vox. vox.com/ezra-klein-show-podcast/2019/7/31/20732041/varshini-prakash-sunrise-movement-green-new-deal
2016–2017 | Coalescence *The second stage of the movement. Membership grows and strategies are formulated.*	“The Sunrise Movement is formed in the summer of 2016 by its founders, some fresh out of college, all terrified about the climate crisis.” Lola Proctor, 2022. ‘The Sunrise Movement – five years later’. Voxmedia Writers Workshop. writersworkshop.voxmedia.com/2022/6/16/23167518/sunrise-movement-leadership “In early 2016, [we] undertook a year-long strategic planning process to build what would become the Sunrise Movement. We united from the beginning around a shared conviction that only the state, especially the federal government, could spearhead the process of decarbonising the economy at the necessary scale and pace.” William Lawrence, 2022. ‘Understanding Sunrise: Part 1, Strategy’. Convergence. convergencemag.com/articles/understanding-sunrise-part-1-strategy/2022

2016–2017 | Coalescence

The movement initially organises through social media and focuses on direct action, such as sit-ins and protests to draw attention to the urgency of the climate crisis.

This was a period of strategic planning for the movement, learning from the successes and failures of previous movements.

After Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton loses the 2016 election, the movement shifts its tactical approach.

> “Our old plan exploded, and when the dust settled, one thing was crystal clear; we’ve gotta figure out how to win some elections.”
>
> Varshini Prakash, in Ezra Klein, 2019.
> ‘‘No permanent friends, no permanent enemies’:
> Inside the Sunrise Movement’s plan to save humanity’. Vox.
> vox.com/ezra-klein-show-podcast/2019/7/31/20732041/
> varshini-prakash-sunrise-movement-green-new-deal

2017–2023 | Bureaucratisation

The third stage of the movement. High levels of organisation, with strategy carried out within formal structures.

With support in the form of seed funding from Sierra Club and 350.org, the Sunrise Movement officially launches in April 2017.

> “Sunrise sped up its journey in 2017. The plan was clear; make climate change the top election issue and win governing power to make change happen.”
>
> Sunrise Movement, 2023

2018

- The movement adopts the legal structure of a non-profit and reports having 16 full-time staff members employed to enact the strategies determined by the leadership.
- Sunrise Semester, a training program to help young people become leaders in the climate movement, launches.
- November 13: The movement holds a sit-in in Nancy Pelosi’s office in the US House of Representatives. This leads to an increase in members from just 200 individuals nationally to more than 100 local action groups across dozens of states.
- December 19: A second sit-in is staged with more than 1000 protesters in attendance.

WHAT
– IS –
YOUR
PLAN
?
SUNRISE
GOOD JOBS AND A LIVABLE FUTURE
GREEN JOBS FOR ALL

2017–2023 | Bureaucratisation

2019

- February – A nationwide ‘Day of Action’ is organised, advocating for the Green New Deal.
- March – A Green New Deal tour begins to activate millions to support the legislation.

2020

- January – The movement officially endorses the 2020 presidential campaign of Senator Bernie Sanders.
- March – Online training program the Sunrise School is launched. The program teaches people how to organise and push for the Green New Deal.
- Movement volunteers contact more than 6.5 million voters (sending 777 570 postcards, 2 616 834 text messages; making 5 820 265 phone calls and confirming 23 518 pledges to vote) to create the largest youth turnout in history and procure the election of Joe Biden.

> “We organised across the country in key battleground Senate and Congressional districts to elect candidates that support a Green New Deal.”
>
> Sunrise Movement, 2023

President-elect Joe Biden gives his victory speech
on election night, 6 December 2020.
Credit: David Lienemann / Biden For President. flic.kr/p/2k8aTCg

2021

- January – The movement begins to pressure the Biden Administration to take bold action on climate change.
- There are hints the movement may be moving towards failure: internal tensions come to the surface as some Sunrise members of colour feel ‘tokenised’ and ‘ignored’; and previous structure and processes that were relationally based are no longer working with the increased size and speed of the movement.

> “This resulted in decreasing trust between the organization and membership. We were growing too fast to develop people well, and we had no meaningful structures to bring people in.”
>
> Sunrise Movement, 2023

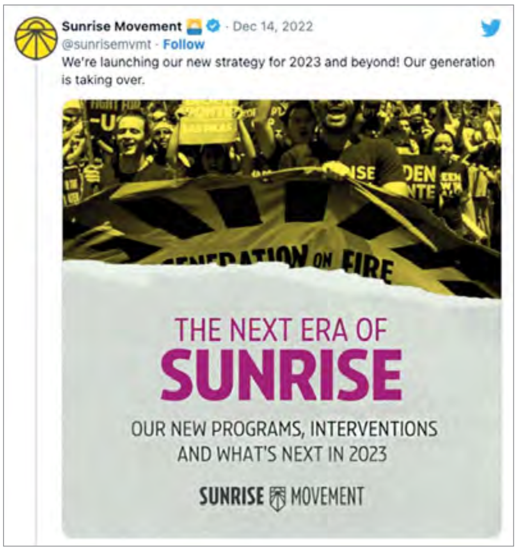
2017–2023 | Bureaucratisation

2021

2022

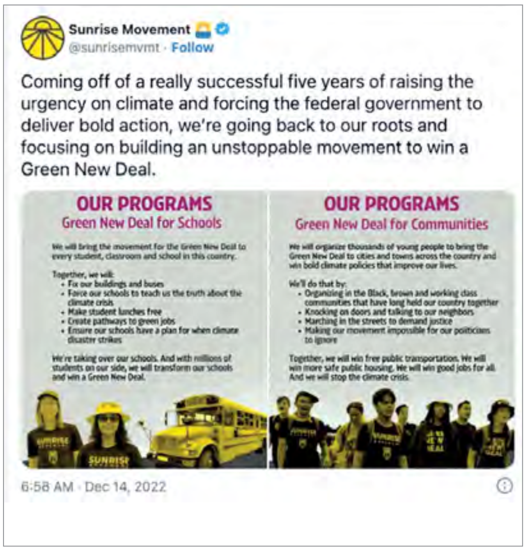
> “We’re kind of at the strongest that we have ever been.”
>
> Sunrise co-founder and executive director
> Varshini Prakash in Ruairí Arrieta-Kenna, 2021.
> ‘When the unstoppable activists met their match’. Politico.
> politico.com/news/magazine/2021/11/05/sunrise-movement-manchin-climate-activism-democratic-washington-518558

- June – Sunrise 2.0 is launched, ratified by hundreds of voting members. It outlines four big shifts for the movement: ‘a focus on Green New Deal policies for schools and communities; a renewed emphasis on building a multiracial, cross-class movement; a new structure for internal democracy meant to streamline decision-making across a decentralised movement; and more resources for leadership development’ (Bauck, 2022).
- December – The movement sets new goals to shape the 2024 election and push for even more Green New Deal policies nationally.
- The movement has more than 100 staff members, 500 active hubs and tens of thousands of volunteers across North America.



Sunrise Movement · Dec 14, 2022
@sunrisemvmt · Follow

We're launching our new strategy for 2023 and beyond! Our generation is taking over.



Sunrise Movement
@sunrisemvmt · Follow

Coming off of a really successful five years of raising the urgency on climate and forcing the federal government to deliver bold action, we’re going back to our roots and focusing on building an unstoppable movement to win a Green New Deal.

OUR PROGRAMS
Green New Deal for Schools

We will bring the movement for the Green New Deal to every student, classroom and school in this country.

Together, we will:
- Fix our buildings and buses
- Force our schools to teach us the truth about the climate crisis
- Make student lunches free
- Create pathways to green jobs
- Ensure our schools have a plan for when climate disaster strikes

We're taking over our schools. And with millions of students on our side, we will transform our schools and win a Green New Deal.

OUR PROGRAMS
Green New Deal for Communities

We will organize thousands of young people to bring the Green New Deal to cities and towns across the country and win bold climate policies that improve our lives.

We'll do that by:
- Organizing in the Black, brown and working class communities that have long held our country together
- Knocking on doors and talking to our neighbors
- Marching in the streets to demand justice
- Making our movement impossible for our politicians to ignore

Together, we will win free public transportation. We will win more safe public housing. We will win good jobs for all. And we will stop the climate crisis.

6:58 AM · Dec 14, 2022

Credit: instagram.com/sunrisemvmt

Decline

The final stage of the movement, where the movement ends; either having achieved or failed to achieve its goals.

The Sunrise Movement is still an active movement, so we can’t relate it to this stage yet – watch this space!

Oppositional power 4.2.3.4

When identifying the opposition of a movement, you need to be able to recognise which individuals, groups or governments oppose the aims of the movement and are actively trying to resist the social change the movement is advocating for.

Activity L – The Sunrise Movement's opposition

1 Before reading any further, reflect on Sunrise's stated mission: '(to) stop climate change and create millions of good jobs in the process . . . end[ing] the corrupting influence of fossil fuel executives on our politics, and elect[ing] leaders who stand up for the health and wellbeing of all people.'

  a What interest groups might you expect to oppose the Sunrise Movement and its goals? List as many as possible.

  b For each interest group you identified, explain why you think it would oppose the Sunrise Movement.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, one way to consider power is that it is *finite*, meaning that there is only a limited amount of it to go around amongst a given population. In this perspective, the power of the opposition directly affects the power of the movement, as in a tug of war, with one side only able to gain power at the expense of the other.

Below is an overview of some of the Sunrise Movement's opponents and the power they have access to.

Donald Trump and the Republican Party

In 2017, Trump withdrew the United States from the Paris climate agreement, and current Republican lawmakers have blocked or opposed climate related legislation and therefore do not support the aims of the Sunrise Movement.

TRUMP
DIGS
COAL

> "Under Trump and his polluter-friendly appointees, the Environmental Protection Agency rolled back hundreds of rules intended to clean up the country's air and water and curtail greenhouse gas emissions – which could result in almost 1.8 billion metric tons of extra carbon dioxide flowing into the atmosphere in the next 15 years."
>
> Shannon Osaka and Kate Yoder, 2021. 'Backlash to the future: How the climate movement came of age under Trump'. Grist. grist.org/climate/trumps-unintended-legacy-a-fiery-climate-resistance/.

When former president Trump and the Republicans were in office, they possessed **legitimate power**. As the elected president and government of the country they had formal rights to make decisions regarding action on climate change.

Former president Trump can also be considered to have **reward power** as he could incentivise individuals or groups to comply with his wishes, including being able to offer political appointments, funding for projects or access to political capital. In the same way, he could also withhold funding, impose tariffs or sanctions or publicly criticise his opponents – all forms of **coercive power**.

As he was a public figure, it can be argued that Trump also had significant **informational power** through his use of social media and his ability to control the messaging and narrative around policy decisions.

The fossil-fuel lobby

The Sunrise Movement supports the implementation of the Green New Deal, which advocates for a just transition from the fossil fuels. It also aims to end the 'corrupting influence of fossil fuel executives on our politics' (Sunrise Movement, 2023). This put the movement at odds with the fossil fuel industry whose members profit from the world's reliance on their commodity.

The fossil fuel industry has significant **reward power** due to its economic position, which it uses to incentivise individuals or groups to comply with its wishes. This has included offering funding for political campaigns, making philanthropic donations and making industry jobs available.

It can also be argued that the fossil fuel industry also possesses **coercive power**, which it uses to punish individuals or groups who do not comply with its wishes. This can include lobbying against policies or regulations that would hurt the industry, as well as threatening to reduce or eliminate jobs in certain areas.

These are just two of the forces that opposed the Sunshine Movement and its goals. You might like to conduct your own research into one of the following – keep in mind, their opposition might be a little less 'clear-cut' than the examples provided above:

- the Biden Administration / 'mainstream' of the Democratic Party
- agricultural businesses, farmers and food producers
- the automotive industry.

Activity M – The use of power by the Sunrise Movement and its opposition

1 The power used by movements and their opposition changes throughout the lifespan of the movement. Using your understanding of the Sunrise Movement and its opposition, create a table using the headings below, noting a few of the most important forms of power used in each cell.

Stage	Power used by the movement	Power used by the opposition
Emergence		
Coalescence		
Bureaucratisation		

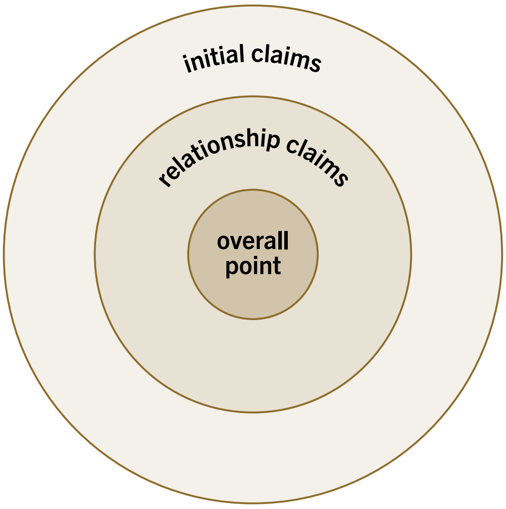
2 Using the information provided and supplemented by your own research, plan and write a response to the following extended response question:

Evaluate how the power used by the Sunrise Movement and its opposition influenced the degree of social change achieved. (10 marks)

a Complete a KLC decoding of the question.

b Determine what you need to do to successfully understand and address this question.

- This question requires you to synthesise information. Complete a 'circle of synthesis' of your own, using the example provided earlier in this chapter as inspiration.
- Map out your *initial claims* in the outer circle.
- Work out *relationships between each of your claims* – in what ways do they support ('yes, and') or contradict ('yes, however') each other?
- Combine these into your *overall point*.



c Compare your circle of synthesis with that of a classmate. Did you record similar/different evidence? Did you interrogate your evidence and reach similar conclusions? If not, why not? Discuss your differences and how you arrived at these conclusions.

d Write out your response.

The influences of the social movement on social change, with reference to the work of Erica Chenoweth 4.2.3.5

> "Sunrise is unquestionably the most successful political venture the American climate movement has ever produced."
>
> Johnathan Guy and Sam Zacher, 2021.
> 'What the Sunrise Movement can do better'. Jacobin.
> jacobin.com/2021/08/sunrise-movement-green-new-deal-left-politics-local-organizing

At the time of writing, 2023, the Sunrise Movement hasn't (yet) achieved its goal to 'stop climate change and create millions of good jobs in the process . . . end[ing] the corrupting influence of fossil fuel executives on our politics, and elect[ing] leaders who stand up for the health and wellbeing of all people' (Sunrise Movement, 2023). This may be because it has not yet been able to mobilise the 3.5 per cent of the population, or 11.5 million Americans, that Chenoweth says is key to achieving success.

However, this does not mean that the movement has not achieved social change.

We learnt about Erica Chenoweth's work earlier in this area of study. Chenoweth has taken their work one step further and now uses their understanding of the power of non-violent resistance to work with active social movements to help develop strategies for success.

One of the movements Chenoweth has worked with is the Sunrise Movement, who among several other core principles have committed to non-violent resistance to achieve their goals. The Sunrise Movement understands that 'nonviolent action is the best way to win over the hearts and minds of the American people' (Grandoni, 2021). For the Sunrise Movement this has meant putting non-violence at the forefront of its planning and strategising.

You can find the full list of the Sunrise Movement principles here:
sunrisemovement.org/principles

You can see the Sunrise Movement set out their commitment to non-violent action (8 min) here:
youtu.be/rJiiMz0CC5U

> “We, as Sunrise, will not win by confronting their violence with violent actions. We combat their violence by boldly organising our communities across race and class. This helps us protect ourselves and our communities as much as we can, bring the most people in, and build the power we need to win.”
>
> Sunrise Movement, 2023.

It is through these non-violent actions – in particular, the way the movement 'communicates the scale of the crisis' (Ball, 2022) – that the Sunrise Movement has been able to achieve the following social change.

Watch some of the non-violent action that Sunrise Movement has taken here:
youtu.be/N28iaWlzJzg

Social changes achieved by the Sunrise Movement

Increased public awareness of the climate crisis – an example of a change in views and values

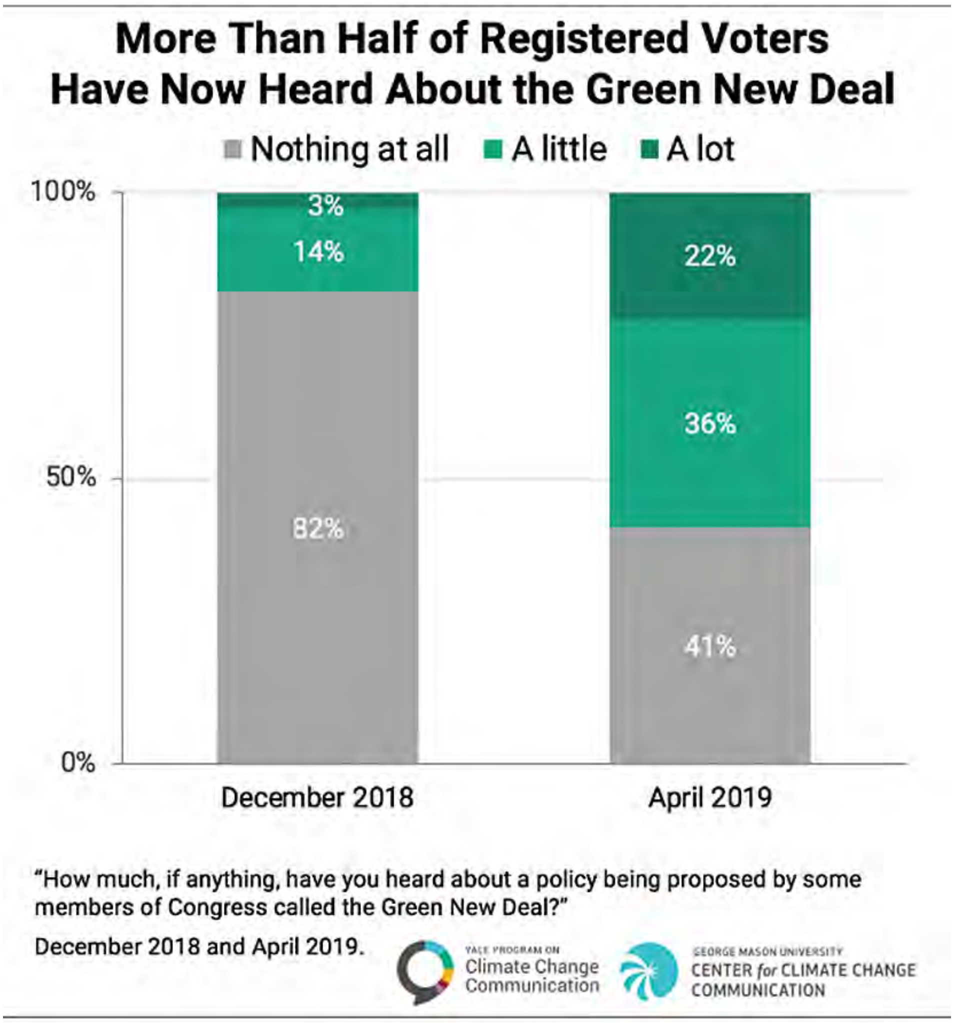
The actions of the Sunrise Movement have led to increased public awareness of the climate crisis and its possible solutions.

One way this has been achieved is through the media exposure the movement has received. Major publications, such as Vogue, The New York Times, Vice and Vox, have written about The Sunrise Movement, its goals and its actions. This has allowed the movement's message about the climate emergency to go mainstream. This in turn means that more people can add their voice and resources to the movement, helping its numbers grow – and as we know from Chenoweth's research, once a movement hits 3.5 per cent active participation it is almost guaranteed to achieve its goals.

The rise of the Green New Deal – an example of a change in views and values

The Sunrise Movement has played a pivotal role in bringing the Green New Deal into mainstream political discourse. Bringing it 'from the Democratic Party's fringe to its mainstream' (Goodrich, 2019).

In 2018, Sunrise's plan of a Green New Deal was endorsed by sixteen of the Democrats running for president, including current president Joe Biden.



From Gustafson et al., 2019. 'Changes in Awareness of and Support for the Green New Deal: December 2018 to April 2019'. Credit: Yale / George Mason University. climatecommunication.yale.edu/publications/changes-in-awareness-of-and-support-for-the-green-new-deal-december-2018-to-april-2019

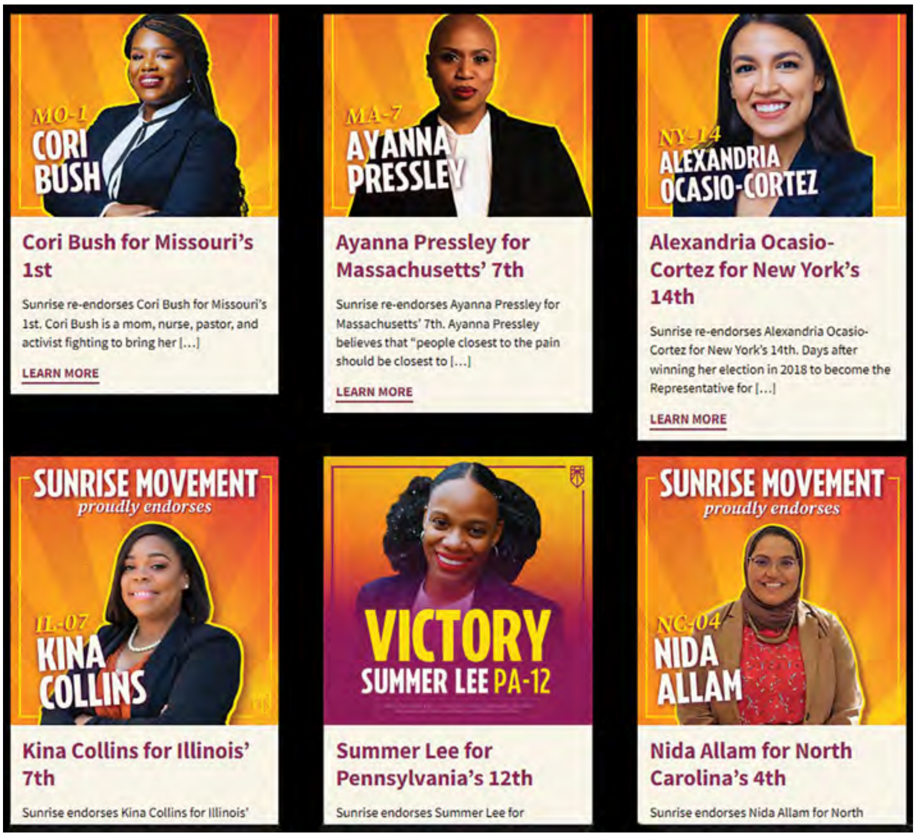
Many Democratic candidates who wanted to be considered viable in the 2020 elections felt that they needed to appear supportive of the themes highlighted by the Green New Deal campaign, which led to some candidates releasing relatively ambitious climate change proposals, along with pledges not to receive political donations from the fossil fuel industry. More still also expressed support explicitly for the campaign. In 2019 Naomi Klein told journalist Marie Solis that 'in an incredibly short order, Sunrise has completely shifted the parameters of the debate, and the majority of serious [presidential] contenders are at least paying lip service to a Green New Deal'.

> “The stratospheric ascent of climate and the Green New Deal in American politics was no accident. The success was the direct product of our political analysis, the development of crucial partnerships and investment in strategic grassroots organising.”
>
> Varshini Prakash, 2019. 'Sunrise Movement, the Green New Deal and phasing out fossil fuels with a just transition'. American Geophysical Union, Fall Meeting 2019. ui.adsabs.harvard.edu/abs/2019AGUFMPA14A..02P/abstract

Electoral victories – exemplifying changes in behaviour and leading to a change in structures in society

The Sunrise Movement has endorsed and helped elect numerous candidates who support the Green New Deal.

> “Sunrise has established itself as the dominant influence on the environmental policy of the Democratic Party’s young, progressive wing.”
>
> Ruairí Arrieta-Kenna, 2021. ‘When the unstoppable activists met their match’. Politico.
> politico.com/news/magazine/2021/11/05/sunrise-movement-manchin-climate-activism-democratic-washington-518558



Cori Bush for Missouri’s 1st

Sunrise re-endorses Cori Bush for Missouri’s 1st. Cori Bush is a mom, nurse, pastor, and activist fighting to bring her […]

LEARN MORE

Ayanna Pressley for Massachusetts’ 7th

Sunrise re-endorses Ayanna Pressley for Massachusetts’ 7th. Ayanna Pressley believes that “people closest to the pain should be closest to […]

LEARN MORE

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez for New York’s 14th

Sunrise re-endorses Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez for New York’s 14th. Days after winning her election in 2018 to become the Representative for […]

LEARN MORE

Kina Collins for Illinois’ 7th

Sunrise endorses Kina Collins for Illinois’

Summer Lee for Pennsylvania’s 12th

Sunrise endorses Summer Lee for

Nida Allam for North Carolina’s 4th

Sunrise endorses Nida Allam for North

An excerpt from ‘Current endorsements’, Sunshine Movement, 2023.
sunrisemovement.org/political-endorsements

Notable examples include the election of Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez in 2018 and the defeat of several incumbent Democratic members of Congress who were perceived as insufficiently committed to addressing climate change.

> “In 2020, young people mobilized to defeat Trump and elect Green New Deal champions. We forced Democrats to run on a bold climate agenda, and then voted in record numbers to deliver them control of the White House and Congress. And in 2021, when they were sworn into office, we knew we’d have to fight to turn their campaign promises into real legislation.”
>
> Sunrise Movement, 2023.
> sunrisemovement.org/movement-updates/reflections-on-2021-build-back-better

Activity N – How social change is achieved

In the last section you read about some of the social change achieved by the Sunrise Movement to date. Using the types identified earlier in this chapter, match the type of power that led to the social change in the below table (keep in mind that in some instances there will be multiple types of power).

reward **coercive** **referent** **legitimate** **expert** **informational**

Social change achieved	Type of power used
Increased public awareness	
The rise of the Green New Deal	
Electoral victories	

Activity O – Your very own case study

The third key knowledge point in this area of study asks you to examine a social movement within its current context, meaning that while the movement you choose can have a 'history', it should still be active and cannot have declined or disappeared.

The movement you choose should also be at a stage where some social change has been achieved and these changes have been broadly commented on by a range of sources. From a practical perspective, this means that you should select a movement that is somewhere within its 'bureaucratisation stage' – because this is the point at which a movement is likely to have had some successes that you can analyse.

Below are some current social movements you might choose to examine as your case study.

PERIOD.	**School Strike 4 Climate**	**Extinction Rebellion**	**Myanmar's civil disobedience movement**
Save Preston Market	**Malala Fund**	**Blockade Australia**	**Stop AAIP Hate**
#DropCroc	**'Stop the Chop' (NSW forest logging)**	**Fireproof Australia**	**Refugee Council of Australia**
Animals Australia	**Fridays for Future**	**March For Our Lives**	**Fur Free Alliance**

Revision questions

Short-answer questions

1 Using an example, explain how social movements can lead to social change.

2 Compare the purpose of reformative and revolutionary movements.

3 Discuss how power is used by a social movement and its opposition. In your response refer to one social movement you have studied this year.

4 Analyse the relationship between the stage of a social movement and its power.

5 Referring to one social movement, examine the degree to which the actions of the movement's opposition impacted the ability of the social movement to achieve its goals.

6 Discuss the role of social media in achieving social change.

7 Explain the significance of non-violent forms of resistance in achieving social change according to Erica Chenoweth.

Extended response questions

1 Analyse how power is used by social movements and their opposition. In your response, refer to a social movement you have studied this year.

2 Analyse how power changes across the lifespan of a social movement. In your response, refer to one social movement you have studied this year.

3 Evaluate the influence of a social movement you have studied this year on achieving social change. In your response, reference the work of Erica Chenoweth.

For a sample response to an extended response question relating to this area of study, refer back to Activity J.

Representation analysis

Read the following representation material and then answer questions 1, 2 and 3.

Extinction Rebellion

Adapted from Samuel Alexander, 2019. ‘Extinction Rebellion protestors might be annoying, but they have a point’. The Conversation. theconversation.com/extinction-rebellion-protesters-might-be-annoying-but-they-have-a-point-124490

If you live in a major Australian city, expect your daily routine to be disrupted this week. Protest group Extinction Rebellion is carrying out a week of flash mobs, sit-ins and marches to block traffic and bring more attention to the pressing problems of climate change and biodiversity loss. Many arrests are expected.

The Extinction Rebellion movement has three bold demands of governments. First, government should declare a climate and ecological ‘emergency’. Second, by 2025 governments should decarbonise the economy and halt biodiversity loss. Third, citizens’ assemblies should be established to work with scientists to inform environmental policymaking.

Extinction Rebellion protesters say peaceful civil disobedience is an important social and political strategy for achieving a just and sustainable world.

Their protest actions may make us feel uncomfortable, annoyed or worse. But it is important that the general public understands the reasoning that underpins civil disobedience and why this radical strategy is being deployed this week.

The Extinction Rebellion is promoting civil disobedience because it says across the world, governments have failed to respond adequately to the climate crisis and the steep decline in wildlife populations. It argues that the political system underpinning this failure must be resisted, even if this causes inconvenience to the general public.

The movement’s supporters include 250 Australian academics who signed an open letter saying they feel a ‘moral duty’ to rebel and ‘defend life itself’.

It could be argued that the activists should wait until governments take action. But judging by recent history – including a lack of substantial progress at last month’s UN climate summit – an adequate, timely global response to the climate crisis seems highly unlikely. In this case, waiting for government action means being complicit in an unjust system.

Response questions

1 Outline the nature and purpose of the movement Extinction Rebellion.

2 Extinction Rebellion are employing ‘flash mobs, sit-ins and marches to block traffic and bring attention’ to climate change. Drawing on the research of Erica Chenoweth, discuss the potential effectiveness of these tactics.

3 Compare the type of power used by the Extinction Rebellion movement and their supporters.

Exam preparation

Well done for making it here, and (unless you're reading ahead) for making it to the end of the Units 3 and 4 Sociology course. Throughout the year you will have worked hard and engaged with some challenging content. Now is a good time to turn your attention to exam revision, so you can prepare to showcase the understanding you've developed to the examiners.

Your teacher is the best resource you have. Be sure to ask them lots of questions and actively engage in the feedback you receive(d) throughout the year. They will have developed a revision program for your class that will be best suited to your timetable and your cohort.

Below are some additional suggestions to help you start your preparation.

1 Plan your time. Develop a study schedule that allows you to study all your subjects effectively but also builds in time for the rest of your life (work, families, friends) as well as for your self-care (sleep, exercise, downtime). You can use the planner below as a guide.

HOURLY STUDY PLAN

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
8 AM							
9 AM		▨			▨	🟪	
10 AM	🟨		🟨	🟨			▨
11 AM		🟪	🟪		🟪	▨	
12 PM				🟨	▨	🟨	🟨
1 PM	🟪	▨	▨				
2 PM	🟪	🟨		🟪	🟨	▨	
3 PM	▨	🟨		🟪	🟨		🟨
4 PM			▨	▨			🟪
5 PM					🟪	🟪	🟪
6 PM						▨	▨
7 PM					▨		
8 PM					▨		
9 PM							
10 PM							

SUBJECTS

🟪 *Sociology*	☐	☐
▨ *Maths*	☐	☐
🟨 *History*	☐	☐

2 Know your study design well. This is the only document the people writing your exam can refer to when they create the questions you'll be asked to answer, so it makes sense to structure your preparation around it.

   Make sure you:

   a understand all the key knowledge dot points, including preparing appropriate and illustrative examples

   b are able to successfully demonstrate all the key skills

   c understand what's included in the preamble to each area of study.

3 Use the 'traffic light' system. This system can help you to identify what you know, what you know well, and what you need to focus your revision efforts on further.

   Go through your study design with three highlighters.

   Green – the content you feel most confident with

   Yellow – the content you feel somewhat confident with

   Pink – the content you don't feel confident with

4 Next, start your revision with the content you've highlighted in pink. Then, work your way up to yellow, then green.

   This might feel a little intimidating, but remember: as humans we're inclined to start a big task with what we're already most comfortable with. This provides us with a nice, cheap dopamine hit, which makes us feel good. The content you're already confident with, however, is the content that you'll need the least time to revise for, so you should instead consider investing your time in your weaker areas first. You're likely to feel better for longer when you notice the size of the progress you've made from a lower starting point, which you can use as fuel as you work your way through your revision.

5 Revise all your past SACs and collate the questions you didn't receive full marks for. Make sure you've revised the content for these questions, and work with your teacher to understand how you could have improved your responses, especially if you're unclear on where you went wrong.

   Once you're feeling more confident in your ability to understand and answer the questions, try rewriting you answers and then compare your old and new responses to track your progress.

6 Use the key skills in the study design to write your own sample question. Use the command terms that each key skills dot point uses as a guide for the types of questions you may be asked on the exam.

Further resources

For more resources relevant to this area of study, access the online resource library associated with this textbook: sev.asn.au/textbook-resources/soc34

Articles

Alexei Anisin, 2020. ‘Debunking the myths behind nonviolent civil resistance’. *Association for Critical Sociology*, vol. 46, iss. 7–8.

Books

Todd Hasak-Lowy, 2020. *We Are Power: How Nonviolent Activism Changes the World*. Abrams Books for Young Readers.

Films

Films about social movements include:

- *To The End* (1 hr 44 min), about the Sunrise Movement
- *Selma* (2014), which depicts the course of the 1965 Selma to Montgomery voting rights marches, part of the US civil rights movement
- *Pride* (2014), which depicts a group of lesbian and gay activists who raised money to help families affected by the British miners’ strike in the 1980s
- *Dolores* (2017), which documents United Farm Workers (UFW) co-founder Dolores Huerta’s work to organise California farmworkers in alliance with the Chicano Movement, the civil rights movement, gay liberation and US-based LGBTIQA+ social movements, and the late-20th-century women’s rights movement.

You can also watch a 2015 interview (13 min) with Jack Mundey, leader of the NSW Builders’ Labourers Federation (BLF) during the 1970s ‘green bans’ against what they considered ‘excessive and inappropriate’ developments in Sydney:

youtu.be/cAidqyj0SPM

More films and documentaries relevant to this area of study can be found at The Commons Social Change Library:

commonslibrary.org/films-about-social-movement-struggles-victories-and-leaders

Podcasts

‘The new wave of climate activists and the laws designed to stop them’. The Guardian. (25 min) theguardian.com/australia-news/audio/2022/apr/13/the-new-wave-of-climate-activists-and-the-laws-designed-to-stop-them

References

Aberle, D. F. 1966. ‘A note on the notion of ideology in the analysis of social movements’. *Sociological Inquiry*, vol. 36, iss. 3, p 250–256.

Auxier, B. 2020. ‘Activism on social media varies by race and ethnicity, age, political party’. Pew Research Center. pewresearch.org/short-reads/2020//07/12/activism-on-social-media-varies-by-race-and-ethnicity-age-political-party

Ball, M. 2022. ‘‘What more do we need to do to win?’ A controversial climate group rethinks its strategy’. TIME. time.com/6158322/sunrise-movement-climate-activism-struggles

Bauck, W. 2022. ‘Where the Sunrise Movement goes from here’. Slate. slate.com/news-and-politics/2022/11/sunrise-movement-biden-ira-2024.html

Blumer, H. 1986. *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*. University of California Press.

Chang, H., Richardson, A. and Ferrara, E. 2022. ‘#JusticeforGeorgeFloyd: How Instagram facilitated the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests’. *PLoS ONE*, vol. 17, iss. 12.

Chen, T. 2021. ‘Black Lives Matter: Power, perception and press’. Carr Center for Human Rights Policy. carrcenter.hks.harvard.edu/files/cchr/files/21_chen_topol_paper.pdf

Chenoweth, E. and Stephan, M. J. 2008. ‘Why civil resistance works: The strategic logic of nonviolent conflict’. *International Security*. vol. 33, iss. 1, p. 7–44. belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/files/IS3301_pp007-044_Stephan_Chenoweth.pdf

Chenoweth, E. and Stephan, M. J. 2011. *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*. Columbia University Press.

Chenoweth, E. and Schock, K. 2015. ‘Do contemporaneous armed challenges affect the outcomes of mass nonviolent campaigns?’. *Mobilization*, vol. 20, iss. 4.

Chenoweth, E. 2020. ‘The future of nonviolent resistance’. *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 31, iss. 3, p 69–84.

French, J. and Raven, B. 1959. ‘The bases of social power’ in D. Cartwright (ed.). *Studies in social power*, p 150–167. Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan.

Goodrich, M. M. 2019. ‘The climate movement’s decades-long path to the Green New Deal’. Dissent. dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/sunrise-movement-green-new-deal

Grandoni, D. 2021. ‘The Energy 202: Nonviolent climate activists reconsider protest tactics in Capitol after mob attack’. *The Washington Post*. washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/01/14/energy-202-nonviolent-climate-activists-reconsider-protest-tactics-capitol-after-mob-attack

Han, H. cited in Gordiychuk, K and Park, H. 2022. ‘The perfect social movement – is there a recipe? This expert explains’. World Economic Forum,

Lawrence, W. 2022. ‘Understanding Sunrise: Part 1, Strategy’. Convergence. convergencemag.com/articles/understanding-sunrise-part-1-strategy/

Miller, F. D. 1999. 'The end of SDS and the emergence of weatherman: Demise through success'. In J. Freeman and V. Johnson (eds). *Waves of Protest: Social movements since the Sixties*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, p 303–324.

Naser, A. 2022. 'Explainer: What are your rights to protest in Australia?'. humanrights.unsw.edu.au/research/commentary/explainer-what-are-your-rights-to-protest-australia

Nicholasen, M. 2019. 'Why nonviolent resistance beats violent force in effecting social political change'. The Harvard Gazette. news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2019/02/why-nonviolent-resistance-beats-violent-force-in-effecting-social-political-change/

Rapid Transitions Alliance. 2021. 'The Sunrise Movement: How a grassroots youth movement helped set the national climate agenda for rapid change'. rapidtransition.org/stories/the-sunrise-movement-how-a-us-grassroots-youth-movement-helped-set-the-national-climate-agenda-for-rapid-change/

Raven, B. H. 1965. 'Social influence and power'. In I. D. Steiner and M. Fishbein (eds). *Current Studies in Social Psychology*. Holt, Rinehart, Winston.

Renalli, R. 2019. 'Erica Chenoweth illuminates the value of nonviolent resistance in societal conflicts'. Harvard Kennedy School. Summer 2019. hks.harvard.edu/faculty-research/policy-topics/advocacy-social-movements/paths-resistance-erica-chenoweths-research

Robson. D. 2019. 'The '3.5% rule': How a small minority can change the world'. BBC. bbc.com/future/article/20190513-it-only-takes-35-of-people-to-change-the-world

Sinanan, J. 2020. 'Blackout Tuesday: The black square is a symbol of online activism for non-activists'. The Conversation. theconversation.com/blackout-tuesday-the-black-square-is-a-symbol-of-online-activism-for-non-activists-139982

Sharp, G. 1973. *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (3 volumes). Porter Sargent.

Solis, M. 2019. 'How a 26-year-old activist forced the Democratic Party to get serious about climate change'. Vice. vice.com/en/article/ne8y5z/how-a-26-year-old-activist-forced-the-democratic-party-to-get-serious-about-climate-change-v26n4

Sunrise Movement, 2023. 'Who we are: About the Sunrise Movement'. sunrisemovement.org/about

Wilson, J. 2022. 'Deep dive – Working from where, and why?'. Ai Group. aigroup.com.au/resourcecentre/research-economics/economics-intelligence/2022/work-from-where

Glossary

Accessibility is the ease with which a place or location can be reached from other places. It is influenced by factors such as transportation infrastructure, proximity and physical barriers.

Alternative movements seek to achieve limited change(s) within the individual.

Awareness involves an examination of what information is known or understood about a topic.

Belonging refers to the emotional experience of feeling secure and supported within a group. It includes the feelings of acceptance and inclusion among members of a particular community.

Built features are human-made structures and developments, such as buildings, roads, bridges and monuments.

Bureaucratisation is the third stage of a social movement. This stage is characterised by high levels of organisation, with strategy carried out within formal structures.

A **census** is an official count or survey of a population.

Climate refers to the long-term patterns of temperature, precipitation, humidity and other atmospheric conditions in a specific area.

Coalescence is the second stage of a social movement. During this stage membership grows and strategies are formulated.

Coercive power is based on the ability to provide a consequence for non-compliance.

Colonisation is the action or processing of establishing control over, and often settling among, the First Nations people of an area, usually by force and invasion.

Community refers to a group of people who share social relationships through being geographically close to each other and/or being in regular contact with each other, and through having similarities such as mutual interests and/or shared ideology.

Comparative perspectives methodology is a type of research where two objects of study are looked at in relation to each other.

Confidentiality of data means protecting data gathered from research participants and storing it carefully and securely.

Cultural relativism is a method where different societies or cultures are analysed without using the values of one culture to judge the worth of another.

Culture refers to the way of life of a particular group or society and is comprised of symbols, languages, values and norms. These are learnt by members and passed on to following generations. Culture can include material or non-material components.

Decline is the final stage of a social movement, where the movement ends, either having achieved or failed to achieve its goals.

Digital revolution refers to the widespread adoption and integration of digital technologies, particularly information and communication technologies, that have led to significant changes in the way people communicate, work, access information and socialise.

Economic factors refer to a group's access to financial resources. These resources are influenced by many factors, such as group members' contributions, donations, government funding and insurance.

Emergence is the first stage of a social movement. In this stage there is widespread discontent but little to no organisation.

Enablers are factors that encourage, promote or make it possible for an individual or group to feel safe and included in multicultural society.

Enlightenment refers to a period in the late 17th and 18th centuries that favoured individualism, science and logic over religion.

Essentialising is the practice of treating a certain quality or trait as being *fundamental* to a particular category of person or thing.

Ethical methodology refers to the process used to conduct socially responsible research, including people who have agreed to take part, after being provided with information about the study, whose privacy is protected.

Ethnic hybridity is a theory that describes the sense of ethnic diversity seen in dual or multiple ethnic identities.

Ethnicity refers to a shared cultural heritage and way of life.

Ethnocentrism is a term used to describe attitudes that judge other cultures using the evaluator's own culture as the measure of what is superior.

Experience of community refers to how people feel and interact with a group of which they are a member, including their sense of belonging, social interaction and level of inclusion.

Expert power is power based on having superior insight, knowledge or abilities: for example, having an expert speak on behalf of the movement.

Gemeinschaft (community) refers to a cohesive, close and long-lasting relationship on a community-level, often used to describe family relationships within small geographical communities.

Geographical characteristics refer to a range of features, including proximity and accessibility, climate, scenic quality, landforms, natural resources, built features such as community centres or other relevant characteristics.

Gesellschaft (society) refers to individualistic and impersonal relationships on a societal level, used to describe post-industrial and urban communities where people are more anonymous, private and busy.

Hierarchy is a way of arranging members of a group or society as 'higher' or 'lower' based on perceptions of status, level or authority.

Ideology refers to a system of ideas or beliefs about how the world is, and how it should be.

Inclusion refers to individuals and groups having the resources, opportunities and capabilities to learn, work, engage and have a voice in society.

Individualism refers to the political and/or personal belief that emphasises the worth and importance of the individual over the collective or group.

Industrialisation refers to the process of transforming an economy from an agricultural-based one to a manufacturing-based one; this involves the introduction of machinery and technology to increase productivity and efficiency.

Information and communications technology (ICT) refers to the equipment and machinery that is used to store and/or distribute information; for example, computers, mobile phones, the Internet and social media.

Informational power is based on the ability to control the information others need to accomplish their goals.

Informed consent is the formal agreement of an individual to participate in a research project.

Landforms are natural features of Earth’s surface, such as mountains, valleys, plateaus and plains.

Legitimate power is based on the belief that a person has the formal right to make demands.

Mass mobilisation refers to the organised efforts of bringing together a large number of people to actively participate in a movement.

Material culture refers to tangible aspects of culture; things that we can see and touch, including objects, places and living things that have meaning for a group. This can include tools, land, clothing, food and animals that have meaning for a particular culture.

Moral panic refers to an intense emotional reaction (usually communicated through the mass media) to an issue that is perceived to threaten the social order.

Multiculturalism is the practice of several different cultures coexisting peacefully and equitably in a single country.

Nationalism is identification with and support for one’s nation over the interests of other nations.

Natural resources are materials and substances that occur naturally in the environment and can be used for economic gain, such as minerals, water and timber.

Nature of a social movement is the context of the social movement and includes the type and stage of the movement as well as why it has come into being.

Neo-tribe refers to a dynamic and loosely formed community that is brought together by a shared interest in seeking a sense of belonging. According to the theorist Michel Maffesoli, these social groups have formed in response to constantly shifting identities within modern societies.

Non-material culture refers to the intangible parts of culture that we cannot see, including language, values, norms and symbols.

Non-violent resistance is a method of struggle in which unarmed people confront adversaries by using collective action – including protests, demonstrations, strikes and non-cooperation.

Othering is a phenomenon in which some individuals or groups are defined and labelled as not fitting in within the norms of a social group; it plays a role in the formation of prejudices against people and groups.

Political factors aspects of the structure, organisation and policies of a government or political system that can influence society and individual behaviour.

Population refers to the number of people living in a particular area or region. It can be influenced by factors such as migration, birth rates and death rates.

Postcolonialism is the study of the cultural, political and economic legacy of colonialism and imperialism, focusing on the impact of human control and exploitation of colonised people and their lands.

Postmodernism is a way of thinking that emerged in the late 20th century. The approach recognises that there are many different perspectives and ways of understanding the world. This way of thinking often involves challenging traditional approaches and beliefs.

Power is the ability to impose one's will on others, even if they resist in some way.

Prejudice is a positive or negative prejudgement (attitude) about an entire category of people.

Preventers are factors that limit, obstruct or make it difficult for an individual or group to feel safe and included in multicultural Australia.

Privacy refers to the use of methods to protect the identity of participants.

Proximity refers to the closeness or distance between two places or objects. It can impact various aspects of life, such as transportation, accessibility and economic development.

Pseudoscience refers to a collection of statements, beliefs or practices that claim to be both scientific and factual but are incompatible with the scientific method.

Purpose of a social movement is its aims or the goals it wants to achieve.

Qualitative methods are processes that generate descriptive data, including lived experiences and personal perspectives about social issues.

Quantitative methods are processes that generate data as, or that can be translated into, numbers.

Race is the categorisation of a group of people based on physical characteristics such as skin colour, eye shape, hair type and bone structure.

Reconciliation describes, in this context, efforts to repair or improve the relationships between colonised and colonising peoples.

Redemptive movements advocate for major or radical change within an individual.

Referent power is based on identification with, attraction to or respect for the leader. This can include people with large followings or strong reputations: for example, having a celebrity add their voice (and resources) to a social movement.

Reformative movements seek to change a specific group or society in a limited way, focussing on a particular facet of the social structure to reform society as a whole.

A **representation** is a portrayal of a person, group, place, idea or thing. It is created through a combination of different elements that we can call symbols, and its meaning is created through interpretation.

Revolutionary movements advocate for a reorganisation of society as a whole, through seeking radical change to society.

Reward power is based on the ability to provide a positive incentive (reward) for compliance.

Scenic quality refers to the visual appeal and attractiveness of a landscape or environment.

Sense of community refers to positive feelings of belonging that occur when members actively participate in and have an emotional connection with a group.

Slavery is the practice of owning and treating a person as property, especially in regard to the products of their labour.

Social change refers to adjustments and fluctuations in the views, values, norms and structures in society in response to various factors such as laws, the actions and interests of specific groups of people, government, available resources and the way society is organised.

Social construction shapes how a culture is organised, functions and behaves, and guides what is seen as both natural and normal – it is the result of a society or culture developing conventions for communicating and understanding ideas.

Social factors refer to elements within society that influence the behaviour, attitudes and beliefs of individuals and groups. Examples of social factors include culture, social norms, values, social trends and interpersonal dynamics.

Social movements involve a group engaged in an organised effort to achieve social change.

Sociological imagination is an awareness of the relationship between personal experience and wider society.

Suppression is the domination of another through the use of power. In this case it involves restrictive legislation and/or force to ‘put down’ identity, culture, autonomy and survival.

Urbanisation refers to the growth of cities and the movement of people from rural areas to urban areas; this often occurs due to the creation of jobs in urban areas, which can provide better opportunities for work.

Violence is the use or involvement of physical force intended to hurt, damage or kill someone.

Voluntary participation is the willing involvement of research participants, including awareness of their right to refuse to participate in a research project without having to give a reason or justify their decision.

White supremacy refers to a belief that white European people and their descendants are inherently superior, and that they should dominate or be privileged over non-white groups; the term also refers to social systems that embody these beliefs and maintain structures of privilege.

Social Education Victoria
552 Victoria St
North Melbourne VIC 3052
www.sev.asn.au

VCE Sociology: Units 3 and 4

Zoya Kitik
Fiona Gontier
Laura Newman
Mohamed Sayed Ibrahim
Thara Brown