Curtin Graduate School of Business

Deconstructing the interconnectedness of community:
An exploratory study on skill shortages, labour migration, and mining booms in Western Australia

Melissa Ivy Cianfrini

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Declaration

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) – updated March 2014. The proposed research study received human research ethics approval from the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (EC00262), Approval Number HR57/2011.

Signature:

Date:

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Abstract

For the last decade in Australia, the narrative to dominate national discourse has been a pursuit to solving the skill shortage crisis emerging from two mining booms, as a consequence of the unprecedented Chinese demand for iron ore. A multiplicity of solutions for the skill shortage have been illuminated, including labour migration. This is a highly controversial solution, depicted by fear of local job loss in favour of 'cheap' migrant labour, and coloured by claims of migrant worker exploitation surfacing in the media. Concomitantly, businesses and industry bodies advocate for the increase use and flexibility of migrant workers as a short-term solution to fostering national economic prosperity. This exploratory study seeks to capture the experiences of employers facing a skill shortage, and the employment experiences of migrant workers. Furthermore, the experiences of stakeholders are also included, capturing the totality of the phenomenon. This study is located in the Mid West and Perth regions of Western Australia, specifically focusing on the Geraldton community.

Situated in a community psychology paradigm, 89 semi-structured qualitative interviews and 22 online surveys were analysed through the analytical ecological framework of causal layered analysis. This process revealed four overarching themes which highlighted aspects in community and society that contribute to and perpetuate the skill shortage. The findings also confirmed the presence of migrant worker exploitation. The study offers a critical reflection through two propositions, which identify the discrepancies between social issues embedded in the micro/meso levels in the community, and the State Government's neoliberal solutions embedded in the macro level. The lack of cognizance of the interconnectedness of the phenomenon informed the examination of the power embedded in the relational capital between employers, migrant workers, and stakeholders. This relational power manifested in expressions of dehumanisation, accusation, oppression, and exploitation as explored by a series of paradoxes. The study asserts widening the lens of analysis in an ecological framework to encapsulate the relational power between community and government policies, sovereignty, and globalisation, provides greater insight to achieving wellbeing for all members in the community.

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List of Abbreviations

ABCC	Australian Building and Construction Commissioner
ABN	Australian Business Number
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ASKAP	Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder
CCIWA	Chamber of Commerce and Industry Western Australia
CFMEU	Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union
CLA	Causal Layered Analysis
CMEWA	Chamber of Minerals and Energy Western Australia
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment, and Workplace Relations
DIAC	Department of Immigration and Citizenship
DIBP	Department of Immigration and Border Protection
DIMIA	Department of Immigration, Multicultural & Indigenous Affairs
DRD	Department of Regional Development
DSD	Department of State Development
DTWD	Department of Training and Workforce development
FIFO	Fly-In, Fly-Out
GIOA	Geraldton Iron Ore Alliance
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
ILO	International Labour Organization
MSA	Manufacturing Skills Australia
MUA	Maritime Union of Australia
MWDC	Mid West Development Commission
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational and Education Research
OPR	Oakajee Port and Rail
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
RfR	Royalties for Regions
SDA	State Development Agreement
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
SKA	Square Kilometre Array
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
VET	Vocational and Educational Training
WA	Western Australia

Chapter One – Setting the Scene

This chapter establishes the contextual background to the research question, by exploring the significance of iron ore in the global and national market. The requirement for skilled workers for mines located in remote parts of the state of Western Australia (WA), and the exorbitant wages offered to attract workers, significantly impacted the national labour market, resulting in a skill shortage crisis. The chapter also introduces labour migration as a short-term solution to the crisis, and elucidates on the perceived threat to Australian jobs and prevalence of exploitation despite policy change to eradicate such occurrences. This solution proved to be a highly divisive topic, however lacked multidisciplinary analysis other than economic conceptions. The research question is then introduced, and includes an overview of the thesis structure.

Mining Booms

China demand for iron ore. The rapid urbanisation of China and liberalising economic reforms of the steel industry in the 1990s resulted in an unprecedented demand for iron ore (Dungey, Fry-McKibbin, & Linehan, 2014; Garnaut, 2012; Tcha & Wright, 1999; Wilson, 2012). Despite an abundance of resources, China's iron ore is not sufficient to produce high quality materials, are difficult to extract, and located far from steelmaking plants (Tcha & Wright, 1999; Wilson, 2012). The country accounted for two-thirds of iron ore demand, one-third of aluminium ore and 45 per cent of global demand for coal (Roberts & Rush, 2010). This subsequently led to a mining boom in Australia (Dungey, Fry-McKibbin, & Linehan, 2014). The influences of the rapid growth of China reverberated globally, which has stimulated the growth of Southeast Asian economies as well as South American economies such as Brazil and Chile (Garnaut, 2012). In 2011, China was the world's largest producer of iron ore at 43 per cent, followed by Australia (17%), and Brazil (14%) (Summerfield, n.d.). In the same year, WA produced 97 per cent of Australia's iron ore (Summerfield, n.d.). As of 2014, Australia has the world's largest economic developed resources of iron ore at 29 per cent, followed by Brazil (16%) (Britt et al., 2015). Overall, Australian iron ore exports are valued at $53.3 billion, exporting 77 per cent of this to China, followed by Japan (12%), South Korea (8%), and Taiwan (2%) (Department of Mines and Petroleum, 2015).

The Asia-Pacific market has driven the increase growth of iron ore, and with the overall influence of Chinese growth, Asian iron ore imports tripled from 240 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) to 775 mtpa between 2000 and 2009 (Wilson, 2012). Australia and Brazil supply the majority of iron ore exports to Asia, through three companies: Companhia Vale do Rio Doce (Vale) in Brazil, and Rio Tinto and BHP Billiton in Australia (Wilson, 2012). Within China, the government holds tight control over its steel industry, with interventionist policies actively supporting top state-owned steelmakers accelerating the growth of the industry and global demand for iron ore (Sun, 2007; Wilson, 2012). The style of the joint ventures between the Chinese Government and the three companies was characterised by a lack of inter-firm cooperation between the government and these companies, price negotiations conducted individually rather than as a collective, and against the backdrop of urgent demand for iron ore exports, despite this, these companies were able to negotiate an increase in price for supply (Wilson, 2012). In 2005, these mining companies increased iron ore prices up 71 per cent, and by 2011, prices peaked at USD $170 per tonne, a nine fold increase on a decade earlier (Wilson, 2012). While steel prices were impacted by the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) in 2008, iron ore prices fell slightly, and continued to increase until peaking in mid-2011. The high business investment in the resource sector supported Australian economic growth during the GFC (Garnaut, 2012; Wilson, 2012). The increase in iron ore prices and decline in steel prices led the Chinese Government to introduce the Iron and Steel Industry Development Policy in 2005 to support the steel industry against rising costs of iron ore (Wilson, 2012). The policy encouraged steel businesses to invest in iron ore projects overseas, thus creating a Chinese importers' cartel. This involved a collective approach amongst steel businesses to improve negotiations of prices, and challenging the exclusive hold on the market by the three companies (Wilson, 2012).

Magnetite and hematite iron ore. Both magnetite and hematite iron ore are mined in WA, with pure hematite containing almost 70 per cent iron, while magnetite contains a higher percentage of iron over 72 per cent (Summerfield, n.d.). Hematite is the preferred iron ore to mine, and has been since the 1960s, with 96 per cent of Australia's iron ore exports high grade hematite from the Pilbara region (Summerfield, n.d.). An emerging market, magnetite is purer and cleaner for the environment, however more costly to produce (Summerfield, n.d.).

Effects of the Mining Boom - Skill Shortages

The Chinese demand for iron ore in 2010 was projected to require 45,000 people in WA (Department of State Development [DSD], 2010). Other reports predicted the state job growth from 2010 to 2017 would grow by within the vicinity of 222,000 and 239,000 (Department of Training & Workforce Development [DTWD], 2010). For the decade 2010 to 2020, it was forecasted jobs would grow to 488,500 in WA (Chamber of Commerce and Industry Western Australia [CCIWA], 2010). Taking into account those retiring from current positions, a further 186,000 positions were expected to be re-filled, thus increasing the required workforce to 425,000 in WA by 2017 (DTWD, 2010). While around half of this figure was expected to be filled by natural population growth and migration, reports indicated a deficit of workers, between 133,000 and 150,000 in WA by 2017 (DTWD, 2010). It was expected in the coming decade there would be a shortage of 210,000 workers (CCI WA, 2010).

This extraordinary demand for labour in the mining industry was due to a lack of available labour with the required skill set near these sites, which are in remote parts of the state. As a result, mining companies sought alternative solutions to solve their demand for labour, including fly-in, fly-out (FIFO), which saw companies fly workers from different capital cities around the country to mine sites. As an incentive to draw workers to the twelve hour shifts on remote sites, mining companies offered rewarding wages, and as of such, increased wages up 30 per cent (Hepworth, Chambers, and Lee, 2010; Hepworth, 2010; Tasker, Lee, & Chambers, 2010). With some trades earning between $200,000 and $250,000 a year, employees left current positions to pursue higher wages in mining states (Stack, 2011). During 2011, WA men earned $1452.70 a week on average, which was 19 per cent more than average national male wage (Freebairn, 2011). Compared to industries that traditionally employ women such as retail and hospitality, WA males earned 90 per cent more than females, who earned $763.60 on average in 2011 (Freebairn, 2011). The increase in wages due to the drive for labour led to a two-speed economy. This led to an increase in costs of housing and living (Wright, 2010a), which influenced bargaining of wage packages on mine sites. One example was the trade union rejection of $190,000 a year to forklift drivers and crane operators, due to the lack of rental assistance built into the contract. Renting in a mining town meant workers were paying $400 to $500 a week to rent a room, and up to $80,000 a year to rent a three bedroom house (Parker, 2011). The mine sites which absorbed workers led to a 'draining' of workers from cities, creating adverse effects in other sectors across the country, with the example of every one thousand

tradespeople leaving the State of New South Wales created $4 million in loss of economic activity, a situation also described as the 'Dutch disease' (Cornell & Searle, 2011; McHale, 2011; Stack, 2011).

By December 2010, skill shortages were becoming apparent across most trades, with 80 per cent of surveyed occupations revealed that employers were experiencing a shortage or difficulty with recruitment (Department of Education, Employment, and Workplace Relations [DEEWR], 2011). At the end of 2010, childcare workers, and food, automotive, electrical, construction and engineering trades all reported recruitment difficulty, due to perceptions of low salary, expansion of the mining industry absorbing jobs, and lack of formal qualification (DEEWR, 2011). The high salaries offered in industries such as mining further impacted on the labour market, creating a bigger shortage in other industries, such as residential housing, retail and manufacturing (Cornell & Searle, 2011; "HIA says", 2010; Wright, 2010b). The skill shortage was predicted to cripple industries, with multi-billion dollar projects on hold to avoid sabotaging current projects (Chambers, 2011; Fitzpatrick, 2010; Healy, 2010; McCarthy, 2011; Tasker, 2010). As another alternative solution to the skill shortage crisis, mining companies such as Rio Tinto utilised driverless trucks which were remote operated in Perth ("Rio Tinto", 2011). Solving the skill shortage was pertinent to not just the states, but the national economy as well, with the president of the Chamber of Minerals and Energy stating: "Western Australia's resource industry is the powerhouse of the national economy and it is vital that we maintain and build on the achievements to date, in order to leave a lasting legacy of benefit for the WA community" (Chamber of Minerals and Energy Western Australia [CMEWA], 2011, para. 15).

As a response to solving the skill shortage, the State Government released a report identifying five key issues significant to supporting the state's economic growth. The detailed report titled S*killing WA – A workforce development plan for Western Australia*, was released by the Department of Training and Workforce Development (DTWD) in 2010. This report is further explored in Chapter Two.

Labour Migration – A Solution to Skill Shortages

Government, industry groups and employers believed temporary skilled migration programmes were pertinent to solving the skill shortage in the short-term, and called for greater flexibility of the scheme to include unskilled workers (Burrell, 2011; "Call for", 2010;

Chambers, 2010; Foreshaw, 2010; Hepworth, Chambers, and Lee, 2010; Lawson, 2011; Tasker, 2010; Tasker, Lee, & Chambers, 2010).

Temporary labour migration programmes are driven by demand and thus suited the needs of employers and industry to support the mining boom. There are a variety of visas supporting the needs of employers, most notably the Temporary Work (Skilled) visa (subclass 457) (herein 457 visa). This visa allows the employer to sponsor the migrant worker from three months up to four years. This visa is constantly amended, depending on the economic market. As of November 2015, to be eligible employers must demonstrate why vacancies cannot be filled by Australian workers, and a requirement to provide training to Australian employees. Following this, migrant workers are required to meet an eligibility criteria, including suitable qualifications, health and criminal checks, meet the language level required for the particular position, and evidence of private health insurance for the duration of the sponsorship (Department of Immigration and Border Protection [DIBP], 2015a). This visa granting temporary status to the migrant worker was however commonly used as a pathway to permanent residency. Another temporary visa was the Working Holiday visa (subclass 417) (herein working holiday or backpacker visa). This visa required no sponsorship, and migrant workers between the ages of 18 and 31 were eligible to work up to six months for one employer on one specific worksite over the duration of the visa. This visa had the possibility of extension for another year, which could also be used as a pathway to other visas and permanent residency (DIBP, 2015b).

Another visa that was commonly used during the mining boom and was permanent was the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme visa (subclass 187) (herein RSMS), which relaxed rules and allowed migrant workers to gain permanent residency immediately. Visa holders were required to again meet a similar criteria for eligibility, and applies the 'regional' location to be anywhere other than the Gold Coast, Brisbane, Newcastle, Sydney, Wollongong and Melbourne (DIBP, 2015c). Another visa was the Skilled Independent Visa (subclass 189) (herein the independent visa), which allowed migrant workers to sponsor themselves to Australia. There were fewer job options on this list of skill shortages, and the onus was on the migrant worker to find employment (DIBP, 2015d).

Another visa introduced in 2011 was the Enterprise Migration Agreement (EMA), which permitted large resource projects with a capital expenditure over $2 billion to sponsor more than 1500 migrant workers, with a pledge to upskill Australians (DIBP,

2015e). At one point, the $9 billion Roy Hill Iron Ore project in the Pilbara region was anticipated to sponsor over a 1700 migrant workers on the EMA visa, creating anger amongst unions and politicians over a lack of commitment to employ local ("Anger over", 2012; "Government to", 2012; Ryan, 2012).

Migrant workers have played an important role in supporting the growth of the state and national economies, however are conferred fewer rights due to their temporary status. As a result, numerous claims of exploitation have emerged in the context of the 2004-08 mining boom, and again in the recent boom. Very little academic literature surfaced during the first mining boom on these exploitative claims, but rather focused on the impact of temporary labour migration on the national economy (Hugo, 2006; Khoo, Voigt-Graf, McDonald, & Hugo, 2007; Khoo, McDonald, & Hugo, 2005). Some of these studies focused on highly qualified migrant workers from English-speaking countries, and although informative, did not capture the experiences of semi-skilled migrant workers from non-English speaking countries, which appeared to be the group most subject to exploitation. Instead, trade union claims and the media informed the public of incidences of exploitation (Cianfrini, 2008).

During the mining boom of 2004-08, there were continuous media reports of migrant worker exploitation across Australia, such as the example of an employer found guilty of paying a Chinese migrant worker a salary of $6000 a year instead of $39,100, equivalent to $3 an hour ("Company ordered", 2006; MacDonald, 2008a). Reports surfaced concerning threats of deportation impacting on the mental wellbeing of migrant workers, racial abuse, deplorable living conditions, appalling work conditions, contracting life-threatening diseases, fired due to injury, debt bondage, and deaths occurring due to the exploitation ("Death prompt", 2007; "Filipino worker", 2008; MacDonald, 2008b; "Union says", 2007; "Union threatens", 2007). Another case emerged of a migrant worker severely injured at work, where the employer refused to cover medical bills and had the migrant worker deported. To seek retribution, the migrant worker (who spoke no English), returned on a fake passport, pressured the employers for the compensation, following which employers kidnapped the migrant worker and assault him ("Foreign worker", 2007).

The severity of these claims led to a Parliamentary Inquiry in 2008, known as the Deegan Review. The review listed several recommendations for the temporary skilled migration programme, ensuring that it both support the integrity of the visa and support

the needs of businesses. In 2009, measures taken by the government included (DIAC, 2009):

- Increasing the minimal salary level, whereby migrant workers would receive the same level of pay as Australians;
- Increase the required language level in trade occupations as a deterrent to exploitation;
- Introduce formal skills assessment for high risk immigrant countries for trade occupations;
- Employers required to demonstrate a commitment to employing local labour and non-discriminatory employment practices as a way to ensure locals are first preference; and
- Developing training benchmarks to clarify requirement for training local labour.

From July to December 2008, offshore applications for 457 visas were at a historic high of 700 applications a week (DIAC, 2009). However during the GFC this figure decreased to 430 457 visa applications a week (DIAC, 2009). Despite the resilience of the mining industry, the GFC impacted other businesses, which resulted in a drop in training and apprentices (Cratchley, 2009). Employers were favouring shorter work hours, salary freezes, forced annual leave or firing staff as methods to manage the GFC (Cratchley, 2009). The cuts to training were seen as having the potential to create a skill shortage once the economy had recovered (Cratchley 2009).

However exploitation claims continue to emerge, such as a Chinese company paying its 457 visa holders $1.90 an hour ("Workers paid", 2010), while foreign workers including backpackers and illegals, are underpaid in construction sites, with examples of unions recovering $129,600 for 95 Chinese workers unpaid for six weeks, $56,613 for Serbian gyprockers, and $102,055 for 17 Irish backpackers (Wallace, 2011a). Reports also surfaced of prostitution rings utilising student and working holiday visas as a way to bring young women over from Hong Kong, and in one case Indonesian church ministries acted as fronts to bring in women for prostitution from Indonesia (Adshed, 2011; Macdonald, 2011). While claims continued to emerge, government advisors stated these occurrences were minimal (McCullagh, 2013).

While the push by industry for temporary labour migration programmes was strong, there were also reports surfacing of Australians being replaced by migrant workers. This was evident in the retrenchment of 54 Australian workers on the magnetite mine run by CITIC Pacific, while Filipino migrant workers continued their employment, reflecting the absence of legislation, implying employers were not bound by law to hire Australians first, but rather sign a declaration that there was a lack of suitable Australians to fill vacancies (Burrell & Perpitch, 2010). As these scenarios occurred, Australians questioned the morality of the situation:

> Legally, it (sacking Australians but keeping on foreigners) may be right, but ethically and morally it's wrong. I am competing against foreign workers for a job and now my livelihood has been taken away from me….I feel like my own country has let me down (Burrell, 2010, para. 5).

There has been an element of contradiction with government rhetoric on the topic of skilled migration, increasing the flexibility of the programme to satisfy industry requests, but later claiming skilled migrants are over utilised and growing faster than local Australian employment (Uhlmann, 2013). At the time of the visa crackdowns, the government reported over 10,000 breaches of the 457 visa scheme ("Chamber of", 2013). However a report later completed by the government suggested otherwise, identifying rare cases of abuse (Kirk, 2013).

The topic of labour migration has been a constant issue for trade unions, who campaign against 457 visas, with a perception that skilled workers are taking Australian jobs ("unions protest", 2013). Another recent example is from 20th November, concerning 40 Australians working for Alcoa to be replaced by migrant workers due to the company's implementation of cost effective procedures (Carmody, 2015). The Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) staged a road blockade near the site, while also informing the media that incoming foreign workers will be paid $2 an hour (Carmody, 2015). Despite protesting 457 visas, trade unions have also employed migrant workers (Cullen, 2013). The constant union tirades on labour migration have been equally met with industry advocating for the indispensable contribution of labour migration to businesses and the economy (demonstrated in Figures 1 & 2). Summarised simply, the excessive income and investment generated from the mining boom subsequently caused a delineating schism in the community.

Research Question

Skill shortages and labour migration in the context of Australian mining booms have been traditionally conceptualised in economic and population paradigms. This thesis addresses these topics and the schism to emerge by applying a community psychology perspective. This alternative paradigm provides an ecological perspective, permitting issues to be illuminated which are usually ignored in other conceptions of the phenomenon. The analytical ecological framework of causal layered analysis supplements this exploratory study, drawing on Foucauldian and civilizational studies which harmonise with community psychology's critique of power and empowerment.

This exploratory study is part of the CSIRO Minerals Down Under National Research Flagship Collaboration Cluster, a collaboration of five Australian universities exploring the future sustainability of the minerals industry. The flagship examined issues pertinent to mineral sustainability, divided over three projects: 1) Commodities Futures, 2) Technology Futures, and 3) Regional Futures. This research is situated in the domain of the third project, which explores issues of transition in resource-rich communities. The findings in this study generate an understanding of the unique social, economic, and demographic variables in a regional community, elucidating on the influences of skill shortage and labour migration on communities and contributing to the flagship. The research question and objective are as follows:

An exploratory study of labour migration and skill shortage experiences during the mining boom in Western Australia.

- Capturing the experiences of employers, migrant workers, and stakeholders influenced by the mining boom in the Mid West and Perth regions.

The inclusion of stakeholder perspectives is significant, as these groups played an integral role, however are very rarely mentioned in the same context. Capturing the experiences of all involved groups in the community is imperative to understanding the totality of the phenomenon, and the ideologies which underpin the present issues.

Figure 1. Minerals Council of Australia newspaper advertisement promoting the use of migrant workers. *The West Australian,* 2012, June 8, p. 2.

Figure 2. CFMEU newspaper advertisement protesting the use of migrant workers. *The Sunday Times*, 2012, August 19, p. 52.

Overview of Thesis Structure

This chapter provides an introduction to the research question, by contextualising the issues imperative to the conceptions of skill shortages and labour migration. It begins by outlining Chinese growth fuelling demand for international iron ore, turning to resource-rich countries such as Australia. Subsequent effects emanating from these global influences included a sharp increase in demand for skilled labour in regional parts of Australia. The lack of available labour in these regional communities prompted the rise in the costs of living, compounding economic and social domains in society known as the 'Dutch disease'. A range of solutions were applied, including the utilisation of temporary labour migration programmes. This short-term solution created contentious dialogue in the WA community, delineating a schism in the narrative for a labour migration solution. Exploitation claims continue to emerge in the media despite government attempts to curb abuses by employers. Concurrently trade unions highlighted migrant workers used as a cheap source of labour to undermine the labour market and squeeze local Australians out of jobs. The research question and objective are presented, along with an overview of the thesis structure.

Chapter Two presents a review of literature pertinent to skill shortages and labour migration. It introduces the research location, the Mid West region, with a focus on the Geraldton community. The characteristics of a skill shortage are explored as are the State Government's response to the crisis. The global influences of financialisation and neoliberalism are expounded in the context of regional governance. Various forms of governance are briefly explored, with an interdependent relationship fostered between government and regional communities that support collaboration with global enterprises as a means of becoming self-reliant and autonomous. The chapter captures Geraldton as an animated community awakened to the political economic environment through partnerships with Chinese mining companies.

This chapter also provides an international review of labour migration, using Gulf countries as an example of the vulnerabilities faced by migrant workers. An asymmetric balance of power in labour migration programmes exposes migrant workers to extreme human rights abuses. Some countries do not extend workplace legislations to cover migrant workers, and thus eliminate any access to recourse. These circumstances have adverse impacts on the wellbeing of migrant workers, including psychological disempowerment. However Australian literature on labour migration is dispersed over a multiplicity of fields,

with limited literature exploring oppression and empowerment of migrant workers in this specific context. Almost all exploitation claims in Australia emerge from trade unions and covered by the media. This is problematic given the agenda of trade unions, but also raises the awareness of exploitation claims.

Chapter Three provides the conceptual and theoretical frameworks for the study. The epistemology is grounded in social constructionism, providing the foundations to support the analysis of multiple perspectives of the participants involved. The lens of the study is situated in community psychology which supplements the analysis of multiple realities through the exploring manifestations of power in multilevel analyses. The theoretical framework adopted is embedded in a futures' ecological framework, Causal Layered Analysis (CLA). This model echoes similarities to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory utilised in community psychology. CLA employs Foucauldian methods to analyse power, and incorporates Indian spirituality and civilizational studies in an attempt to capture the totality of the issue.

This chapter also outlines the research design with participants divided into three cohorts: employers, migrant workers, and stakeholders, as well as highlighting the complications encountered in the data collection phase. Difficulties with obtaining migrant worker interviews with a recording device reflected the precarious nature of labour migration, and shaped the trust between researcher and participant. Interviews with employers were also difficult to obtain due to employer time constraints. In these circumstances, online surveys were utilised, telephone interviews, and short hand notes taken in place of a recording device.

Chapter Four combines the findings and discussion, and is divided into Parts A, B, and C. Part A captures the findings, highlighting key themes to emerge from each cohort, and identifies the commonalities across the three groups. As a result, four overarching themes emerge, as described in Part B. These overarching themes explore the poor work ethics of Australian workers and dehumanisation of labour. The blame game elucidates on a diffusion of responsibility across cohorts, however literature did reinforce these complaints, suggesting while there was a habit of blaming others, there was some truth to these accusations. Social issues as barriers to economic participation were key issues perpetuating the skill shortage, with drug and alcohol abuse cited as a major reason for difficulties in staff retention in Geraldton. The exploitation of migrant workers was verified

by migrant worker accounts, while some stakeholders highlighted that migrant workers refused to seek access to recourse, attributing this to cultural influences. Each overarching theme is explored in according with the CLA framework, telling a story from the litany level down to uncovering the unconscious roots of the overarching theme.

Part C details the discussion, putting forward two propositions. Proposition one compares the State Government's approach to the skill shortage through the *Skilling WA* report (2010), and compares this with the findings. Major discrepancies are revealed between what the State Government identified as issues to solving the skill shortage, and what employers and stakeholders described as issues to solving the skill shortage. This is due to the macro level approach by State Government which failed to offer solutions for the micro/meso levels in which the finding were embedded. This revelation, along with the findings which demonstrated participants were interacting with all levels of the ecological framework, informs the second proposition, which captures the awareness of the interconnectedness of the skill shortage crisis.

Most participants lacked the awareness of the power embedded in the relational capital, therefore reflected in the findings are examples of power manifested in expressions of dehumanisation, accusations, oppression, and exploitation. The interconnectedness of the phenomenon and the expressions of power which violate the synergistic interactions are discussed in four paradoxes. These paradoxes explore the interdependent relationships between employer, employee, and stakeholders, and influences of globalisation on national identity, and sovereignty and the protection of rights.

Finally, Chapter Five presents key conclusions implications for future research. It highlights the emphasis of pursuing neoliberal solutions presented in government documents and approaches, which fail to capture the social dimensions of the skill shortage crisis. This chapter calls for further investigation into skill shortages and labour migration in the domain of community psychology, accompanied with a critical consciousness of global influences on the wellbeing of communities.

Chapter Two – Literature Review

This chapter provides a two-pronged approach of the literature pertinent to skill shortages and labour migration. After introducing the Geraldton community, the first part under the rubric of skill shortages, provides a definition of the elements which constitute a skill shortage and government response to the crisis. The chapter contextualises the political economic influences of everyday life as prescribed by globalisation, by emphasising the presence of financialisation and neoliberal policies in regional development. This approach engenders a reworking of governance, shifting the focus from Federal Government interventionist policies to self-reliance and autonomy in pursuing community wellbeing. This is explicated in the context of a global mining enterprise presence in regional communities.

The second part of the chapter defines the concept of labour migration and illuminates the vulnerabilities faced by migrant workers due to an asymmetric power balance imbued in employer/migrant worker dynamic. A brief review of international literature identifies the themes of oppression manifested as psychological disempowerment. However narrowing the scope to an Australian context reflects a series of alternative perspectives. The literature does identify the presence (and historical presence) of migrant worker exploitation in Australia, however this is exceedingly scant, and relies on trade union information. The chapter problematizes this, calling for further analysis of the mechanics of power underpinning the narrative of exploitation of this transient community.

Geraldton and the Mid West Region

Geraldton is a coastal city located 424 kilometres north of Perth, the capital city of Western Australia. Under the local government of the City of Greater Geraldton, it boasts of a population of 40,448, with 9.6% identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ABS, 2015a; City of Greater Geraldton [CGG], 2014). As of the 2011 Census, the largest employment industry was retail (12%), followed by construction (11.2%), health care and social assistance (10.9%), and education and training (9%) (ABS, 2015a).

Geraldton is located in the Mid West region, which has an overall population of 57,901, accounting for 2.3% of the State's population (ABS, 2015b; Department of Regional

Development [DRD], 2014a). There are 17 local government authorities spread across the region, from the coast of the Indian Ocean to the edge of the Gibson Desert. At the 2011 Census, 20.5% were born overseas and 9.9% identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ABS, 2015b). The region has several Aboriginal language groups including Amangu, Naaguja, Wadjarri, Nanda, Badimia, and Martu peoples, who are collectively known as Yamatji (CGG, 2014; Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation, 2015).

(Department of Regional Development, 2014)

Figure 3:   Map of the Mid West region, Western Australia.

The region has a diversity of industries, with mining and mineral processing valued at more than AUS$3 billion in 2012-13 (Table 1). Due to global demand for iron ore, the region's unemployment rate was at a record low of 2.7% in 2011-12 (DRD, 2014a).

Table 1.

Value of Industrial Activities in the Mid West

Value of Industry Activities

Industry	Value ($ million)
Mining and Mineral Processing (2012-13)	$3,044
Agriculture (2011-12)	$1,004
Retail Turnover (2011-12)	$660
Tourism (2010-11-12)	$282
Building Construction (2012-13)	$227
Fishing and Aquaculture (2011-12)	$91
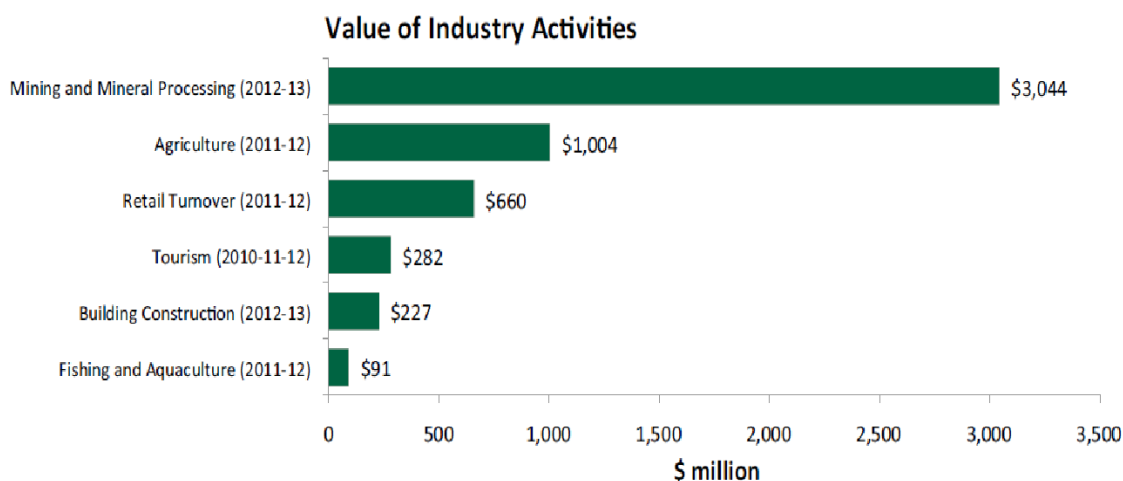
(Department of Regional Development, 2014a)

The region is also home to the Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder (ASKAP) precursor radio telescope, one of two radio telescopes (the other in South Africa), as part of the multinational Square Kilometre Array (SKA) project. The objectives of the SKA project are to explore cosmic magnetism, dark energy and the formation of galaxies, stars and black holes, to test Einstein's theory of general relativity, and the possibility of extra-terrestrial life (SKA, 2015). ASKAP is located in the Murchison, 300 kilometres north-east of Geraldton, and was chosen due to its high visibility, low radio interference, and favourable weather conditions, with construction set for 2018 (SKA, 2015).

History of mining in the Mid West. The Mid West region spans across the Yilgarn Craton, which holds deposits of a variety of minerals, including gold, iron, lead, and uranium (Geoscience Australia, 2012). Detrital zircons up to 4.4 billion years old have been found in the Jack Hills range, and are the earliest remnants of the Earth's formation (Wilde, Valley, Peck, & Graham, 2001). Mining was part of the establishment of the towns in the Mid West region, with coal first discovered in the Irwin River in 1846, and later galena (lead sulphate) and copper discovered in the Murchison River in 1848 (Bain, 1996). Mines were difficult to establish due to the short supply of labour in the colony, but with political

pressure the Geraldine Mining Company was established. By 1888, gold was discovered throughout the region; near the Murchison settlement, Yalgoo, Sandstone, Meekatharra, Wiluna, Cue and Mount Magnet, establishing gold rush towns (Landgate, 2015).

From 1850 to 1868, convicts were deported to the region to assist in the establishment of the district and provide labour, which was perceived as an opportunity to explore unchartered territory as a debt to the English Government for the opportunity (Bain, 1996). By 1853 alcohol was a growing problem, despite attempts to regulate with licences. Work ethics on the mine site were reported to be lacking, with reports of men working four hours a day over a two year period (Bain, 1996). However mining was hard labour and dangerous, with miners susceptible to diseases from working in damp environments, and risks of falling stones and poorly constructed ladders (Bain, 1996). By 1916, the discovery of gold waned, and towns such as Cue were severely reduced in population size (Bain, 1996). The recent re-emergence of mineral exploration and processing boom has boosted the region's economy and population, however the demand for specific skills required due to the mining boom has resulted in a shortage of available skills.

Mid West projects. According to the DSD (2010) in 2010, there were more than AUS $150 billion worth of mining projects in WA, which were either committed to or in the process of finalisation. It was anticipated that combined these projects would create a workforce of 45,000 positions. In February 2011, it was estimated the minerals and energy sectors would contribute $9.5 billion to the Mid West region's economic growth, accounting for 52 per cent of the overall growth (Mid West Development Commission [MWDC], 2011a). By December 2011, this figure rose to $15.77 billion (MWDC, 2011b). Overall, the minerals sector in the Mid West in 2011 alone would require a construction workforce of over 9,000, and a permanent operations workforce of over 5,000 (MWDC, 2011a). Table 2 below presents the major iron ore projects in the Mid West, all which are backed by Chinese and Japanese investment.

Table 2.

Major Iron Ore Projects in the Mid West, February 2011

Project	Project Value (estimated A$m)	Employment Construction	Employment Permanent
Asia Iron – Extension Hill Magnetite Mine	2000	1000	350
Crosslands Resources – Jack Hills – Hematite Mine	2000	450	350
Gindalbie Metals - Karara Iron Ore Project	2000	1500	700
Sinosteel Midwest Corporation – Weld Range Hematite Mine	1600	1020	850

(Department of State Development, 2010; Mid West Development Commission, 2011a)

WA's resource sector grew due to Chinese demand for iron ore, from $27.9 billion in 2002-03, to $101.8 billion in 2012-13 (DRDa, 2014). In 2012-13 the value of mineral production in the Mid West was $3 billion, with gold production at 32 per cent of this figure, followed by iron ore (27%), base metals such as zinc, lead and copper (25%), and mineral sands, nickel, vanadium, petroleum, talc, chromite, silver, gypsum, and lime sand (16%) (DRDa, 2014).

Oakajee Port and Rail. The development of the iron ore sector in the Mid West region depends on the transportation and shipment of ore, the Oakajee Port and Rail (OPR). First identified as a potential port over 30 years ago, the deepwater port would cater for ore carriers, while the rail network would connect the mine sites to the port (MWDC, 2012; OPR, n.d.). This deep water port was estimated at $4 billion, and would require 2000 for the construction phase, and 400 to operate the port (DSD, 2010). In 2009, a state development agreement was signed, and the State and Federal Governments committed $678 million towards the Japanese-owned project (MWDC, 2012). In 2011 Murchison

Metals lacked the financial backing and sold its interests in the project to Mitsubishi, who, sought to engage other investors in the project, and with State Government assistance, commenced talks with China (MWDC, 2012). While the project was abandoned by Mitsubishi, Mid West miner Padbury Mining purchased the intellectual property rights in 2011 and sought the $6.5 billion required to financially back the tender in 2014 (Saunders, 2014). However they too were forced to abandon the project. To date, no progress has been made on the project.

Skill Shortages

      The skill shortage concept embodies various meanings, depending on the perspective of the employer, or union. Three common meanings are attached to the concept, including hard-to-fill vacancies, in which employers have difficulties filling positions in an occupation, and in a reasonable timeframe. A skills gap relates to employees who lack the required qualifications and experience to fulfil a position's duties. This can occur with new employees, or when employers are unaware of the skills necessary for realising the full potential of production. The third definition, recruitment difficulties, is taken from an employer perspective, where employers have difficulties filling vacancies when there is adequate supply of skilled workers. Influences can include highly-specialised skills required, inconvenient location, low pay, and ineffective recruitment strategies (Shah & Burke, 2010).

      Skill shortages can occur for a variety of reasons, such as an improvement in living conditions which subsequently results in an ageing population, and has an effect on the labour market. Underutilization of capacity, can lead to a reduction of productivity (Baum & Mitchell, 2010). An increase in wages which does not match productivity leads to higher inflation and lower retention. The required time for training skills and training institution response to change in the labour market also influences skill shortages, as well as student interest to fill apprenticeships (Shah & Burke, 2010; 2005). Employer preference for a certain demographic can lead to a shortage, as well as a preference for extensive experience, excluding potential employees recently graduated. During a skill shortage, some employers may respond by increasing working hours of employees and change contracts from part-time to full-time, or seek less qualified labour, all which may seem more suitable than hiring in a tight market (Shah & Burke, 2005).

Within the last 10 years the concept of skills shortage has become part of the rhetoric of employers, economists, and governments, and is synonymous with the mining boom in Australia. However it is not a new concept. In an article examining the skill shortages in computer programming published almost thirty years ago, the author highlighted employers' perceived training staff as too expensive, and a strong possibility employees would eventually leave for a higher paying salary (Pocock, 1986). Pocock (1986) states that while refining recruitment difficulties, the key to avoiding a skill shortage is training and retraining. Another article published around the same time also highlighted the skill shortage in the emerging fields of information technology, and biotechnology. Again it called for better training policies and higher education as crucial tools for effective ways in tackling the labour force issue (Pearson, 1985).

There are a variety of options for public policy response to skill shortages, as outlined by Shah and Burke (2005). These include provision of publicly funded training, which also provides the opportunity to promote equity and education amongst citizens. Encouraging training in industry requires an attitude shift to encompass long-term perspective on the benefits of training, especially in a tight labour market where employers fear poaching of investment. Labour market information is ideally provided by government, and in the case of Australia, the Federal Government utilises the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO), a collection and analysis of occupational data (DIBP, n.d.). A criticism of the classification is it does not list or assess tasks involved to perform in an occupation, and instead utilises education, training and experience as an indicator (Esposto, 2008). Another criticism is aimed at the 10 year update to the classification, given that the data becomes outdated almost immediately (Esposto, 2008). Immigration can assist with covering skill shortages. However issues with skilled migration include the time lag between the requirement for migrant workers and the time of arrival, by which the market can correct itself, and migrant preference to work in urban settings rather than regional. Finally, Shah and Burke (2005) encourage mobility to regions requiring an injection of labour to cover shortages.

State Government response to skill shortages. The Department of Training and Workforce Development (DTWD), presented *Skilling WA – A workforce development plan for Western Australia*, a comprehensive report in 2010, which after consulting stakeholders, identified five key issues pertinent to solving the skill shortage in WA. These included addressing:

- Barriers to labour force participation;
- Issues impacting migration;
- Attraction and retention issues for the state;
- Issues impacting skill development and training; and
- Issues impacting the strategic planning and coordination of workforce development between government, industry, and enterprise.

Addressing barriers to labour force participation. The *Skilling WA* report highlighted four key issues impacting on labour force participation, including a predicted fall in labour force participation, an ageing population, an increase use of under-utilised sources of labour, and removing employment barriers to under-utilised sources of labour.

At the time of the report in 2010, the State unemployment rate was 4.5, with the underemployment rate of 10.8% (DTWD, 2010). Utilising a 2009 ABS survey, the report revealed reasons why this figure was more than double the unemployment rate, citing home duties and caring for children, attending school, health issues, caring for elderly or disabled, no vacancies in desired location, satisfaction with current arrangements, and employers' perception of employees as too mature for employment (DTWD, 2010).

Also at the time of the report release, the State's labour force participation rate was at 68.7%, and above the national average, however projections for the future showed that an ageing population would apply further pressure on the labour force to support. Regional labour force participation compared poorly with overall State figures. According to the 2006 Census, the State labour force participation rate was 62.3%. The Mid West region rate combined with the Gascoyne, and was 60.9%. While not that far behind the State figure, it was third lowest.

A tailored approach to engaging under-utilised sources of labour was identified as a method to solving the skill shortage, targeting Aboriginal, women, people with disabilities, youth, and mature-aged people. The Aboriginal Workforce Development Strategy (DTWD, 2010) identified six main findings, which included a need for better cohesion between employers, job seekers, service providers and government, employers lacking knowledge to successfully engage Aboriginal people, local responsive solutions, support with transitioning from school to workplace with relationship-based mentoring, removal of individual and

systemic barriers to Aboriginal employment, and raising awareness of Aboriginal job opportunities and Aboriginal role models.

Interestingly the report's presentation of women as a source of under-utilised labour only identified women with dependents. Women from single parent and couple families were represented in the workforce at 58.5% and 62.7% respectively (DTWD, 2010). The report cited barriers such as affordability, quality, availability, geographic location, and allocated government funding of childcare services, negatively impacted on the labour supply of mothers with dependent children (DTWD, 2010).

People with disabilities were another identified under-utilised source of labour, with the report highlighting the prevalence of misconceptions associated with disability employment including a lack of confidence in people with disabilities to pursue employment, and government structural barriers. Employer commitment and flexibility of support were identified as keys to increasing workforce engagement of people with disabilities.

Youth were reported to be adversely affected by the global financial crisis resulting in a lack of training, confidence, and financial insecurity (DTWD, 2010). The report also highlighted teenagers were a group marked by transition, experiencing a move from school to the workplace, training, or further education. Mentoring was suggested as a positive approach to increasing the engagement of youth in the workforce.

Finally mature--aged workers were identified as under-utilised sources of labour. Research indicates mature aged workers returning to the workforce experience age discrimination, age-related health issues, policy barriers, and barriers accessing training reskilling (DTWD, 2010). Employer perceptions of mature-aged workers were also identified as a barrier to employing mature--aged workers (DTWD, 2010). Not only are there concerns of engaging mature--aged workers to hold off on retirement or to re-enter the workforce, but figures project the number of working aged over 55 years to be a growing proportion of the workforce in the next few decades.

Issues impacting migration. The report ascertained that natural population growth would not meet the demands for labour, identifying migration to be the second option essential to addressing this forecast. However labour migration programmes at the time of

the report were considered to be limited in their responsiveness to the demand for labour. WA's population growth was comparatively higher compared to national growth, and was attributed to migration, in particularly the demand for labour from the previous mining boom of 2004-2008 (DTWD, 2010). In 2009, WA's population grew 2.7% (58,893 people), above the national population growth rate of 2.0% for that year (DTWD, 2010). The regions in WA varied in population growth, and in the period from 2001 to 2009, the Mid West/Gascoyne region faced a decline in population, due to a lack of employment opportunities, and lower levels of housing, community, and social infrastructure (DTWD, 2010).

The report highlighted the challenges confronted by migrant workers, with two-thirds of migrants not working in their chosen profession due to language barriers (DTWD, 2010). Other challenges included a lack of recognition of overseas qualifications and experience, registration and licensing requirements, difficulties with English, employer perceptions of attitudes and behaviours perceived to be unacceptable, and discrimination (DTWD, 2010). To better meet the demands of the resource boom, the Federal Government made significant changes to skilled migration programmes, which included training benchmarks, requirements for English language, job readiness assessments, minimum salary level, and development of the Skilled Occupations List, with greater State input (DTWD, 2010).

While emphasising the economic benefits of skilled migration (such as job creation, support of trades, and enhancing skill level of industries (DTWD, 2010), the report does not capture the risks and costs associated with the use of migrant workers, as a barrier to solving the skill shortage. The report, however, mentioned amendments to temporary labour migration programmes, which while not stated, allude to key issues emphasised in the Visa Subclass 457 Integrity Review (2008) (DIBP, 2015f), including altering the minimum salary level, training benchmarks, and English language requirement.

Addressing attraction and retention issues. Key issues listed in the 2010 report identified emphasising the role of government and enterprise in attracting and retaining a workforce, in particularly regional and remote WA, and the delivery of social and physical infrastructure to retain workers in these parts of WA. The report highlighted the effects of globalisation, and competition for skilled workers as compounding skill shortages. Government cited its role in creating and supporting an economy which encouraged job

creation, while also investing in social capital as an incentive to attract and retain people in regional WA. Enterprises were cited as acquiring the duty to assist in this approach, with offering alternatives to wages such as flexibility in employment conditions, rewards, and recognition of work (DTWD, 2010).

The report (2010) illuminated findings from the Standing Committee on Regional Development, identifying six issues impacting on attraction and retention in regional and remote WA. These included jobs and career opportunities, housing (availability and affordability), infrastructure (such as transportation and utilities), lifestyle and community (social capital such as education, quality of living), health (presence of health care professionals), and education and training (as a means to retaining youth). As growth in regional and remote communities varied considerably, these factors all needed to be considered in the context of a case-by-case approach for each community, rather than just population numbers. Overall, the Regional Development Council emphasised the necessity of coordination and cooperation between all levels of government to support community (DTWD, 2010).

Addressing skill development, utilisation, and training. This theme identified the competitive market as a result of globalisation, increasing pressure on government and enterprise to increase competitiveness. Training and education were highlighted as requiring greater flexible and responsiveness to the needs of employers. With globalisation applying pressure on enterprise to be more competitive, the report forecasted an increase demand for higher education, with a bachelor's degree to be the most sought after qualification by 2017 (DTWD, 2010). This demand on education, plus the forecasted decline in labour force participation rate, ageing population and increase pressures of globalisation, emphasises that increasing attention is essential to address education and training requirements.

Increasing participation in vocational education and training was cited as pertinent to solving the skill shortage crisis. WA's vocational education and training participation rate was 7.1% in 2008, and the second lowest below the national rate of 8.0%, as explained by the State's high workforce participation rate (DWTD, 2010). The report highlighted the necessity to change employer and student perceptions on vocational training, by improving flexibility, responsiveness, capacity, addressing needs of regional communities, and transparency in providing info for students and employers (DTWD, 2010). The report also

highlights the need for cooperation and collaboration amongst stakeholders, such as industry groups, private and public training providers, training councils, and enterprises (DTWD, 2010).

The report highlighted that Australia's investment and participation in education was falling behind other countries (DWTD, 2010). In 2008, 29% of Australians aged 25-34 obtained a degree qualification (DTWD, 2010). Ways of increasing this have been identified, by strengthening ties between industry and university to ensure courses meet job demands, flexibility in the delivery of courses to meet student needs, multiple qualifications to get into a job, and better marketing. Regional WA was faced with harder issues, with participation in higher education at 8.8% compared to 10.0% of other states. WA was cited as lacking critical mass of population spread out across the state to support universities in the regions. However vocational training has been provided in regional and remote parts of the State through collaboration of WA universities, working with local training providers (DWDT, 2010). Literacy and numeracy level in the workplace were also identified as important in alleviating the skill shortage. The report highlighted that the 2006 International Adult Literacy survey found 46% of Australians scored below the level of literacy required for the workplace, and 53% were below the minimum requirement for numeracy (DWDT, 2010).

Addressing planning and coordination. This final theme in the State Government's 2010 report addressing skill shortages identifies the necessity for consistent coordination, planning and knowledge sharing, and a shared responsibility between government departments, industry, and employers. This issue outlines the role and expectations of the state government, such as providing incentives to encourage under-utilised sources of labour, strengthening partnership between government and industry, working on social inclusion, supporting industry through tailoring education and training to their needs, and adapting labour migration programmes to support industry. Industry was expected to provide current data on demands for labour, assist in providing opportunities for apprenticeships and traineeships, upskilling existing employees, and working with employers for better workforce planning (DTWD, 2010). This issue emphasised focus on knowledge sharing, outlining the type of information that would be expected to share, the inter-dependent nature of the issue and expected cooperation and shared responsibility between government, industry, employers and stakeholders.

Globalisation, Financialisation, and Neoliberalism

Exploring the underpinnings of the State Government's report on skill shortages shifts the focus to Global economic growth and subsequent financialisation of society, an integration of financial processes in labour and households, whereby households absorb financial, economic and social risks (Rafferty & Yu, 2010). Rafferty and Yu (2010) present a detailed report on employment in Australia and the complexities of financialisation during the GFC. A growth in global scale of production requires local and national businesses to participate at a global benchmark. This has resulted in several subsequent developments, such as a shift in wage bargaining, traditionally imbued with a sense of rationality and equity, to standards supporting profits on a global scale, as well as an increase in different modes of employment. The requirement for flexibility of labour means individuals absorb the risks, which requires longer working weeks and working lives, greater number of household members working to cover the cost of living, and an increase in pay inequality across different locations. The failure to make mortgage repayments in low and middle income earners resulting in the GFC reflects as an example of the transfer of risk to households. This sees labour norms now as contractual, casual, and precarious (Rafferty & Yu, 2010).
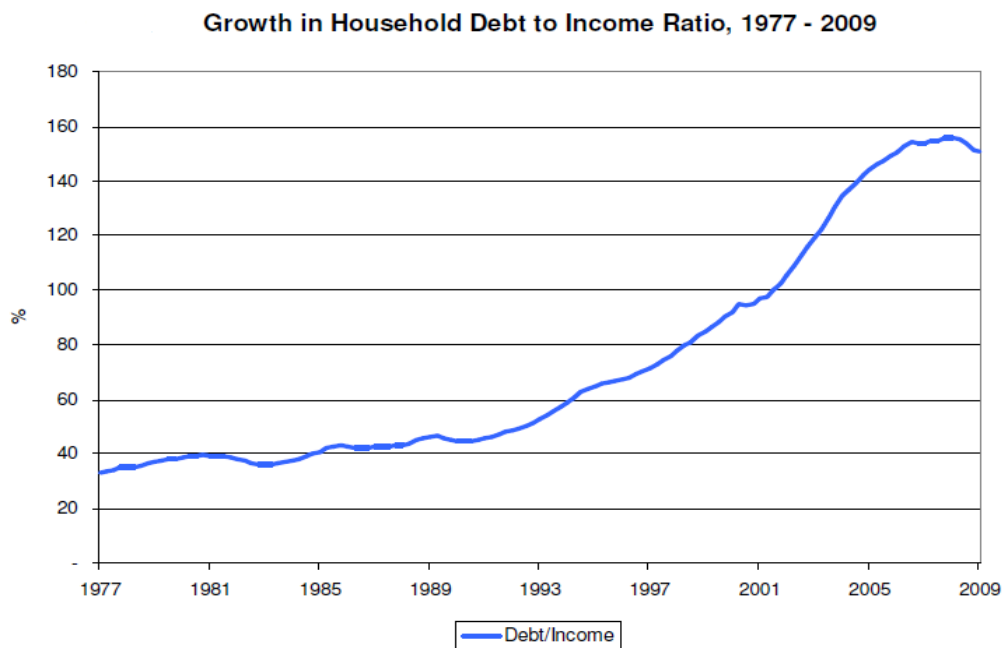
(Rafferty & Yu, 2010)

Figure 4. Growth of household debt in Australia, 1977-2009

This process has also been characterised by government transferring risk to households, by way of depoliticising social welfare through privatisation, such as health care, likening the household to a business minus limited liability (Rafferty & Yu, 2010). The growth of fixed costs results in an increase in labour, where households are in a position of requiring an increase in labour output to cover the increase of fixed cost of living (such as education, childcare), but also the costs of fees and repayments (Rafferty & Yu, 2010). Another aspect to financialisation is the relationship between workers, with solutions to social and economic changes embedded in individualism. Products, services, and utilities must be purchased to accommodate for the costs of living, such as superannuation, and insurance, all tailored to the individual's needs, and thus creating a culture of the individual's worthiness based on their personal risk assessment, rather than shared commonalities between workers (Rafferty & Yu, 2010).

Neoliberalism in regional development. Over the decades neoliberal policies have become inherent in regional development, with Federal Government utilising 'new regionalism' as an approach to encourage regional self-reliance and self-help through devolution of power, while mediating partnerships with global business (Beer, Clower, Haughtow, & Maude, 2005; Everingham, Cheshire & Lawrence, 2006; Pick, Dayaram, & Butler, 2008). Everingham et al. (2006) purport there are three variegated forms of regional development in Australia, beginning with Old-style regionalism (post war - 1970s), developed with a dependence on interventionist government style with policies which pushed for population growth and productivity to boost national economic growth, through fiscal and infrastructure incentives (Everingham et al, 2006). These policies were carved out of the Federal Government's neoliberal approach to increase the economic responsibilities of rural governance at a local government level (Everingham et al, 2006).

Following on in the next decade was New Localism, characterised by a bottom-up, 'empowered' self-help approach, where regional communities were trusted with their own economic actualisation (Everingham, et al 2006). The dominance of neoliberalism in governance emphasised economic policy rather than social policy. This approach conceptualises problems as economic-based, and thus seeks economic-driven solutions, accompanied with input from businesses (Beer et al, 2005). The combination of neoliberal policies by Federal and State Governments, along with an expanding global economy,

consequently resulted in downsizing of businesses, service and amenity withdrawals, population decline and environmental issues in regional Australia, however was championed as community development and capacity building (Everingham et al, 2006).

The final phase of regional development in Australia has been multifaceted regionalism (2000 onwards), depicted as a network of interdependence and collaboration of economic and social clusters in regions. A resolve to foster better coordination and cooperation between government tiers is also stressed, due to previous examples of incongruity of allocation of resources, moderating a more proactive and interconnected government response from all tiers in form of equal participation in regional development, while simultaneously promoting community autonomy (Everingham et al, 2006). This approach takes into consideration sustainability and long-term development of all capital in society, rather than just limited to economic capital (Everingham et al, 2006). The totality of government, regional bodies, collaborations with stakeholders, and networks compose synergistic interactions which solidify a legacy of interconnectedness, promoting sustainability and community empowerment:

> A partnership approach of weaving sectoral issues and interests together within the holistic framework of a bioregion [that] serves to align, integrate and coordinate the programmes and services associated with those sectors. I like to think of this strategic capacity-building approach as `bottom-up, top-down and sideways-in'. (Brunckhorst, 2000, p. 61, as cited by Everingham et al, 2006, p. 149)

This encourages communication between government and community, and deliberative governance, and the utilisation of knowledge capital in decision making processes (Everingham et al, 2006).

With neoliberal governance comes a reworking of power, from sovereign states to the shared allocation of resources, and responsibilities with global bodies and disseminated down to regional bodies (vertical power), and shared power with businesses (horizontal power) (Beer et al, 2005; Jessop, 1997). This in turn allows the State to 'steer' policies, rather than directly implement them (Beer et al, 2005). However government attempts to implement policies embracing neoliberal values have resulted in further government intervention to assist regional economies to adapt to economic reforms, by methods such

as developing export resources for greater participation in the global economy (Beer et al 2005). This was made possible by collaborations and partnerships.

The Mid West has proficiently adapted to collaborations with international mining companies, such as the Geraldton Iron Ore Alliance (GIOA). This voluntary organisation of five iron ore mining companies in the Mid West region held the ethos of promoting sustainability in collaboration with industry, community, and government to create a legacy. This organisation was active in community partnerships, including sponsoring resource forums, art and agricultural and farming expos, Aboriginal youth programmes, community planning initiatives, and creating opportunities for local Aboriginal businesses (GIOA, 2009). The organisation also collaborated with Local Government to provide "community chest funds", by assisting with amenity and service delivery funding, such as the Gindalbie Agreement with the shires of Perenjori, Morawa, Three Springs, and Mingenew (GIOA, 2009). Increasing Aboriginal employment in the region was also a key goal identified by the organisation, with a focus on empowering Aboriginals and businesses in supporting Aboriginal engagement in the workforce. Ultimately, the successful collaborations of GIOA were underpinned by shared principles and values of knowledge sharing of sustainable mining, ethical business practice, respect for culture, building economic and social legacy, and transparent engagement (GIOA, 2009). Other partnerships in the Mid West region include the Morawa Education, Industry and Training Alliance (MEITA), a collaboration between the Morawa Shire Council, Morawa District High School, Durack Institute of Technology, Karara Mining, and the WA College of Agriculture. The Leaving a Legacy (2010) workshop coordinated by the Mid West Hinterland Sustainable Communities Working Group comprised of members of parliament, the Mid West Development Commission, and local governments, with the aim to deliver social outcomes for hinterland communities during the iron ore boom through a collaboration of stakeholders including State and Local Governments, universities, and industry.

Financialisation has had a notable impact on the economic restructuring of international mining companies and state agreements, which has also had consequences for regional economies, possibly damaging partnerships between regional communities and enterprises (Beer, 2012). The absence of government funding to support the construction of new town development and the high costs incurred by mining companies to construct a mining town has led to the increase use of FIFO work practices. These practices have negative consequences for regional communities, which contribute to an increase in drug

and alcohol abuse, family breakdowns, decrease in community participation, population decline of regional communities, and regional communities missing out on fiscal benefits from mining (Storey, 2001). A parliamentary inquiry into the impact of FIFO practice on mental health emphasised FIFO workers represented the demographic which was most at risk of suicide; male aged 18-44 (Jacobs, 2015). FIFO is a work practice that affects up to 60,000 families in WA, and is very much a feature of the State's mining work culture. Media and union claims of nine suicides in 2014 occurring in FIFO accommodation were difficult for the inquiry to investigate due to the ambiguity of regulatory requirement in reporting non-work-related suicide on off-shifts despite being in accommodation facilities (Jacobs, 2015). The WA Police were also unable to provide the inquiry with reported suicide deaths. However figures obtained by the State Coroner indicated 24 reported cases of suicide from 2008 to 2014, with the highest rate of nine in 2011-12. However due to questioning the accuracy of details it is expected suicide reports are underreported (Jacobs, 2015).

While the inquiry did not identify a causal link between FIFO work and suicide, it did illuminate community concerns of isolation, mental health and workplace culture in FIFO work sites, and the disconnection with family and community (O'Conner, 2015a). However despite the findings, the State Government earlier this month extended the lease on a 1960 State Agreement with BHP Billiton, granting the company the ongoing right to maintain a 1600 bed work camp near the town of Newman (O'Conner, 2015b). The Premier stated "…they are entitled to a lease extension under the state agreement and indeed the state has a statutory obligation to sign that lease extension, so it will be signed" (O'Conner, 2015b, para. 8), however this action has caused a division between political parties, debating the action as undermining regional development and communities.

State development agreements (SDA) are legal contracts between the State and enterprises with projects within the state boundary ratified by parliament, with these agreements as a gesture of state commitment to the project (DSD, 2015). Past examples have shown these commitments to overlook regional development, such as the example drawn from the State Development Agreement Oakajee Port and Rail Project (SDA), a state agreement between the WA State Government and Oakajee Port and Rail investors Murchison Metals, Crosslands Resources, and Mitsubishi Development in the Mid West. It was brought to the attention of members of the Legislative Assembly in November 2010 that this particular SDA guaranteed manufacturing work of OPR to be undertaken in China (Parliament of Western Australia, 2010a). The Premier requested confidentiality of the SDA

from parliamentary and public scrutiny as it was considered commercially sensitive due to ongoing negotiation with national and international businesses and State and Commonwealth Governments, however the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations (2010) motioned against the request, asserting aspects of the SDA were in public domain by ways of media releases. Premier Barnett tabled an email in the Legislative Assembly in November 2010 which outlined that the construction and labour for the OPR project was to be completed by Chinese State and private enterprises. This meant the possibility of the entire infrastructure built and brought over from China, bar the concrete foundations, and bypassing any opportunity for regional and national development (Parliament of Western Australia, 2010b).

State agreements are questionably balanced by the Royalties for Regions (RfR) initiative, the State Government's commitment to investing mining and petroleum royalties into regional development. Since its inception in 2008, $6.1 billion has been invested in 3,600 projects state-wide, with a focus on strategic collaboration with regional communities (DRD, 2014b). The focus of this initiative is to facilitate economic and community regional development as an alternative to urban living, with various schemes under the rubric of RfR include the Regional Grants Scheme (investing $981,110 in the Mid West such as upgrading crisis accommodation for women), and the SuperTowns scheme, which aimed to enhance growth of towns identified as pertinent to the state's economic growth. The Shire of Morawa was the only Mid West town to be included in the scheme, which was experiencing a transition from agricultural farming as the dominant industry, to mining. The scheme was aimed at fostering, economic, social, and environmental growth of the region, utilising the rhetoric of what the community of Morawa can do "to serve the region" (DRD, n.d., p. xii; DRD, 2014b).

A brief insight into the interaction between global mining companies and communities reveals that neoliberalism weakens democratic institutions (by way of local government lacking the resources to meet local community needs, a lack of trust in government ability to delivery regional development, and discordant relationships between government levels), induces social breakdown (deterioration of social infrastructure attributed to the FIFO employment arrangements in absence of relocation to community), and fails to meet social needs (basic needs such as health, education, and housing unmet) (Pick, Dayaram, & Butler, 2008). The collaborative approaches forged by global mining companies and regional communities creates a partnership of consistency, reciprocity and

trust in the sense of a psychological contract, thus establishing a non-contractual, social licence to operate (Browne, Stehlik, & Buckley, 2011). However these promises can be broken without warning, and as in the example of the Ravensthorpe Nickel Operation closure due to the drop in nickel prices during the GFC, resulting in job loss and economic downturn in local communities, and highlighting mistrust and inequity in the dynamics between global businesses and regional communities (Browne et al., 2011).

Neoliberalism and the presence of global mining companies affect not just social and economic aspects of community and regional development, but also environmental too. The demand from managing land for various uses potentially involves conflict (Mallawaarachchi, Morrison, & Blamey, 2006). Foreign stakeholders competing for land can bring a sense of powerlessness to the local community, where instances of proposed mining sites have competed with local communities who propose alternative land use (Le Heron and Roche, 1985). In some traditionally agricultural communities, mining is viewed as a short-term venture, which can strip the land of its previous richness. Concerns for the change in land use extend to health matters, such as the cleanness of drinking water, and fumes affecting the local community. An example of this is occurred between Karara Mining and the local residents of Mingenew, where it was claimed the mining company was applying to the Department of Water for 80% of the region's water supply. Farmers feared the large request would be detrimental to their livelihood and health. While farmers suggested the mining company build its own desalination plant, the company was positive it would be granted the water licence from the department, which operates under a first in first service basis ("farmers face" 2010).

Labour Migration

The definition of a migrant worker can be taken from the United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990):

The term "migrant worker" refers to a person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national. (Article 2(1))

Labour migration contributes to the social and economic development of sending and receiving countries. The benefits migrant workers bring to receiving countries include

engaging in low-skilled jobs which locals refuse. These positions can include agriculture, cleaning, food processing, and manufacturing. Highly-skilled migrant workers with higher qualifications contribute skills and knowledge absent in receiving countries, and supplying a source of labour due to increases in ageing populations. Migrant workers contribute to the economy via living costs and taxes, and also to the social fabric of community (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2015). The benefits of labour migration to sending countries include migrant workers cultivating knowledge and social capital gained from employment in another country, bringing these skills upon their return. However labour migration can cause a 'brain drain' of labour and skills in sending countries. Remittances sent to families, with an estimation of $436 billion in remittances sent to developing countries in 2014 (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2015).

Migrant worker exploitation. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) posits there are 232 million international migrants worldwide, with 90% migrating for employment, and 21 million trafficked into forced labour (ILO, 2015). Gulf countries such as Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, and Oman attract the largest number of migrant workers globally, with migrant workers constituting 94% of Qatar's workforce, and 8.5% of UAE's population (Human Rights Watch, 2014; Siebel, 2014). Other countries to attract large numbers of migrant workers include Malaysia, with over one million Indonesian workers, and Singapore, with around 400,000 Malaysian workers. Thailand receives up to three million migrant workers from Burma and Cambodia (Siebel, 2014).

Migrant workers are subject to an array of exploitative practices, including not receiving remittances, working in dangerous conditions, substandard living conditions, and movement restriction to and from countries. Some of these examples are derived from the experiences of migrant workers employed for stadium construction in Qatar for the FIFA World Cup in 2022. This specific example highlights the disempowerment experienced by Nepalese and South East Asian migrant workers, who are threatened with fines and deportation for tardiness in the workplace, despite not receiving wages. These migrant workers live in conditions with sewerage overflow, and passports are confiscated. In 2012, over 1,000 migrant workers were admitted to the trauma unit in hospital due to occupational hazards on construction of stadiums ("Qatar: End", 2013).

A 2014 report investigating the experiences of migrant domestic workers in the UAE revealed the employer sponsorship system, *kafala*, binds migrant workers to one employer and position, and restricts the ability to leave. The disempowerment of migrant workers inherent in the kafala system and UAE laws which exclude migrant workers from protection under labour laws, creates an environment of exploitation. In the Human Rights Watch report, migrant workers reported physical and sexual abuse, rape, broken bones, name calling, long working hours (up to 21 hours a day), failure to pay remittances on time and in full, passport confiscation, restriction from interacting with the local community, imprisoned in homes, deplorable living conditions, and lack of access to medical assistance (Human Rights Watch, 2014). The legislative support for migrant workers in these oppressive situations is absent. There are no shelters for migrant workers who flee these circumstances, and it is a criminal offence to assist migrant workers without visas. Migrant workers who flee are perceived to have committed an offence, and face deportation if prosecuted. Recruitment agencies also have a role in oppressing domestic migrant workers, either returning them back to the employer committing the abuse, beating them, or forcing them to reimburse the recruitment fees. The report highlighted these Gulf countries to have a long-standing history of exploiting migrant workers, as portrayed in migrant worker accounts below:

> He [the sponsor] slapped me and banged my head on the wall, then spit on me. He beat me with a cable on my back and put a knife to my face. After beating me up he left. [Later] Some of the family asked, "Why you have bruises?" I was afraid if I tell I will get beaten up again. (Human Rights Watch, 2014, para. 6)

> Madam keep shouting – always like that. She would say I "don't have brain," "don't have common sense," "donkey" in Arabic. In Abu Dhabi mall, I was crying in the restaurant because she shouted at me saying, "You have no brain," in front of other people. It really hurt. (Human Rights Watch, 2014, para. 21)

In the absence of access to recourse in these countries, incidences have emerged of migrant workers retaliating and seeking their own retributive justice. An example of an Indonesian domestic migrant worker reportedly abuse at the hands of her employer in Saudi Arabia. The migrant worker reacted with a blow to the employer, who fell into a coma and later died. The migrant worker was due to be executed, however 'blood money' raised by supporters and the Indonesian Government compensated the victim's family

($1.8 million) and prevented the execution ("Blood money", 2014). Another example again from Saudi Arabia earlier this year saw the beheading of an Indonesian domestic migrant worker, who was also abused and murdered her employer in self-defence, and was suspected to be suffering from a mental illness ("Indonesia protests", 2015).

With the large number of migrant workers employed in Gulf countries and reporting severe exploitation, Kronfol, Saleh, and Al-Ghafry (2014) conducted a literature review in Arabic and English of mental health issues in this migrant worker diaspora. Their findings revealed the literature to be scant, and an absence of research on the psychological wellbeing of domestic migrant workers. Suicide featured amongst the literature reviewed, with aspects of the migrant worker life, including physical problems from working in the construction industry, earning a certain amount and working long hours, contributed to depression, thoughts of suicide and attempts (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). Male migrant workers in Bahrain were six times more likely to commit suicide than females, with financial issues the most cited reason, followed by domestic issues, negative news from their home country, and relationship complications (Al Ansari, Hamadeh, Ali, & El Offi, 2007). The authors also revealed the number of suicides in the female cohort from countries such as the Philippines, Ethiopia, and Sri Lanka, were higher than the male cohort, attributing this to the predominance of employment in domestic work. However these figures could not be confirmed due to the criminalising of suicide in Bahrain and the dishonour brought to the family that is associated with reporting it.

Literature indicates a range of factors are germane to the varying degree of exploitative incidences experienced by migrant workers, applying a human rights values-based approach. Micro level analysis of the individual is emphasised, and psychological disempowerment strongly features in this approach. Intrapersonal issues emerging capture the sense of shame migrant workers feel returning home due to employers not paying remittances (Olsen, 2015). Severe psychological distress is also a feature, coupled with contemplation of suicide (Human Rights Watch, 2014; "Qatar: End", 2013). Language is a barrier in the workplace, which limits the ability to socialise with others outside of the language group and induced feelings of inadequacy and frustration (Weishaar, 2008). Work-related stress is the cause of psychosomatic issues in migrant workers, citing anxiety, apathy, sleep problems, and headaches (Weishaar, 2008). Interpersonal issues also emerge, with migrant workers reporting difficulties in establishing genuine friendships with other migrant workers from the same country, citing a focus on money as a theme which

dominated these support groups. These communities were characterised by a lack of cooperation, competition, co-ethnic exploitation, and envy (Joseph, 2011; Weishaar, 2008; Velayutham, 2013).

The asymmetric power balance between employer and migrant worker is a dominating source of tension, where migrant workers are underpaid, work 80 hour weeks, seven days a week, overqualified, working in substandard conditions, absence of contracts, treated differently to nationals, given warnings after taking sick leave, and dismissal over trivial incidences. The stress that accompanies a migrant worker lifestyle, working conditions, psychological disempowerment, and loneliness can lead to adoption of coping behaviours such as increase alcohol consumption, emotional eating, and risky behaviour (Grzywacz, Quandt, Isom, & Arcury, 2007; Rhodes et al., 2009; Weishaar, 2008; Worby et al., 2014). Overall employer exploitation, language barriers, absence from loved ones, discrimination, and financial instability were factors impacting the mental wellbeing of migrant workers (Cislo, Spence, & Gayman, 2010; Ismayilova et al., 2014; Joseph, 2011; Potter & Hamilton, 2014; Weishaar, 2008; Wong, He, Leung, Lau, &Chang, 2008; Yip et al., 2007).

Migrant workers immigrate to accumulate wealth to create a better life for themselves, and often are supporting a family in their home country. This alters family structure and upbringing of children, with other family members taking on the task (Hoang, Lam, Yeoh, & Graham, 2015; Hugo 2002). The absence of fathers as migrant workers requires mothers and children to pick up the tasks traditionally completed by fathers (Hoang et al, 2015). Children from these family arrangements are more susceptible to impacts on psychological wellbeing, such as sense of emotional distancing from parents (Dreby, 2007; Graham, & Jordan, 2011). The effects of mother migration sees the father receiving assistance from female family and friends who provide emotional support for the family in the mother's absence, as well as greater involvement in daughters supplementing the mother's role (Gamburd 2000). Nonetheless, fathers do adopt a caregiver role in the absence of the mother (Gamburd 2000; Hoang & Yeoh 2012). The absence of mothers also challenges the fathers' sense of masculinity, as was found in Sri Lankan men who did not admit to household duties which in fact they did (Gamburd, 2000; Hoang et al, 2015). However fathers who struggled with the restructuring of the family were more likely to take up alcohol and drugs as a coping mechanism (Hewage, Kumara, & Rigg, 2011).

Grandparents also play a vital role to supporting the family in absence of a parent (Hoang et al., 2015).

Migrant workers struggle with acculturation and confusion over lack of information on how to conduct everyday routines such as finding a post office (Weishaar, 2008). However evidence emerging from other countries emphasise government agencies providing resources for migrants on how to utilise services, housing, education, and transportation in several languages, such as in Germany, Canada, and the US (Chung, Choi, Park, & Litman, 2014). Research into the presence of social exclusion of migrant workers has led to governments introducing policies in the transportation sector to foster greater inclusion, in countries such as Norway and the US (Chung et. al, 2014).

Migrant Workers in the Australian Context

Contextualising exploitation of migrant workers in a historical Australian setting draws focus to a racist ideology reflected in legislation, which underpinned the oppressive treatment of migrant workers over the course of European settlement. Settlement of the Mid West region and the colonies was characterised by an increase in convict deportation and indentured labour to encourage population growth in the region, as well as stimulate economic growth through the servicing of mines (Bain, 1996; Fitch, 2003). From 1850 onwards, ticket-of-leaves were issued to convicts as a form of parole, allowing them to seek employment in the colony. Conditions imposed on the ticketed convicts did not allow convicts to leave the settlement without permission, who were required to repay their passage to Australia, were free to bargain their wages, could not return to their home country until the sentence was served, and required permission to marry (Bain, 1996).

The *Imported Labour Registry Act 1874* was introduced into the colonies, which legalised the employment of Chinese migrant workers or "coolies", who were able to leave the colony once their contract of three years expired. This act was opposed by the eastern colonies, and by 1886 it was amended to impose a tax to limit Chinese migration to gold fields in the Kimberley region north of the state and other goldfields across the country, unless employed under a European in which the passage was unrestricted. These exclusionary practices also included exclusion from mining, and refunding of the entrance tax if they left the country within three years. These stipulations were all based on working class opposition to the competiveness in the labour market from Chinese presence (ABS, 2012).

From 1863 until 1904, Pacific Islanders were also brought to Australia to work as indentured labourers on sugar cane paddocks, with employers covering the costs of passage, food, and accommodation. Wages were negotiated, however Pacific Islanders, or "kanakas", were paid significantly less than Europeans and were a source of cheap labour (Megarrity, 2006). Pacific Island labour was perceived to be necessary to fill in jobs that Europeans perceived as degrading. Furthermore, science was used to reinforce the suitability of Pacific Islanders to the tropical climate of north Queensland. Megarrity (2006) highlights the convenience of this perspective, in light of Chinese migrant workers banned from the goldfields, which can harbour hot, arid climates. The recruitment of Pacific Islanders involved 'blackbirding', the coercion, kidnapping and forced labour, akin to slavery. By 1904, the Pacific Island Labourers Act prohibited Pacific Islanders from entering the country, eventually leading to mass deportation (DIBP, 2015g).

Following Federation in 1901, the newly formed Australian Government passed the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901*, with the intent on curbing Chinese and other non-European nationals from settling in Australia. The acceptance into Australia was verified by a dictation test, which required the individual to write 50 words in any European language at the discretion of the immigration officer (DIBP, 2015g). Legislations which excluded migrants from Australia, competition with Chinese immigration in the goldfields, and Pacific Islanders exploited for cheap labour undermining the labour market, formed the foundations of the White Australia Policy. This was a political and social ideology reinforced by legislation to preserve the 'purity' of an Anglo nation at the exclusion of migrants from non-English speaking countries. These policies and legislations reflect the oppressive practices against migrant workers and immigrants in the early years of European settlement, positing a hegemonic ideology steeped in racism. By the 1970s the White Australia Policy was dismantled, and immigration policies shifted from post-war, assisted family migration schemes towards skilled migration in the late 1990s (DIBP, 2015g).

The Australian literature on labour migration is captured in a multiplicity of disciplines, with the mining boom as a major impetus for investigation on the subject. This includes a human resource management issues which focus on human capital, such as the changing nature of work with the presence of global mobility (Bahn & Cameron, 2013; Barrett, Bahn, Susomrith, & Prasad, 2014; Cameron & Harrison, 2013; Connell & Burgess, 2009). The impact of temporary labour migration on the local labour market is explored, including regional contexts, the need for migrant workers in certain sectors, and the

motivating factors for sponsorship (Cobb-Clark, 2000; Hugo, 2006; Khoo, McDonald, Voigt-Graf, & Hugo, 2007; Massey & Parr, 2012). The health sector explores the recruitment of migrant worker nurses, identifying the difficulties experienced in English language testing, and the loneliness nurses experienced as a result of language barriers and removal from support networks. Also explored are difficulties of acculturation in the workplace and community, in particularly with interacting with Aboriginal communities in rural settings, retention issues, and the confusion and difficulty with migrant worker doctors registering and negotiating around the Australian system (Hawthorne, 2015; Wellard & Stockhausen, 2010).

The opportunities for secondary visa holders are explored, identifying 'blind spots' in education and training policies in the feminising of skilled migration (Webb, 2015). Other forms of labour migration have been examined in the Australian context, included the labour provided by student visas and working holiday visas and the complexity inherent in the temporal dimensions of these visas and the nexus of consumer rights and human rights in international students (Robertson, 2011; 2014). Working holiday visas are examined through investigations of experiences and suggested reforms to ensure the rights of visa holders are protected (Clarke, 2005; Reilly, 2015).

The vulnerability of migrant workers is explored in the context of transnational politics and the impacts this has on trade unions and non-government organisations. Literature examines the reworking of rights, equality and solidarity in networks bridging national and global bodies (Oke, 2012). Investigating the precarious nature of work for 457 visa holders involves addressing lack of access to redress, the difficulties accessing occupational health and safety rights, and the ethics of seasonal labour migration (Boese, Campbell, Roberts, & Tham, 2013; Reilly, 2011, 2015; Toh & Quinlan, 2009; Velayutham, 2013). Articles highlight a lack of qualitative research on migrant worker experiences, and the difficulties associated with obtaining quantitative information, especially in circumstances of migrant workers living in employer provided accommodation. These methods could potentially fail to capture the themes pertinent to migrant worker wellbeing (Velayutham, 2013). The dominant focus on human capital and economic perspectives fails to capture the social construction of migrant workers in Australia (Ho, 2006; Ho & Alcorso, 2004).

A brief overview on Australian literature examining migrant workers captures the progression of the topic from exploring human capital and impacts on labour markets (late 2000s), to investigating the precarious nature of migrant labour at present. This increase in awareness has emerged in the last five years, along with the increase interest in framing labour migration in the context of the mining boom. Despite the awareness of the vulnerability of labour migration, the literature is exceedingly limited, with unions as the primary source of information, and the media continuing to be the main vehicle to deliver occurrences.

The issue with this arrangement, as with all organisations, is that trade unions have an agenda, which is to ensure Australians are employed in Australian jobs. Anecdotal evidence suggests unions initially did not advocate for the rights of migrant workers, and instead perceived this community as a threat to job security. Over time, this stance shifted to encompass the rights of migrant workers (although not a unified position), with evidence of the impacts of global forces on trade union organisations in the community (Oke, 2012; Ford, 2006). However does union presence in the media have an influence on membership numbers and leveraging political power? Trade unions rely on funding from memberships to function as a representative for workers' rights (that is, the rights of their members). Are the reported exploited migrant workers assisted by unions once they pay membership fees, or is the reporting purely incidental in the context of Australians being fired before 457 visa holders? Does the presence of trade unions in the workplace encourage migrant workers to seek assistance with their predicament, or does it encourage Australian workers to ostracise migrant workers due to perceived job threat? These questions are not set to criticise union success in supporting the rights and wellbeing of migrant workers. On the contrary, the constant reporting of exploitative cases has resulted in government inquiries and altering of legislations.

There are many other nuances to be explored; why has a group, which has been the central focus in societal discourse and a source of great controversy for a decade, had little investigation into these contentious issues? Why has academia been slow to gain traction on the exploitation of migrant workers? Is the increased interest in exploring the domain of labour migration due to historical influences, the mining boom, neoliberal policies and globalisation, or an alternative influence not yet made conscious? Why do employers continue to exploit despite the Federal Government introducing civil and criminal penalties for employers utilising illegal foreign labour or abusing visa stipulations?

Again media reports claimed in 2011 over 100 employers were sanctioned however none faced civil penalties, and that government had halved the quota of monitoring employer sponsors of the 457 visa (Wallace, 2011b).

Instead, qualitative, exploratory investigations of exploitation claims in a research setting within the parameters of strict ethical and rigorous considerations, and that which is not a stakeholder directly invested in labour migration, enhances the veracity of the emerging narrative of precarious employment for the migrant worker. These questions presented above merely seek to illuminate the potential for further investigation into these forces which dominate the Australian discourse in society, explicating how power is framed within the dynamics between migrant workers, employers and stakeholders involved. Community psychology can contribute to this discourse, employing tools such as a sense of community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986), analytical ecological frameworks, psychological empowerment (Zimmerman, 1995), and capturing the manifestations of power through exploring oppression, liberation, and wellbeing in this transient community co-existing within hegemonic communities (Prilleltensky, 2008).

Furthermore, understanding the underpinnings of the political economic setting as prescribed by globalisation captures the embodiment of financialisation and neoliberalism within the asymmetric power relations between employer and migrant worker (exposing migrant workers to vulnerabilities), and in a wider scope, the dynamics between multinational enterprises passing on risk to the individual household. In this particular setting, the influences of neoliberal policies on regional development encapsulate increased autonomy of community from the tiers of government. This however has had adverse effects on regional communities, who lack the tools and finances to achieve empowerment in the competitive global market. Encouragement from government to become more sustainable and competitive is achieved through securing collaborations with mining companies and regional communities, providing a forum for interdependent synergies to flourish and meet the needs of all involved. Geraldton is a perfect example of a community which has realised the synergy and realising its own strengths and weaknesses, has effectively collaborated with international mining companies to deliver packages and programmes pertinent to their wellbeing as a community.

Chapter Three – Methodology

This chapter provides an in depth review of the conceptual frameworks underpinning this exploratory research. Social constructionism provides the epistemological grounding, focusing on the plurality of realities in the construct of the dominant ideology. In the context of this study the dominant ideology is fragmented into competing hegemonic ideas that question the necessity of migrant workers to solving the skill shortage. Community psychology provides the conceptual foundations. An awareness of the expressions of power and empowerment is pertinent to supporting a critical analysis of the asymmetric power embedded in employer and migrant worker relationships, and to a further extent, the global influences on regional communities. This examination of power is supported by the analytical ecological framework of Causal Layered Analysis (CLA), which unpacks the layers in a multilevel analysis to expose the roots of the phenomenon, illuminating themes which were previously hidden. Community psychology and CLA complement each other as community psychology has a contextualist grounding which captures agency and context, while CLA provides a contextualist layered structure for analysis. Derived from futures studies, the aim of CLA is to critically analyse the issue at hand to determine an alternative future, through utilising a number of post-structuralist tools. CLA supplements community psychology with the dimension of time, reminding us that the current reality is not guaranteed an existence in the future. These three conceptual frameworks synchronise to provide an overall analysis of power.

This chapter also encapsulates the research design. Semi-structured interviews were initially employed as the method for data collection. However difficulties encountered with data collection reflected the precarious nature of labour migration, where some participants speculated the purpose of the research and the imposition of the recording device. This questions the level of trust embedded in the researcher/participant relationship. Interviews were also difficult to obtain with employers due to time constraints, which subsequently informed a widening of the scope of methods to utilise online surveys.

Social Constructionism

The lens of social constructionism have been appropriated as the theoretical approach to the epistemology due to the nature of the study. Social constructionism is concerned with the creation, understanding and meaning given to reality through social interactions. The concept of language features as a tool to understanding how the socialisation of knowledge has come to be in the present context. As an epistemology, social constructionism asserts that knowledge is constructed within cultural and historical contexts, with language constituting, rather than reflecting, reality (Durrheim, 1997; Stead, 2004). The theory focuses on the plurality of realities; how these are constructed, sustained, and how groups are affected in regards to power relations (Jones, 2002; Cohen, Duberley, & Mallon, 2004). It critiques dominant ideologies (including itself) in any given field by exploring the values embedded in the taken-for-granted reality, and thus reflects the values of the ideologies which are silenced (Gergen, 1999). The following paragraphs explore the origin and key tenets of social constructionism, reinforcing the choice as the preferred theory for the epistemology.

The sociology of scientific knowledge. Berger and Luckmann (1966) acknowledge the existence of different spheres of reality, such as dream-like state, and consciousness. However, the reality which dominates our everyday lives is considered to be normal and self-evident, thus what is called 'natural'. In this natural state, everything appears ordered, objectified, with language allocating meaning to everything. We share this natural state of being with the reality of others, through interaction. There is an ongoing correspondence between the two constructions of realities, but there is a common sense of this shared reality. This shared sense of reality is reinforced through routine. Everyday life is taken for granted without verification for authenticity of truth.

The sociology of knowledge is "concerned with the relationship between human thought and the social context within which it arises" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 16). While magnifying the social aspects of a problem, the sociology of knowledge explores other factors including historical, psychological, and biological. They are concerned with identifying if thoughts are reflected or are independent of these factors.

According to Berger and Luckmann (1966), society exists as both subjective and objective reality. Individuals are not born a member of society; rather they are born with a

predisposition towards sociality, which leads to becoming a member. Becoming a member involves the individual internalising an objective event through expressing meaning. This event is a subjective expression of another individual in which the interaction occurs with, and thus becomes subjectively meaningful to the individual. Through this process, an individual understands another individual's reality, which becomes part of their reality. There is a shared connectedness occurring. This ongoing process constitutes a person as a member of society. Through this interweaving of objective and subjective realities, knowledge is created, shared, and sustained (Young & Collin, 2004). Social actions carry little intrinsic value but rather appear to be products of social negotiation (Gergen, 1978). Burr (1995) writes the ideal way to understand how meaning is attributed to everyday life is through how people interact: "things, objects, and persons do not have any intrinsic meaning: they are brought into human society through the frameworks of knowledge in current use" (Billington, Hockey, & Strawbridge, 1998, p. 223) (See also Stead, 2004; Milton, 1996). The sociology of knowledge can differ in the context of culture:

> Relationships construct cultures and recursively cultures construct relationships. Meanings differ across cultures and contexts and no word or thought is an expression of a reality that reflects nature, but they are considered to be socially and culturally constructed (Stead, 2004, p. 391).

Origins. Social constructionism has its roots embedded in a multiplicity of disciplines. It draws from post-structuralism and hermeneutics (Stead, 2004), sociology, literary studies, and post-modernism (Young & Collin, 2004), and is situated in an anti-essentialist and anti-realist ontology (Burr, 1995).

Berger and Luckmann (1966) cite three intellectual domains as precursors to social constructionism; Marxism, Nietzschean, and historicism. Marx influences the sociology of knowledge, stating the individual's consciousness is determined by social being (Woolfolk, 1992). This is characterised by a focus on labour, social standing, interactions, and examining how these elements influence human thought. Nietzsche's concept of *ressentiment* and anti-idealism were adopted and revised by Scheler, to become a generative factor to human thought. Nietzsche positioned *ressentiment* within the social context of master/aristocratic and slave/common classes; characterised by a social-Darwinist perspective, and with roots in Judeo-Christian doctrines which reinforce the emotion (Meltzer & Musolf, 2002). Scheler reworked the concept to have its roots in social

stratification, but with cognitive factors and agency as implicit key elements (Meltzer & Musolf, 2002). The third predecessor to social constructionism is historicism, in particularly the works of Dilthey (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Dilthey advocated the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften)* to be posited with consideration given to their historical undercurrents (Makkreel, 2008). Pertinent to this focus, Dilthey's attention to hermeneutics asserted individual self-understanding is possible not through introspection, but rather from the social interactions with others (Makkreel, 2008).

An influential figure to contribute to the sociology of knowledge was Karl Mannheim (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Mannheim was influenced by the works of Dilthey (Berger and Luckmann, 1966), and Marx and Engels (Goldman, 2001), in particular, Marx's theory of ideology. This theory of ideology is centred on the social construction of a purported reality rooted in class structure (Goldman, 2001). Mannheim extended Marx's theory of ideology, asserting the ideology to be a concept ingrained not only in the oppressed, but also the oppressor. This realises that no ideology is immune from the social and historical contexts, thus making it less political and more 'socially' epistemological (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Goldman, 2001). It was Mannheim who pioneered the term 'relationism' regarding the epistemology perspective for the sociology of knowledge (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Gergen (1999) cites Mannheim's work on ideology and utopia as 'ground-breaking' for social constructionism.

Gergen's key tenets of social constructionism. Gergen (1999) presents a reworking of social constructionism in four major points. They are:

1) *The terms by which we understand our world and our self are neither required nor demanded by "what there is"* – this is concerned with acknowledging various explanations for one particular situation or event, all equal in their own right. This assumption applies to spoken and written words, and other forms of representation such as photographs and maps.

2) *Our modes of description, explanation, and/or representation are derived from relationship-* this highlights the importance of relationships, with the existence of relationships marking the creation of reality, knowledge, and language, outside of the individual mind.

3) *As we describe, explain or otherwise represent, so do we fashion our future*-
    language sits within the domain of relationships, and relationships sit within the
    domain of culture (Gergen, 1999). The past guarantees nothing for the present or
    future. However these traditions can be sustained through generating rationality,
    which Gergen (1999) calls generative discourse -- a continual explanation,
    representation, and adaptation of existing tradition; a re-construction of a tradition
    to maintain its relativity to the present, and continual existence into the future,
    through language and relationships.

4) *Reflection on our forms of understanding is vital to our future well-being*- this fourth
    point highlights the reflexivity involved in sustaining traditions and creating new
    traditions. It acknowledges the cultural and historical context that traditions come
    from, and suspending those beliefs to make way for new, alternative
    traditions/futures to be heard. Gergen (1999) critiques how society accepts values
    based on the 'good evidence' and 'good reasons' born out of traditions. These good
    values blind society from alternatives that exist outside the dominant accepted
    tradition. This point emphasises that reflexivity is essential in society's attempts to
    suspend these traditional accepted beliefs to discover alternative truths.

Language. Language features as a critical facet to social constructionism, underpinning
the capacity in which reality is conceptualised, communicated, sustained, and
reconstructed (Martin & Sugarman, 1999; Cohen et al, 2004). It constitutes the marriage
between individual thoughts to collective ideas identified and accepted as the dominant
ideology. Within this scope, literary techniques are engaged to unveil the values
entrenched in the dominant ideology of reality. Such a technique is Derrida's
deconstruction (Gergen, 1999; Barnett, 2009). The unquestioned values of the dominant
reality are exposed and analysed through binary opposition; exploring the process by which
meaning is assigned to concepts through juxtaposition. Derrida proposed that Western
culture is littered with binaries, with one concept privileged, while the contrary concept
obtains its meaning by virtue of its absence (Gergen, 1999).

Knowledge and power. Beginning in the late 17th century, the Enlightenment period is
hailed as a crucial point in the history of science, for severing knowledge from the supreme
rule of royalty and religion, giving individuals the right to knowledge (Gergen, 1999;
Bristow, 2010). In recent times, however, jargon from specific scientific fields has

permeated into society's everyday language. Jargon has two motivations: 1) to exclude outsiders; and 2) to increase the self-image of the field by mystifying and intimidating outsiders (Allan, 2006). Laypeople are not privileged in understanding the contextual significance behind the jargon, but accept it as scientific knowledge and therefore truth (Gergen, 1999). Gergen (1999) likens the accepted scientific truth and associated scientists to "a new breed of priests" (p. 51).

The Frankfurt School addressed these concerns regarding the balance of power and knowledge. Critical theorists at the institution, such as Max Horkheimer, Erich Fromm, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and Walter Benjamin, shifted the focus from the theoretical influences of Marxism to a dialectical framework of understanding how theory, society and culture are connected (Ryoo & McLaren, 2010). The school critiqued the objective observation, truth-seeking ways of logical positivism through employing critical theory; exposing an unconscious society unaware of the oppressive nature of these scientific methods (Ryoo & McLaren, 2010; Gundlach, 2001). In their book *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944)*,* Adorno and Horkheimer explain the liberation of knowledge in the Enlightenment period. However, while science has progressed, society has regressed into an irrational acceptance of subjugation; a blind domination of humans towards other humans and of nature, driven by an irrational fear of the unknown (Zuidervaart, 2003; Dubiel, 2001). Horkheimer attacked the negative social impacts of the positivist paradigm, arguing the individual is denied a broader prospective on alternative interpretations, and treated as an object to be acted on, therefore denying the status of a free agent. The acceptance of one universal reality implies this truth is the only truth in the present, which denies the possibility for changes to allow for an alternative future (Gergen, 1978; Berendzen, 2009).

Horkheimer (cited by Phillips, 2009, p. 385) summarised the key tenets for the Frankfurt school. These were:

> (1) the development of research which examined fundamental philosophical questions through sophisticated research methods; (2) a reconstruction of Marxism so as to enable it more fully to achieve its objectives; and (3) the production of social theory capable of explicating the mediation of economic, psychological, and cultural facets of social life.

Critical theory emerges from these points, as an inquiry into present social conditions, which to a degree are 'enslaving' society with an element of power imbalance. The theory critiques a particular issue by placing it in historical and social contexts, illuminating the oppressive ideologies underpinning the dominant accepted version of reality (Grams & Christ, 1992). Critical theory has an element of practicality; aiming to transform social structures through critically engaging, and an emancipation of social justice in some form (Bohman, 2001; Adams, Hollenberg, Lui, & Broom, 2009). While the Frankfurt school was criticised for not engaging enough with Marx's critique of political economy, it was Marx's theory of society which underpinned the epistemology of critical theory (Mason, 2010a). Guess (1981, pp. 1-3) highlights the features:

> A critical theory, then, is a reflective theory which gives agents a kind of knowledge inherently productive of enlightenment and emancipation. . . . The very heart of the critical theory of society is its criticism of ideology. Their ideology is what prevents agents in the society from correctly perceiving their true situation and real interests; if they are to free themselves from social repression, the agents must rid themselves of ideological delusion. (as cited by Mason, 2010a)

Another figure to explore the delicate balance of power inextricably tied in with knowledge was Foucault. Foucault writes that scientific truth is more concerned with "the ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true", rather than the acceptance of a discovered truth (Swazo, 2005, p. 575; citing Foucault, 1984). Foucault referred to experts who stipulate the terms and conditions and their disciplines as 'disciplinary regimes' (Gergen, 1999), with modern science itself a 'colonising norm' (Swazo, 2005). The adoption of the jargon used by these 'disciplinary regimes' permeate into public policies and institutions, leaving society oblivious to the scope of the power of these 'disciplinary regimes', and the reinforcement process that society participates in its own subjugation (Gergen, 1999; Winkel, 2012). Scientific discourse is a transmission of knowledge as power, with a view of a cultural hierarchy which is not genuinely open to alternative cultures (Swazo, 2005). By accepting we are who we are (identities created by others), and not actively open to alternative understandings of ourselves and our relationships with others, we continue to exist in a limbo of reinforcing authoritarian norms; an opportunity for totalitarian ideologies to become hegemonic (Kelemen & Peltonen, 2001). Foucault challenged society to question this subjugation (Gergen, 1999). However, rather than rejecting society as Foucault

advocates, Gergen (1999) suggests the adoption of generative theory, or what he calls 'differentiating appraisal'-- examining the consequences of sustaining a tradition.

Generative theory. Gergen (1999) suggests abandoning the binary dichotomy of truth versus false, and instead situating the truth within context. The truth is understood within the political, social, and cultural paradigms, which serves as a tool to shift the focus from deciphering motives and ideological biases to focusing on the circumstances which an ideology is prevalent in a society, who is empowered and who is disempowered. An example of this is in Moghaddam's (1990) conceptualisation of modulative and generative orientations in psychology. Modulative psychology reacts to the consequences of social, political, and economic changes in society, often supporting the status quo of the dominant ideology. Moghaddam (1990) purports that Western modulative psychology holds elements of the orientation which do not exist in third world societies. Instead, knowledge is exported to third world societies, questioning the 'appropriateness' of this transfer of knowledge, thus creating a circular dependence of third world societies on educators in first world societies (Moghaddam & Taylor, 1986). Generative psychology, on the contrary, acts as a vehicle which instigates societal change, working to its fullest potential when operating within the paradigms of third world countries. The criterion for generative theory can be contrasted with heuristics and critical theory (Gergen, 1978), as both theories have the capacity to generate solutions to practical problems. Gergen (1999) refers to generative theory as 'poetic activism'-- disrupting the foundations of society through the power of language.

Gergen's generative theory echoes the Frankfurt School's concerns regarding the reflexivity of scientific knowledge. Scientists' values are almost inevitably linked in with their research in shaping scientific knowledge, including the manner an individual interprets, labels, amount of evidence chosen to prove a theory, the theory chosen, and the application of theory. Therefore, these values shape the outcome, shape the knowledge, and shape society (Gergen, 1978). Gergen (1978; 1999) suggests embracing the issues surrounding embedded values in research, as values motivate the researcher to participate further in generative theorising, to become a full participant in culture, and engage in struggle for competing values.

Reflexivity in social constructionism. Woolgar (1988) suggests to problematize the inter-dependent, transparent connections between word and reality by re-introducing

agency into text. Reflexive techniques are geared towards the goal of increasing the individual's awareness that a scientist is drawing upon various resources that have constructed the text/knowledge in question. Michael (1996) reminds that if the aim is to demonstrate how one's own sociological text is dependent upon a range of social factors, then those factors need to be identified and reified. Consequently, these resources are at risk of objectification.

A criticism on this thought-- reflexivity now views knowledge as attributed to a collection of authors (Michael, 1996). Due to postmodernism, any academic reader is predisposed to deconstruct text. However, to question the veracity of every truth by deconstructing, is to uproot any possible stable reality to use as guidelines, thus displacing the individual from all forms of stability in life, ranging from institutions to politics (this can be related to Derrida's *différance*). Douglas' (1986) analysis on radical scepticism further adds to the questioning of the possibility of an independent reality. Problematizing reality by consistently and reflexively applying the tools of social constructionism to the individual's own analysis can be compared to political marginalisation (Michael, 1996). Douglas (1986) writes that without a stable 'reality' to act upon, one becomes disengaged from the realm of political. Foucault is an example of a radical sceptic. It is at this point that Gergen's generative theory finds its value. To refute all forms of reality is ordered chaos. Instead, generative theory accepts the dominant reality, and rather than question its veracity (as questioning its truthfulness would imply the existence of a singular, universal reality), thus allowing for other realities to surface. Generative theory does not stand alone neither; Michael (1996) identifies others such as Furhman and Oehler (1986), Bourdieu (1990), and Haraway (1991) whose conceptualisation of reflexivity involves examining the historical and political past which have enabled and constrained a person's present knowledge, with a purpose to critically examine these constructs, factors, and from this discover tools to empowerment. Harding (1998) writes this technique of situating the present knowledge in historical and cultural contexts presents social constructionism as more objective than positivism, as positivism makes its claim within the realms of the dominant historical and cultural ideologies (Shimp, 2001).

Critiques of social constructionism. There is, however, an inherent contradiction at the core of social constructionism. Michael (1996) points out if a social constructionist analysis was applied to social constructionism, in that reality and truth are contingent on social norms, then there could come a time where it becomes discredited by social

conventions and labelled 'inappropriate'. However, despite the possibility of proving its own existence as redundant, this possibility in fact supports sociology of scientific knowledge (Michael, 1996).

Another critique of social constructionism is that the epistemology does not include the analysis of non-human elements, such as the environment. Jones (2002) suggests an alternative in the form of moderate constructionism (Milton, 1996), or 'contextual' constructionism (Hannigan, 1995). Jones (2002) claims there is an approach to harmonise an epistemological relativism (never knowing what reality exactly is), and simultaneously rejecting ontological relativism (accounts of the world are not limited by nature). Jones (2002) suggests that by adopting ontologically realist yet epistemologically relativist position, this stance finds the balance between the two in the approach to non-human elements.

Ultimately, social constructionism is concerned with the construction, understanding and meaning given to reality through social interactions. Language is utilised as a tool to examine the delicate balance between power and knowledge. Historical and cultural elements provide the contextual information to explain the present accepted reality; a legacy to dominant ideologies of the past. Frameworks such as critical theory and generative theory provide direction to this understanding, and exploring who is empowered and disempowered by the dominant reality. We are not "the sole authors of our own narratives, in every conversation a positioning takes place which is accepted, rejected, or improved on by the parties in the conversation" (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1997, p. 14). There is a constant exchange of power as we continuously socially construct our reality.

Community Psychology

A community psychology perspective has been chosen to provide the conceptual foundation for this study. As highlighted in Chapters One and Two, community psychology is a suitable discipline to ground the study in due to its ecological perspective on power and wellbeing, and the lack of qualitative evidence exploring the vulnerabilities associated with migrant worker experiences also providing a fresh perspective to capture skill shortages. As with all community sciences, the epistemological grounding of the discipline is embedded in the hypothetico-deductive framework of logical empiricism (Tebes, 2005; Dalton, Elias, & Wandserman, 2001). However, Altman (1987), Trickett (1996), and Tebes (2005) illuminate contextualism as a contemporary alternative to logical empiricism, with community

psychologists asserting that no research is value-free (Dalton et al., 2001). Contextualism anchors human action to socio-historical and cultural contexts, which are defined within the compounds of an explicit time period, where people are perceived as inseparable to their context (Rosnow & Georgoudi, 1986; Bishop, Dzidic, & Breen, 2013). A contextualist perspective claim all hypotheses to be true, with the task of exploring the contexts of these truths (McGuire, 1983). For the community psychologist, investigating phenomena in a multiplicity of contexts can differentiate specific knowledge which is bound by explicit contextual and cultural constraints to a distinct setting, and that which is otherwise universal (Trickett, 1996). Advocating for pluralistic methodologies and theories, contextualist epistemology echoes similarities to social constructionism, in that 'truth', or reality, is constructed and embedded in social, historical, and cultural contexts. Just as social constructionism posits that reality is constructed through individuals relating to each other, the fundamentals of community psychology lay within the analysis of the dynamics of relationships between individuals and groups in society. While examining relationships through the lens of an ecological framework, the discipline ultimately focusses on actively enhancing the wellbeing of society, through seeking to empower the oppressed through collaboration with community. Following is an overview of the evolution of ecological systems theory, and an analysis of the conceptualisation of empowerment and power framed within the context of community psychology.

What is community? The term 'community' evokes ideas such as loyalty, tradition, intimacy, belonging, safety, emotional attachment, support and survival (Kayahara, 2006; Berger, 1998; Bruhn, 2011; Sichling, 2008). The definition of the concept alters in context, contingent on the variables of theoretical grounding, time, and culture, thus adding difficulty to applying a conclusive definition. A social constructionist conceptualisation of community hinges on the members; their awareness of the community and boundaries associated with it (Cohen, 1985). Community implies 'we', a homogeneous group distinguished from 'others' (Wiesenfeld, 1996). Each definition of community stresses a similarity amongst members, which solidifies their identity, a collection of individuals whose characteristics and needs exist and are met in social cohesion, while maintaining the *I/we* duality (Wiesenfeld, 1996). Sarason (1974) set the tone for the meaning of a psychological sense of community, defining it as "a mutually supportive network of relationships on which one could depend" (p.1). This definition can be applied to various settings, from 'community' referring to family and neighbourhood, to institutions and national organisations (Dalton et al, 2001).

Psychological sense of community. In their theory of sense of community, McMillan and Chavis (1986) defined the concept as "a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (p. 9). There are four qualities to this concept of community, which are: membership, influence, integration and fulfilment of needs, and shared emotional connection.

- *Membership* - a sense of belonging to a community in which one has invested in. There are five attributes to defining membership in a community: 1) *Boundaries* define the qualities required for membership; 2) *Emotional safety* adds to the broader scope of security, involving self-disclosure and group acceptance (Dalton et al, 2001); 3) *Sense of belonging and identification* deepens the connection and acceptance through beliefs and expectations; 4) *Personal investment* involves actively investing to cement a long-term commitment to the group, with an emphasis on emotional connection; and 5) *A common symbol system* acts as a process to maintain boundaries;

- *Influence* - the power members exercise over group and reciprocal power that group dynamics exert on members. Members are more attracted to groups in which they feel they can influence. Concurrently, most influential members in group are often those whose needs and values of others matter most, creating a group cohesiveness, and more pressure for conformity;

- *Integration and Fulfilment of Needs* - values and needs are shared by members, and are pursued by virtue of membership, through an exchange of resources; and

- *Shared Emotional Connection* - a 'spiritual bond' based on a history shared by members, expressed through events, speech, behaviour, or culture, cementing a sense of community.

McMillan and Chavis (1986) noted that a sense of community is a powerful force, and can be used to alienate, polarise and persecute others, such as the case with hate groups. Therefore, it is implied a sense of community does not necessarily correlate to a moral

standing, and can possibly perpetuate in-group/out-group bias. With an awareness of the power embedded within a strong sense of community, McMillan and Chavis (1986) called for a greater understanding of community, as a means to develop a world where communities are based on faith, cooperation, understanding, and most importantly, tolerance. This is where community psychology can contribute to this calling.

Ecological systems theory. Ecological systems theory is a multilevel contextual analysis which situates the individual within the environment. This process is vital to achieving wellbeing and empowerment, the core values at the heart of community psychology (Neal & Christens, 2014). The framework conceptualises community as an ecosystem (Hawe & Riley, 2005). The essence of the ecological perspective is to assess the natural setting and contextual background, which creates the opportunity to alter the social issue and the environmental setting (Kelly, 1971). Individual-environment interactions were first considered by Kurt Lewin and Henry Murray in the 1930s (Angelique & Culley, 2007). From that time, numerous academics have reworked and implemented variations on ecological systems theory, such as Barker, Wright, Simmel, Kelly, and Trickett (Angelique & Culley, 2007; Barker, 1965; Kelly, 1966; McNeal Jnr, 2014; Shinn, 1996; Weinstein & Frankel, 1974). However, it was Bronfenbrenner's framework which set the tone for ecological analysis in community psychology.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory constitutes four levels, and is likened to the image of an onion or Russian nesting dolls. Nestled centre within the levels is the individual. The next levels include:

- *Microsystems* - pertains to environments that directly influence the individual. These can include family and friendships;
- *Mesosystems* -schools, workplace, and human service organisations;
- *Exosystems* - includes community coalitions, sense of community (both neighbourhood and psychological) community organisations and institutions;
- *Macrosystems* - encompass culture, societal forces, government, and economic organisations, ideologies, and belief systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Dalton et al, 2001); and
- *Chronosystem*, a system reflecting the ebb and flow of influences over time, introduced later by Bronfenbrenner (Neal & Neal, 2013).

Conceptualising community issues in an ecological framework provides many benefits. It guides the community psychologist with insights regarding the impact of social, political, and economic systems on different levels of analysis, such as the individual, family, organisations and institutions, and the characteristics and manner in which the issue manifests on each of these levels (Weinstein & Frankel, 1974). An Ecological framework is a useful tool in unpacking issues to shed light on the nature of power dynamics at each level (Neal & Christens, 2014). The framework provides opportunities for community psychologists to work closely with community members, by placing themselves in the midst of the issue, working together to solve social issues as key players, events, and institutions are seen as interrelated. The needs of the community are better addressed as the community as a whole is considered (Kelly 1971). Ecological frameworks strengthen the notion of participatory action research, and advocate for the community psychologist's identity to be influenced by the environment and the engagement of the community with which they work with (Kelly, 1971).
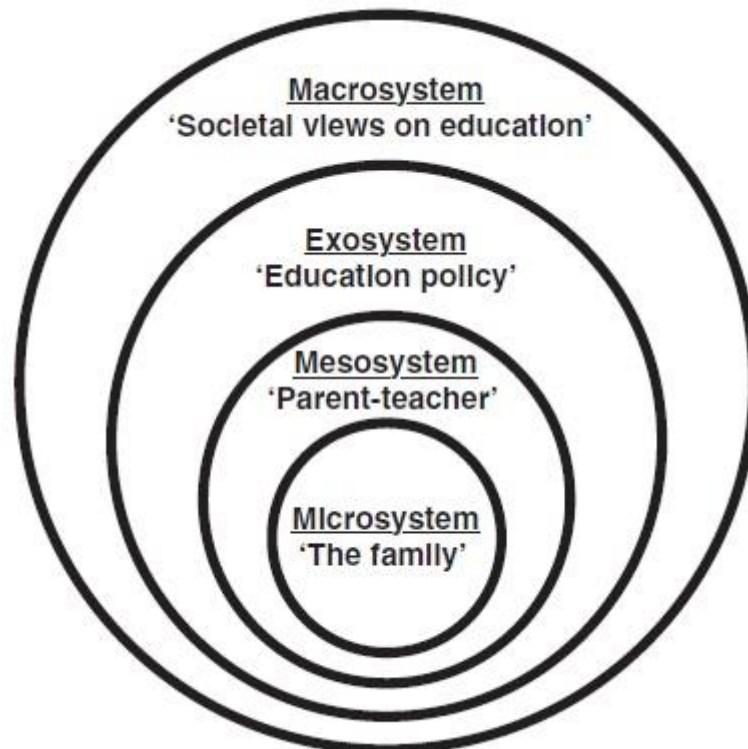
Figure 5. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory model (Neal & Neal, 2013).

Trickett (1974) outlines how ecological frameworks take the environment into account when analysing community issues (Hawe & Riley, 2005; Kelly 1966). He gives four premises as a guide to conducting community research, citing the premises as borrowed from biology. They are:

- Cycling of resources: resources refer to people, settings or events, and what is contributed to the community and highlights institutional strength;

- Adaptation: how successful an intervention is applied in the context of a specific community. The success of the adaption is dependent on the values, characteristics, and norms of the community, as well as use of language and technology;

- Interdependence: highlights the established linking connections throughout the system, and emphasises the transactional effects across the system; and

- Succession: The success of an intervention also relies on the timing of the system. Systems/communities are cyclical; flowing through stages of regeneration, and development. The success of the intervention also depends on the stages of systems within community, for example, does an economic budget allow for the intervention.

Some have noted the limitations of ecological systems theory in addressing issues on an individual level analysis, with some practitioners assessing individual skills and attitudes rather than context, or even aggregating individual perceptions within each different level. This has led to a requirement to move beyond this level to focus on including multiple level analyses (Angelique & Culley, 2007; Shinn, 1996; Neal & Christens, 2014). Relational and social networks are the foundations to social settings (Neal & Christens, 2014; Neal & Neal, 2013), and these perspectives provide methods of analysis which guide the community psychologist for a more social constructionist-like analysis, and avoid applying individual perspectives to different levels (Neal & Christens, 2014).

Neal and Neal (2013) have offered a reworking of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, redefining each ecological level with relationships between individuals at each level

based on patterns of interactions. Therefore, the relationships are not concentrically arranged as they are in Bronfenbrenner's model, but rather there's an overlapping link between each level. The emphasis is not on strictly defined ecological levels, but rather settings that overlap and are linked by relationships (Neal & Christens, 2014; Neal & Neal, 2013), lending a social constructionist perspective to the analytic process. The networked model shifts the focus away from where systems occur, and instead focuses on how and with whom individuals interact with (Neal & Neal, 2013). The networked model allows for more than one microsystem to exist, thus allowing for increased in-depth analysis of emotions. Neal and Neal (2013) reworked Bronfenbrenner's notion of setting, reconceptualising it from a spatial place, to a set of people engaged in a series of social interactions, with the environment having secondary influences on the situation.
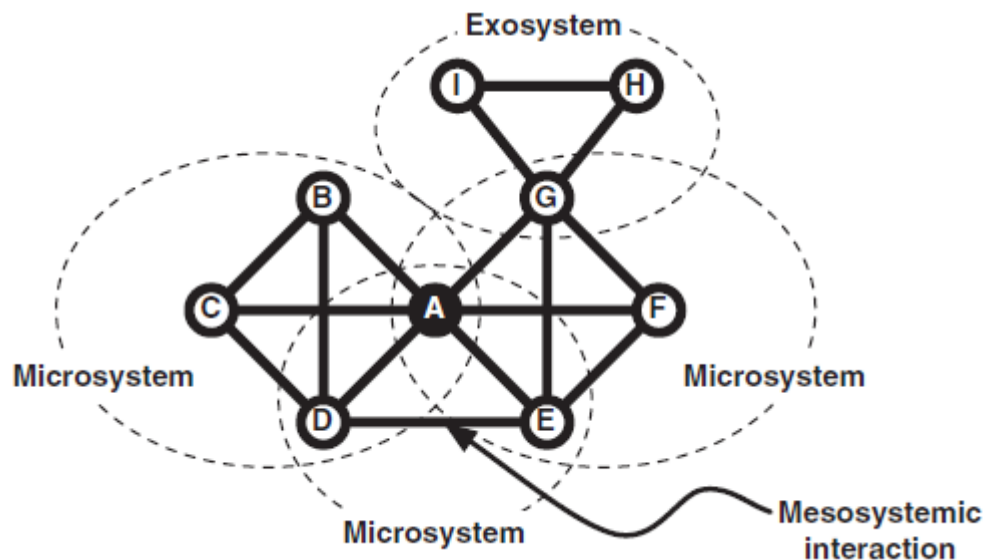
Figure 6. Networked model of ecological systems (Neal & Neal, 2013).

Empowerment and power. While community psychology was influenced by mental health and changes in dominant social norms, it did not have theories to call its own. Rappaport (1981, 1987) initiated the dialogue for a need for theories grounded in community psychology, not necessarily discounting the borrowed theories from psychology, but creating theories aligned with the discipline's own world views. Following the guiding path of Kuhn's approach to role exemplars, Rappaport (1981) initially suggested the theme of empowerment to unify practitioners of community psychology, rejecting

prevention that featured strongly in community mental health care. However, Rappaport (1987) later addressed the dichotomy of exemplars, and suggested empowerment and prevention served different but complimentary functions. Prevention, in context of public health, focused on problem solution and strategies behind interventions. While prevention was the phenomenon of interest, or outcome desired, it was not substantial enough to encompass the worldviews of community psychology (Rappaport, 1987). Empowerment, however, lends itself to promoting the world views of community psychology, and gave the opportunity to focus on theory development, methods, and explained policies and interventions. It is noted that elements of empowerment can feature in prevention programs (Blanchard et al, 2013; Kerrigan, Fonner, Stromdahl, & Kennedy, 2013; Peterson & Reid, 2003). This reconceptualization was more harmonious and complimentary to progression of the discipline.

Rappaport (1987) purports empowerment to be the 'bottom line' of community psychology. Empowerment refers to a process of becoming or qualified to do something, with a degree of unspoken authority over this 'something', a limitation of sort (Rappaport, 1987). However, while it is difficult to precisely define the concept empowerment, Dalton et al (2001) explain the general consensus as to which characteristics summarise empowerment based on the theoretical works of Rappaport (1981, 1987) and Zimmerman (1995, 2000). These characteristics include:

- a multilevel construct;
- bottom-up perspective, with ideas and movements originating from the community;
- an appreciation for empowerment to manifest differently due to unique cultural and historical environments;
- occurs in a collective context; and
- a dynamic process which can deteriorate, influence, grow over time, but is never stationary.

Empowerment is present in sociological, psychological, economic, and political spheres of life (Hur, 2006). It is present across all ecological levels, from the individual's personal empowerment of overcoming psychological obstacles and attaining self-determination (Becker, Kovach, & Gronseth, 2004; Christens, Inzeo, & Faust, 2014; Rappaport, 1987), to

collective empowerment in the community with the purpose of social change (Staples, 1990). Empowerment is both a social process and outcome (Peterson, Lowe, Aquilino & Schnider, 2005).

Empowerment does not pertain solely to communities, and can be situated on an individual level. Psychological empowerment refers to a belief that goals are attainable, with a critical awareness of available resources, factors and processes supporting and hindering the attainment of those goals (Zimmerman, 1995). Power and psychological empowerment are similar but not the same, an individual can be psychologically empowered without having complete authority over their objective and outcomes (Gruber & Trickett 1987). Zimmerman (1995) presented a nomological framework for the construction of psychological empowerment which takes into account intrapersonal (self-efficacy, perceived control), interactional (critical awareness, skill development), and behavioural (community involvement, coping behaviours) components. Recently however, Christens (2012) offered an alternation to Zimmerman's (1995) model of psychological empowerment, with the addition of a relational component. This component includes collaborative competence, bridging social divisions, facilitating the empowerment of others, network mobilisation, and passing on legacy. As the individual occupies a different and separate level to organisations in ecological systems theory, these features listed in the relational component assist in gaining insights into the mechanics of how empowerment can be facilitated or subdued between the layers (Christens, 2012; Christens, Inzeo, & Faust, 2014; Neal, 2014). While not featured prominently in psychological empowerment research, relational contexts in other constructs can provide insight, such as in social capital (with a focus on trust, and mutual obligation) and social networks. These constructs resonate with community and ecological values found in community psychology (Christens, 2012).

Riger (1993) formulates a feminist reading on empowerment as conceptualised by community psychology, noting that the heavily researched studies of an individual's sense of empowerment is due to psychology's focus on cognition, rather than the study of actual power gained, and power viewed in the traditional masculine sense of mastery and control, as opposed to the feminine framing of cooperation and communication. Definitions include a psychological sense of control over one self, and sense of self-efficacy, with mastery and gaining control of one's life (Rappaport, 1981, 1987; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988). Other studies which make this connection between empowerment and efficacy include

Ozer and Bandura (1990), Kieffer (1984), Sprague and Hayes (2000), Wang, Zhang, and Jackson (2013), and Hunter, Jason, and Keys (2013). However, Perkins and Zimmerman (1995) later established that concepts such as self-efficacy, competency, and control do not define and are confused with empowerment, while Prilleltensky and Fox (2007) believe these values constitute wellness and are synergistically linked in with justice. This process of framing empowerment within the context of the individual and personal power stems from deeper roots in psychology, with the cognitivist perspective dominating American psychology at the time of Riger's (1993) article. While Riger (1993) criticised empowerment to be constructed with masculine values, Christens's (2012) emphasis on relational aspects to psychological empowerment can offer a solution to this criticism, creating space to include feminist and other alternative perspectives which postulate power as occurring between individuals, rather than within the individual (Christens, 2012; Neal, 2014; Neal & Neal, 2011; VanderPlaat, 1999).

Another issue raised by Riger (1993) and Rappaport (1987), was if enhancing a sense of empowerment stipulated the effects of the distribution of power. They questioned the limitations of empowerment operating at all ecological levels, which may be creating an illusion within the outer levels due to the failings of addressing political, economic, social, and cultural factors (de Clercq, 1994; De Souza Mello Bicalho & Hoefle, 2010). An example is Serrano-Garcia's (1984, p. 198) work into empowering a Puerto Rican community:

> I am convinced that our project achieved the goals it did because its goals and strategies were and are unknown to people in power, because we are working with low-status people who are not recognized as a threat, and because we did not choose to deal with problems which directly confront governmental institutions.

The issue of enhancing a sense of empowerment and the effects of distribution of power was an extension of the critique on the majority of empowerment-based research focused on the individual level. Sarason (1984) highlighted the absence of community psychology from the public policy forum, which constitute the outer layers of the ecological system. While attributing this absence to the discipline's roots in clinical psychology, Sarason (1984) had faith that practitioners could fulfil the role of researcher-activist:

> The scientist who is experimenting is not only "studying" but trying to change something. In that sense he or she is an activist...I subscribe fully to the maxim that

> if you want to understand the social world, you should experience trying to change
> it in some way. That is why I believe that community psychology will be viable to
> the extent that public policy becomes more central to its concerns. (pp. 206-207).

As community psychology has refined itself, empowerment has been worked into the outer layers of the ecological system, with practitioners addressing the need and stipulating the requirements to engage with public policy (Serrano-García, 2013; Shinn, 2007). Nelson (2013) suggests community psychologists to engage in distinct roles when promoting empowerment and policy change, such as researcher/evaluator (inform and study policy making processes), program innovator (community based programs encapsulated in social policies), public intellectual (educating the public on social issues through media), policy advisor (working with or in government), ally to progressive social movements (broad social movement and sustained advocacy challenging neo-liberalism), and partnership maker (working in partnership with different policy stakeholder groups). However, an understanding of power is required for transformative policy change to occur (Nelson, 2013). Furthermore, community psychologists call for the discipline to emphasise power, oppression, and inequality at different levels; all themes which underlie empowerment (Fisher, Sonn, & Evans, 2007; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005; Rappaport, 1981). Prilleltensky (2001, 2003) married the concepts of power to distributive justice, oppression, and wellness (Angelique & Culley, 2007).

Power is the ability and opportunity to influence the course of events, which enhances the element of agency with consideration given to social and historical contexts (Prilleltensky, 2008). Power is wellness and can be used to resist oppression and promote liberation (Prilleltensky, 2008). While empowerment and the underlying concept of power are central to community psychology, so too is the concept of oppression; as empowerment cannot exist without oppression. Oppression is either a state or process, one where the oppressed suffer from exclusion, exploitation, and domination of some description (Prilleltensky, 2008). Oppression is not restricted to political, social, or economic issues, but can be perceived by a boundary dictated by culture or society, internalised and psychological, weighing down on self-esteem (Prilleltensky, 2008). Learned helplessness is an example of psychological oppression (Serrano-García, 1984), as well as internalising the self in a negative way, not deserving of resources or participation in society (Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996), with self-fulfilling prophecies sustaining oppression (Deutsch, 2006). Psychological oppression can saturate through to outer levels of analysis in form of a lack of

sense of community (Affonso et al., 2010; Serrano-Garcia, 1984), onto a national scale, manifested through negative impacts of colonialism (David, 2008; David & Okazaki, 2010; Serrano-García, 1984).

Prilleltensky's (2008) concept of liberation as a force to resisting oppression is likened to Freire's (1998) conscientization, whereby marginalised communities become critically conscious of their oppression and take action to liberate themselves from it. Communities do not begin the process of empowerment/liberation until there is considerable awareness of oppression (Grabe, Dutt, & Dworkin, 2014; Kieffer, 1984; Montero, 2007; Prilleltensky, 2008; Serrano-García, 1984). Community partnerships are employed to approach the political and psychological understandings of power, wellness and oppression encompassing all levels of the ecological system. This process is supported by practitioners reflecting on the effects of their own practices on the communities (Prilleltensky, 2008). To do this, Prilleltensky (2008) suggests using psychopolitical literacy to understand the relationship between political and psychological factors that impact on wellness and justice (Prilleltensky & Fox, 2007), and psychopolitical validity, to improve the awareness of power, oppression, liberation, and the factors impacting on wellness and justice through research and action (Prilleltensky, 2003; Prilleltensky & Fox, 2007). Zimmerman (1995) also reiterates that socio-political and contextual factors should be carefully considered at every level of ecological analysis.

Rigger (1993) believed the traditional views of agency, control and mastery found in empowerment overshadow the theory of sense of community. While both concepts are equally important to community psychology, she suggested community psychologists direct their attention to understanding how sense of community shapes personal efficacy. This is a process that can be achieved through addressing the nature of relationships between groups (Cheryomukhin & Peterson, 2014; Christens, 2012; Neal, 2014). The use of power in community psychology requires constant monitoring. Critical reflection on how theories, discourses and practices were established and maintained is essential, with a reminder of what knowledge is favoured and valued over alternative ideas (Fisher, Sonn & Evans, 2007).

Critiques of community psychology. A critique of community psychology is that practitioners have failed to apply a critical theory deconstruction of the term 'community' (Coimbra et al., 2012; Fryer & Laing, 2008). As previously reinforced by McMillan and Chavis (1986), community is a powerful construct that can alienate and exclude. Therefore,

community psychologists are called to critically assess the concept of community, the context it occurs in, and who is being 'othered', or excluded (Coimbra et al, 2012). Coimbra et al (2012) believe that community psychology has become mundane, and lacks the radical edge as an alternative solution to dominant ideologies. They call for the discipline to look outside Western psychology to seek alternative methods to reconceptualise frameworks, and to critique mainstream ideologies of psychology and other related disciplines, including community psychology itself.

Issues that community psychology contends with include current low visibility of community psychology in other discipline settings (Kloos, 2005), individual accountability versus societal impact, distrust of the government versus reliance on government funding, social change goals versus classical scientific inquiry as neutral, non-hierarchical professional relationships versus licensing/credentialing pressure, logical positivist critique versus history of person-centred research, ecological, multilevel framework versus individual-level research, and value of diversity versus Anglocentric history (Angelique & Culley, 2007, p.50; Cosgrove & McHugh, 2000; Mulvey, 1988). Acknowledging the discipline's roots in white, male power is a method to practice critical assessment of the discipline while advocating for social justice (Angelique & Culley, 2007).

To continue to develop the discipline, Angelique and Culley (2007) suggest practitioners address the analysis of power while simultaneously working with empowerment (such as works by Prilleltensky), a strong critical presence (as mentioned by Coimbra et al 2012), and the continual use of an ecological framework for analysis. Fryer and Laing (2008) delve deep into critical analysis and ask what is community psychology, and who does it empower. They establish that the US interpretation of community psychology dominates text book production, generates more postgraduate courses than any other nation, and governing interpretations. This tailors the discipline to be situated in the individualistic culture of the US, exported into other community psychology communities which may not necessarily embrace similar ideologies. This process, Fryer and Laing (2008) and Fryer (2008) believe is akin to intellectual and cultural colonisation, and echoes the sentiments of Moghaddam and Taylor (1986) and Moghaddam (1990). However, Fisher, Gridley, Thomas, and Bishop (2008) take an alternative approach, acknowledging Australia and New Zealand to be influenced by the US modality, but necessarily formed by it (Bishop & D'Rozario, 2002). Kelly (2010) suggests four agendas to renew the collective spirit of community psychologists in reconciling the dichotomy

between theory and practice; intellectual activity and emotional commitment to the discipline. These include: increase understanding of systems, increase interdisciplinary research and action, increase ties to the work of community organisers, and increase an emphasis on culture (Trickett, 1996).

Causal Layered Analysis

Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) is a framework exploring the ideological positions of a phenomenon at a deep seated unconscious level, seeking to challenge assumptions (Riedy, 2008). Created by Sohail Inayatullah, the paradigm is situated within futures studies, however is not concerned with predicting the future. Rather, it operates by unpacking layers of the dominant ideology to expose the root of a phenomenon, by employing poststructuralist techniques and alternative ideologies which may not feature in the context of the dilemma. These methods reconceptualise the phenomenon positioned with a fresh perspective, and thus propose alternative futures. The analysis consists of four levels; litany, social causes, worldview discourse, and myth/metaphor. CLA draws on an assortment of influences, including poststructuralism, macrohistory, critical spirituality, and the works of Foucault. The following paragraphs explore the theoretical and practical application of CLA as a theoretical framework for the data analysis of this study.

Futures studies. Up until the two world wars, the future was depicted as predetermined and circumscribed by time. This mindset, the first paradigm of futures studies, engaged methods which included shamanism, herbalism, dreaming of utopia/dystopia realities, and intuitively-guided revelations pertaining to the future (Kuosa, 2011). This construction of reality implied an awareness of the continuation of the reality and its guaranteed existence in the future. However, a combination of advances in technology and science and the two world wars consequently shifted futures studies into the second paradigm, where strategy, planning, and management skills were developed and refined (Kuosa, 2011). In this paradigm of futures studies, the current reality is no longer guaranteed an existence in the future.

Futures studies (as an academic discipline) emerged in the 1960s, the same decade community psychology was established, and Berger and Luckmann's highly influential book, *The Social Construction of Reality* (1966), and Kuhn's ground-breaking book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), were published. The establishment of the discipline was guided by Gaston Berger, Bertrand de Jouvenel, and Pierre Massé in the late 1950s and

early 1960s (Goux-Baudiment, 1997; Masini, 1998, 2006). Berger believed in a 'futurist anthropology', a consolidation of specialists to deliberate on desirable future (*futurables*) alternatives to current dilemmas in society (Durance, 2010; Godet, 2010). His approach to identifying alternative futures, was known as *prospective* (Durance, 2010).

It is generally agreed future studies is a multidisciplinary approach that through its exposure to other disciplines, has the facility to observe alternative modalities to inform the future of society desired. The discipline accepts that while the future is not predetermined, it is shaped by the mechanics of social underpinnings, ethical considerations, and history (Dator, 1998; Masini, 1998). Conversely, there is a sense of empowerment with future studies, as Masini (1998, p. 343) relays:

> The future is the only area on which the human being can have an influence because the past can only be interpreted, and the present is in most ways already decided by events and actions in the recent or distant past.

Due to its multidisciplinary approach and flexible application to alternative disciplines, futures studies and thus CLA are grounded in a plurality of epistemologies.

Theoretical roots of futures studies. Futures studies is goal-oriented and utilises methodologies from a multiplicity of disciplines, which therefore promotes epistemological pluralism. CLA is grounded in a plurality of three intersecting epistemologies: predictive, cultural, and critical, which CLA is situated in (Inayatullah, 2004a; 1990).

The critical approach views the future as discursive. Inayatullah (2004b) emphasises the difference between the ideas of critical futures within futures studies. One school of thought has a Habermasian and hermeneutic mark of distinction, recovering the true self and true culture lost in predictive futures methods. The alternative form of critical futures research adopts a Foucauldian approach, with a focus on the interpretation of power and discourse. It is this approach, which CLA is grounded in. Mirroring the theoretical framework of poststructuralism, critical futures problematizes the current accepted truth through the deconstruction of language, and situating the issue within a historical context. This process permits critical futurists to construct alternative perspectives on the current issue, which imparts alternative solutions (Inayatullah, 2004b; Turnbull, 2004). Methods utilised stem from the works of Foucault, including the construction of time (the

Foucauldian approach views time as a concept that is socially constructed, ordering knowledge. It is a construction of reality, and not necessarily eternal); distancing (a step back, purposefully creating space to problematize the issue, in a manner that creates a sense of alienation from the taken for granted notions); and meaning assigned to language (some futures studies employ language focused on the present tense, thus reinscribing present dominant constructions of reality which suffocate alternative solutions) (Inayatullah, 1998, 2004b). Reinforcing the epistemological plurality which grounds futures studies, social constructionism offers yet another epistemology for CLA, as a point of convergence for the analysis of power found in the Foucauldian approach to critical futures, and the exploration of empowerment in community psychology.

Social constructionism: An alternative epistemology for future studies? Futures studies has the flexibility to embrace a multiplicity of epistemologies from almost any discipline. However, the knowledge generated in futures research used to construct alternative futures exists in a space that is prescient; "empirically non-existent/yet to exist" (Fuller & Loogma, 2009, p. 73). There are no experiments (and to that extent scientific rigour) or empirical evidence that futures studies can employ (Mermet, Fuller, & van der Helm, 2009). With observation relying on the present and past, knowledge of the future could be construed as 'subjective', and 'unscientific' (Fuller & Loogma, 2009). In response, futures studies practitioners push for theoretical justification of the discipline, and sound methodologies (Mermet et al., 2009). However a futures study with social constructionism underpinning the epistemology does eradicate the 'subjectiveness' of futures knowledge by situating the knowledge in historical and cultural contexts, drawing on the relational aspects of the sociology of knowledge. The epistemology anchors critical theory and generative theory within the domain of futures studies, resonating in the conceptual design of this study which engages community psychology's analysis of power and empowerment, and Foucault's poststructuralist techniques used in critical futures research. The analysis of power is the thread that binds together all three disciplines in this study.

Fuller and Loogma (2009) detailed distinct characteristics of social constructionism which feature in critical futures epistemology, asserting a social constructionist perspective enables the reflection on the production and usage of knowledge gathered to forecast future alternatives. Some of these features include:

- *Time (past/present/future)* – time for futures practitioners is measured as short, medium, and long-term. However the differences in the construction of time relays a different perception of the meaning of time (Adam, 2009; Fuller & Loogma, 2009);

- *Values* – social constructionism is not value-laden, but rather accepts reality based on empirical evidence. The methodological feature of this perspective is the process in which *how* knowledge is legitimised. Fuller and Loogma (2009) suggest a social constructionist perspective in futures studies' methodologies would identify the values embedded in the interpretation of the data; and

- *Reflexivity* – Futures studies is reflexive, with the analysis of alternative futures assisting to change everyday understanding of life. Reflexivity plays a part in social constructionism as well, with a perpetual feedback occurring between self-identity and the nature of relationship with others. From a methodological stance, reflections on alternative futures challenges the identity of the present self and community in an ongoing process, fostering action for change (Fuller & Loogma, 2009).

As explored, social constructionism situates the phenomenon in question in historical and cultural contexts, which blends into the conceptual influences of CLA. These influences, civilization studies and Indian philosophy, support the framework to enhance the exploration of power dynamics underpinning dominant cultural and societal forces.

Conceptual influences. Inayatullah explicates Galtung's civilizational studies a major influence in his construction of CLA (Inayatullah, 2002; 2004a). Galtung's civilizational studies operates on a broader and deeper level, exploring the ideologies that underpin nations in their present state. An exploration of the formation of identity and historical causes are required to understand these ideologies. The theory reveals how mythic trauma may help create the dichotomy between self/other, cohesion and separation, and give rise to civilizational /cultural identity (Ramos, 2004a).

While social constructionism is focused on exploring subjectivity on a personal level, Galtung explores the level of subjectivity between the individual and civilisations and sub-civilisations (Galtung, 1981). Galtung's civilizational studies are also situated within the discipline of macrohistory, which is focused on studying the histories of social systems in search for evidence of patterns of change within societies. Patterns observed include

catalysts and processes for societal change, the stability of these changes and the consequences, and the stages of history. These patterns give futurists insight into which elements of society can be altered, eliminated, or cannot be removed, thus guiding the analysis and gathering the evidence to forecast a preferred future (Inayatullah, 1998; Hoffman, 2014).

CLA's vertical analysis is influenced by Indian philosophy, in particular the works of the spiritual teacher for the spiritual movement *Ananda Marga*, social philosopher, poet and linguist, Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar. Sarkar's visions for the future offer a fresh alternative to contrast Western ideologies, offering a spiritual perspective which encompasses individual rights and democracy possible through the realisation of cosmopolitanism; an allegiance to collective responsibility and universal ethics (Inayatullah, 1988). Sarkar's progressive utilisation theory (or PROUST) offers a vision of a future where the individual's basic needs of food, water, shelter, education, and health are guaranteed, allowing the individual the opportunity to pursue spiritual and intellectual growth. Economic growth is a significant element in the theory, nestled in between Marxism and capitalism, with businesses run by quasi government-appointed boards, the private sector and a people's sector (Inayatullah, 1988). Sarkar's teachings also discuss the mind as being constituted by shells, or *kosas*. Moving up and down the kosas is a process of moral and spiritual enlightenment, delving deeper to attain an awareness of unconscious patterns (similar to Vendatic philosophy) (Inayatullah, 2004a). The inclusion of spirituality, or mindfulness as an internal process, compliments the historical analysis of nations in Galtung's civilizational studies. These conceptual influences inform the six basic futures questions posed in futures studies, followed by the four layers of CLA and the steps taken to analyse these layers.

The six basic futures questions. Inayatullah (2008) lists six basic questions that government, organisation, institution, or individual can ask when addressing their desired future. These are:

1. Will: What type of future is predicted?

2. Fear: What type of fear is depicted in the future? Is there the ability to transform this future to a desired future? Why or why not?

3. Hidden assumptions: What are the hidden assumptions of the predicted future? Are there some taken-for-granted assumptions (gender, nature, technology, culture)?

4. Alternative futures: What are some alternatives to the predicted or feared future? If you change some of your assumptions, what alternatives emerge?

5. Preferred future: What is the preferred future? Which future do you wish to become reality for yourself or your organization? and

6. Next Steps: how might you get there? What steps can you take to move in toward your preferred future?

The four levels. CLA is based on truths framed by history. The challenge is to accumulate multiple perspectives to the problem, as analysis moves vertical and horizontal (Inayatullah, 2004a). CLA does not reject ideologies; rather it seeks to understand them within the context of the problem and enrich the situation, through creating layers and giving depth. CLA acknowledges the inherent complexities in each unique problem through differing perspectives (Hofmeester, Bishop, Stocker, & Syme, 2012). The four levels of analysis are litany, social causes, worldview, and myth.

Litany. Litany is the official unquestioned view of reality (Inayatullah, 2004a). This is the shallowest level, often containing political discourse echoed throughout the media, with issues appearing as disconnected. This level stirs feelings of apathy, fear, and diffusion of responsibility. Problems are often exaggerated at this level and assumptions put forward are not questioned (Inayatullah, 2004a; De Simone, 2004). Slaughter (2002) refers to this level as 'pop futurism', where western consumerist problems are informed and reinforced by the global media, and an emphasis on the accumulation of wealth through the development of science and technology. Governments and/or corporations are charged with the duty of solving the issues at this level (Inayatullah, 2004a; Ramos, 2004b).

Social causes. This level is concerned with social causes that include economic, cultural, political, and historical factors. Taking a systemic perspective, data from the litany is explained and questioned at this level (Inayatullah, 2004a). This level is concerned with the role of key actors, including states and bodies, with these groups holding responsibility to

solving the issue. This analysis is a way of understanding the hegemonic dominance of the West in its many aspects, in particular the 'superior' cultural artefacts emerging from it. Theoretical influences on this level include Galtung's civilizational theory. Borrowing from works of Lenin, Galtung analysed how imperialistic relations systematically create harmony of interests and conflict of interests to benefit the elites of a 'centre' and the detriment of people in the 'periphery' (Ramos, 2004a). Another theoretical influence at this level is Wallerstein's world systems theory. The theory uses core/periphery perspective, similar to Galtung's centre/periphery distinction (Galtung, 1981). World systems theory is a technique to reveal hidden structures and change it, in a sense a revision of Marxism. The theory challenges the notion of nation-state as fundamental unity of analysis by espousing a historical and planetary approach (Ramos, 2004a).

Worldview discourse. This level seeks to locate historical, social, linguistic, and cultural processes operating at a deeper level. The beliefs and values of stakeholders involved are exposed, and deeper social, linguistic, and cultural structures that support the previous two layers are revealed (De Simone, 2004; Hofmeester et al, 2012). It is at this level that scenarios of alternative futures are developed, and where community and/or voluntary groups are in charge of resolving the issue (Inayatullah, 2004a). Analysis at this level is not dependent on actors, but explores how various social and cultural paradigms frame the problem.

In Galtung's analysis, actions of nations are symptomatic of deeper historical causes and civilizational cosmologies (Ramos, 2004a). Foucault's analysis of genealogy compliments this, revealing that what society considers to be a universal structure is actually a particular expression of a researcher, writer, and the person's historical context. From this worldview, values are derived and constructed by society (Sardar, 2004). A multicultural society contains a number of distinct groups with a diversity of worldviews; to identify points of convergence, common principles and shared values of ethical and moral frameworks of different worldviews are necessary in uncovering creative strength of genuine multicultural society. However, the greatest impediment to incorporating non-western values is that these worldviews are not seen as equal or full partner projects within multicultural society (Sardar, 2004; Ramos, 2004a).

Myth/metaphor. This final level explores the unconscious and emotive dimensions of the problem, through reviewing collective archetype stories or myths (Inayatullah,

2004a). The issue is understood from a community perspective, evoking questions that promote emotional, and instinctual responses. This level embodies the roots of the issue and is the unconscious dimension of the problem. It deals with how society thinks and the beliefs driving the actions (Kelly, 2010). Artists, poets, and those of creative disciplines have the duty to solve the problem at this level. De Simone (2004) asks what images, works of art, films, and poetry evoke the issues being discussed, and if there are any myths that compound the issue and/or methods of solving the issue.

Fricker (2002) makes a connection between the level of myth and belongingness to community. There is a shift from the "I" to the "us", where community is the 'creative resource'. The crux of the situation is located at the final bottom layer, where symbols are established to represent all the diverse ways of knowing, which come together to form the story as myth (Wildman, 2002). At this level social structures are dissolved, as they are morphed through the de-construction and re-construction process to reveal the foundations underlying the previous layers (Slaughter, 2002). This process it exposes the roots of the problem; and promotes solutions relative to the exposed roots. This sense of renewed energy creates new open spaces of inspiration (Slaughter, 2002).

The mystical/spiritual discourse suspends all notions of the future-state, and directs the focus to training the mind to perceive the world differently, or from a 'deeper level' (Inayatullah, 2004a). Bussey (2004) writes that individual and collective consciousness have not been greatly developed under the philosophical ideals of the past few decades, citing Sardar that "postmodernism…has nothing new to say" (Ramos, 2004a, p. 200). Instead he suggests incorporating critical spirituality to soften the rigid academic mode of rationality, adding a dimension that reveals deep-seated cultural motivations, through neo-humanism. A critical spirituality narrative at this level blends the current hegemonic epistemological framework with a notion that prevails outside of the framework. This marriage of the familiar with the new gives action for new energy and transformation, unleashing potentiality of a solution to the issue.

Application of CLA. CLA is applied both horizontal and vertical. The vertical levels are concerned with unpeeling the layers, continuously delving deeper into the psyche of the problem. The horizontal layers are concerned with superficial issues, including identifying the problem and possible solutions, and actors involved. De Simone (2004)

writes a five step 'cookbook' approach to the application of the methodology, however only four steps are followed in this study.

Step one: Vertical analysis. The four layered approach listed above entails the vertical analysis applied to the issue. The challenge is to conduct research that moves up and down these layers of analysis and is inclusive of different ways of knowing (Inayatullah, 2004a).

Step two: Horizontal gaze. This step of the analysis is applied at the social causes and worldview/discourse levels. De Simone (2004) suggests using the STEEP (Social, Technological, Environmental, Economic, and Political) method at the social causes level to reveal different perspectives on the issue. This method can reveal alternative perspectives on the relationships between actors and the issue (De Simone, 2004).
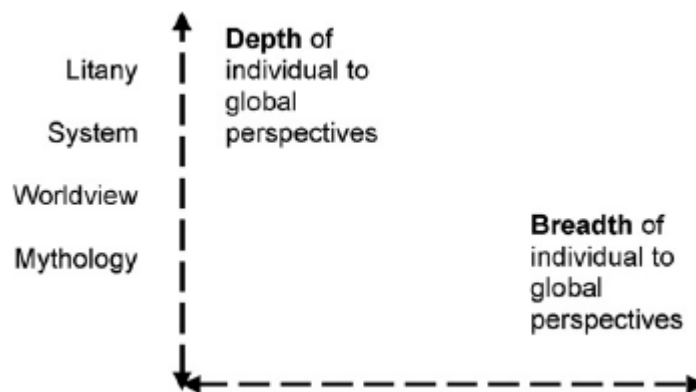
Figure 7. Linear layers and deep lateral perspectives in CLA (Russo, 2010).
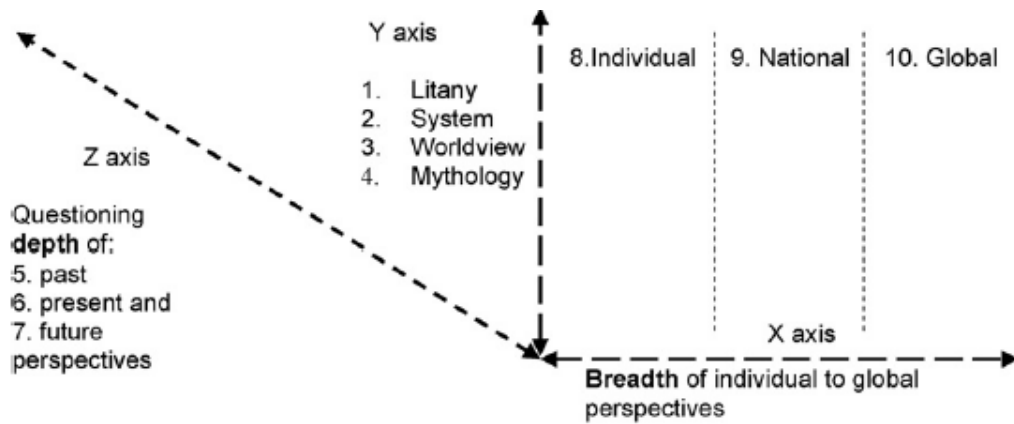
Figure 8. Psychological perspectives in CLA (Russo, 2010).

At the Worldview level the challenge is to demonstrate how deeply held beliefs are championed over alternative beliefs and how language has been utilised to reinforce hegemonic beliefs. This process also creates space for the opportunity to capture the issue from an alternative perspective. Some alternative perspectives at this level include economist, political ideologies, feminism, and scientific/technological. Cultural and/or religious worldview perspectives for consideration include: tribal, ecological, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity (De Simone, 2004).

Step three: Re-envisioning the myth/metaphor. A reimaging of the current issue occurs at this step, to a preferred alternative, collective utopian outcome. This process is accomplished by uncovering the myths that confine the beliefs on the issue (De Simone, 2004). This step provides the theoretical foundations for Step Four.

Step four: Recasting issue and defining possible solutions. This step allows for practical implementation of alternative outcomes. A basis of solution provided at each level, include the transformation of consciousness (worldview), a support network for systems currently existing (social causes), and short term approach with discourse bridging between the litany and deeper values (litany).

These four steps guide the direction of the analysis in CLA, however it is the Poststructural toolbox which directs the focus of analysis inward, as explored in the Foucauldian concepts identified below.

Poststructural toolbox. There are five poststructural concepts employed to analyse an issue, all taken from the works of Foucault (Inayatullah, 2004a). Foucault's work by nature is anti-methodological, but the combination of deconstruction and genealogy, and the assistance of a multi-layered analysis, a methodology can be theorised within Foucault's framework (Inayatullah, 2004a; 2002).

Deconstruction. Deconstruction involves breaking down text. In doing so, it enquires into who is privileged, who gains and losses, who is silenced, who is heard, and what is the construction of the truth. In the context of futures studies, this concept asks which future is privileged, and what assumptions regarding the future are made preferable. The function of truth in CLA is not concerning 'what is the truth?', but how the truth functions in particular political settings, how it is evoked, who evokes it, who gains and losses from it (Inayatullah, 2004a).

Genealogy. Foucault's genealogy is centred on examining paradigms and discourses that are hegemonic. Similar to deconstruction, this concept seeks to understand which discourses have become the dominant ideology and why. The truth is unhinged from the present, to reveal historical influences (Wright, 2004). It does not reveal the roots of the issue in historical context, rather genealogy makes all issues and factors contentious (Wright, 2004). Inayatullah (1998) reminds the past is written by the successes of a dominant culture/group. Realising this occurs through asking the questions applied to the present. Such questions include who were the main actors? Who was benefiting from what actions? What was the dominant discourse at the time? Asking these questions creates alternative pasts. Committed to enquiry, it seeks to dissolve coherences of systems of intelligibility that give individual and collective identities to people and to orders that house them by recreating the process which subjectivities and objectivities are produced (Shapiro, 2004). Genealogy views every form of life as producing human identities and systems of value in a struggle with other possible forms of life (Shapiro, 2004). It is focused on uncovering marginalised discourses, ignored theories, dissenting opinions, local knowledge, to make apparent the historical and political struggles that have occurred in valorisation of knowledge (Ramos, 2004a).

Distance. Creating scenarios or utopian-type settings generates an ideal outcome which can critique the present. It can also create future scenarios which alienate the present situation, denaturalise it, and question if these scenarios could have occurred in the past, present, or future had the present situation been different (Inayatullah, 1998). It occurs in between the 'what is', and the 'what if' scenarios. The 'what is' is the current problem, the dominant discourse. The 'what ifs' are the possible scenarios that critique the problem in its current form. It serves to further aid in the deconstruction of the problem. Looking at the possible scenarios helps the current problem to be perceived differently. Inayatullah (1998) further asks where on a continuum timeline these possible scenarios would fall in. Using other ways of knowing, especially categories from other civilisations, is one way of creating distance from the present. An example is querying civilisation by questioning how Confucian, Islamic, indigenous or Indic civilisations constitute population discourse (Inayatullah, 2004a).

Alternative pasts and futures. Futures studies focuses on the future, while poststructural critical framework alerts attention to the past. This concept explores history as written by the victorious, and the histories that would make the present problematic. Looking to the future, this concept asks what visions of the future are required to maintain the present.

Reordering knowledge. Similar to civilizational futures research, genealogy and deconstruction, this concept explores how categories order knowledge. The ordering of knowledge differs across categories, such as civilization, gender, episteme, and so forth. Other queries within the scope of this context include who or what is ordered, how it denaturalises the current ordering of knowledge.

Critiques of CLA. The construction of the litany level in the analysis is portrayed as negative, over-hyped, exaggerated problems portrayed by the media. However, if in the future, a society existed where sustainability was developed and maintained, the present litany would disappear and replaced with a sustainable-friendly litany. Although it may be more 'inclusive' than the previous/current litany, it would be the dominant ideology. In the paradigm of critical theory, this is viewed as dominating, with an inquiry conducted into the silencing of groups seated outside this hegemony (Inayatullah, 2004c). CLA has an inherent

'undoing' of its purpose, similar, to an extent, to Michael's (1996) critique of social constructionism.

A critique of CLA from an empiricist perspective is a sense of cognitive dissonance when applying the method. This occurs when empiricists are operating from strict position, and are not open to the possibilities of levels of reality. It is suggested an avoidance of cognitive dissonance can be achieved when engaging in discussion with those who hold alternative perspectives to the problem (Inayatullah, 1998; 2004c).

Inayatullah (1998; 2004c) also adds that too much time can be spent conceptualising problems and not enough on creating new policies. Instead he suggests ensuring the practitioner develops an awareness of the process, and avoids being tied down in ideologies and to ensure the continuous movement horizontally and vertically as a way to overcome these limitations.

Other critiques of CLA include it as too 'ethereal' in analysis at the fourth level. Inayatullah (2004c) argues the myth/metaphor level is the basis for how societies operate, as most nations define themselves through historical moments of trauma that then reinforce identity. Trauma represents the suffering, real or imagined, that a culture experienced that may have led to a fall, and how a culture overcame that suffering. Passed down through generations, this truth, regardless if it is historical, becomes embedded in the identity of the group (Ramos, 2004a).

Another critique is that CLA is anti-empirical, describing empirical as litany. Inayatullah (2004c) offers an explanation that the empirical is viewed within context. This does not discount the veracity, but rather empirical evidence is true at that particular level of analysis. As a tenet of poststructuralism, the guiding question is not what the truth is, but how is the truth real and functioning in discourse.

Despite CLA situated in futures studies, its conceptualisation of time encompasses the past, present, and future. We look to the past to examine the history of events, and the discourses and paradigms that were centre stage. It is the legacy of past paradigms with which we realise the consequences within the present problem. In the future context, we examine and question how these past paradigms would play out in the future, as well as creating space for new alternative meanings. The strengths of CLA lie in its capacity to

capture the authenticity of Berger and de Jouvenel's visions for future studies; a discipline which promotes acceptance of cultures and empowers humankind.

Futures studies and psychology. Social science interest in futures studies first appeared during the industrialisation era and periods of political and social turmoil, most evidently in 18th century France (Adam, 2009). Philosophers, sociologists, political scientists and economists such as Turgot, Condorcet, Saint Simon, Fourier and Comte were agents for social and moral change. These thinkers/activists, along with Marx, were future makers with a commitment to shaping society into a better place for its members (Adam, 2009). American social scientists who portrayed interest in future studies in the first half of the 20th century included William F. Ogburn, Harold Lasswell, John McHale, Daniel Bell, and Wendell Bell (Masini, 1998; 2001). However it was Gaston Berger, Bertrand de Jouvenel, and Pierre Massé and their philosophical/social science backgrounds, established the academic discipline of futures studies.

Futures studies also appears in Max Weber's methodological writings, whereby Weber demonstrates the possibility of a variety of means to complete existing ends (Adam, 2009). Social scientists can employ historicism, reviewing past events to gain an understanding on the different possibilities on how current events could transpire, identifying cultural assumptions attached to such events without undermining the veracity or morality of these assumptions (Adam, 2009). However Weber also demonstrated that while the end goal is located in the future and devoid of empiricism, the means of achieving the end goal is viewed with scientific methods and observational data. Adam (2009) writes this was Weber's manner of demonstrating science as lacking a position to critique the merit and value of an end goal. Rather than viewing the past, present, and future as three separate entities, Adam (2009) suggest they interpenetrate in purposes and goals. However, it is motivations, values, hopes, and fears that encompass human futurity; the future is anchored in the causes for action.

Recently CLA has been embraced by community psychologists as a method for unveiling roots underpinning complex issues. Bishop and Dzidic (2014) and Bishop, Dzidic, and Breen (2013) justify the adoption of the framework, identifying current methods such as thematic analysis and phenomenological analysis which struggle to penetrate the driving forces of complex phenomena. While CLA employs traditional poststructural techniques in the layers, the uniqueness of CLA is in the fourth layer, the uncovering of the unconscious

(Shevellar, 2011). Psychology, in particularly psychoanalysis, can offer a valuable perspective to myth/ metaphor analysis in CLA, with psychotherapy focusing on elucidating the processes of the psyche (Kirmayer, 1993).

Myths are "fundamental visions which enable us to understand, cope with, and transform ourselves and our worlds", with transformation a significant feature in myths (Lageman, 1986, p. 58). There are two conceptions of myth. Myth as a narrative/ideology encompasses tacit knowledge of social life. The construction of the social life in this sphere holds transcendental values and beliefs which are unchallenged by empirical tests or critical analysis (Kirmayer, 1993). The second concept of myth is anchored in a time and space that is beyond concerns, yet has a confounding ability to move people with transcendence and longing for community, a 'mythic consciousness', which is not sustained by conviction but of entrusting acceptance absent of the need for justification (Kirmayer, 1993). The mythic consciousness is intrinsically linked to the imagination, a belonging to community which collectively values something larger than itself (Kirmayer, 1993).

According to Campbell, myth systems have four major functions (Slusser, 1986, as cited by McGarry, 1991, p. 12):

- To reconcile waking consciousness to the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* ("*the mysterious presence of the wholly other that inspires awe and devotion")* of the universe as it is;
- To render an interpretive total image of the same (the universe);
- The enforcement of a moral order: the shaping of the individual to the requirements of his geographically and historically conditioned social group; and
- To foster the unfolding of the individual in integrity in accord with himself (microcosm), his culture (mesocosm), the universe (macrocosm), and, the awesome ultimate mystery which is beyond and within himself and all things.

Myths capture the social and psychological contributions to truth and meaning (Kirmayer, 1993). Kolakowski (1989) writes cultural norms are inherited through mythical narratives. Myths are not obliged to pertain to the 'rules' that science places on reality for credibility and truth, rather myth is an expression of collective experiences (Kolakowski, 1989; McGarry, 1991). Myths are 'narratised' and communicated through the power of

metaphors, which can portray and crystallise a person's struggle or vision (Kirmayer, 1993; Lageman, 1986). Rhetoric is integral to the functioning of myths and metaphors, with the power of language to move and transform emotions and moral convictions (Spillane, 1987).

The image of the concentric spheres, featured in Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, Galtung's civilizational studies, and Sarkar's kosas, feature in Jung's mandala which constituted the soul, conscious and unconscious; a symbol for wholeness and plenitude of self (Bailey, 2014; Kirmayer, 1993). The innermost circle symbolises the self (the psychological experience of the divine within) (Bailey, 2014), with the metaphor of the concentric spheres allowing for the narrative possibility of myth to emerge. In a therapy setting, opening the shells exposes the possibility of agency. Through the relationship with the therapist and the interrelatedness of the shells, the individual intellectualises the unconscious, "the inwardness and privacy of the self-observing ego" (Kirmayer, 1993, p. 178). The power of the myth is that it provides a story which universalises and succinctly describes the individual's predicament. Concomitantly, the myth suggests how to resolve the conflict through the narrative (Kirmayer, 1993). Myth simultaneously reinforces the issue and provides the resolution; a polarity which is a source of energy necessary to growth (McGarry, 1991; Moreno, 1970).

The CLA framework is pertinent to the analysis of skill shortages and labour migration in Australia. CLA, in particularly its analysis of myth/metaphor, provides opportunity to delve deep into this complex phenomenon. Captured through the lens of community psychology, this exploratory study provides a fresh new perspective on the mining boom-influenced conceptualisation of skill shortages and labour migration in Australia.

Research Design

The research design was informed by previous data collection experience with migrant workers. The potential for difficulties to be encountered are expected with the recruitment of participants, especially when there are cultural and language barriers, and thus a third party involved assists with fostering connections with migrant workers. However during data collection, external factors greatly influenced this study, which led to a series of alterations to the research design. This consequently extended the data collection phase by a considerable length of time.

Initially, this study set out to capture the experiences of employers and 457 visa holders in the Mid West region. However as data collection progressed, the increasing presence of working holiday visa holders in the workforce was evident, and so the scope was widened to include this cohort, especially as there a minimal employer restrictions imposed on this visa (such as an absence of language requirement). Stakeholders were initially interviewed to provide third party connections, however they identified issues unique to them in relation to skill shortages and labour migration. The lack of research on these issues within this specific context, despite the contentious discourse in the media led to scope to be widened to include stakeholder perspectives in the Mid West and Perth regions, however maintaining Geraldton as the focus location for the study.

The data collection method was also influenced by external factors. Employers who were requested an interview often reported being time poor. To manage this obstacle an online survey was created, which was successful in collecting responses. An alternative survey was created to collect responses from migrant workers who had recently departed Geraldton. While a point was made of developing trust with potential migrant worker participants, most were hesitant to agreeing to an interview with a recording device, and signing a consent form. The recording device was removed, verbal consent was accepted, and short hand notes were taken instead. Short hand notes were also used in most employer interviews, where interviews were restricted by time and taking place in noisy workshops.

However the most significant external factor to influence the data collection was the shelving of OPR during the data collection phase. As mine sites were contingent on the building of the port and rail and vice versa, the economic prosperity of the region was dependent on foreign investment. The price for iron ore began to decline at the beginning of 2013, as did the demand for labour, and as a result migrant workers departed the city in search of work. This had a significant impact on the themes to emerge, which are explored in the next chapter. Overall, 89 interviews and 22 online surveys were collected over 18 months.

Description of participants. Participants interviewed were divided into three cohorts; employers, migrant workers, and stakeholders. Employers interviewed were operating businesses in the Mid West region, with a focus on Geraldton. These businesses covered a variety of industries, from industry trades to the health sector.

A majority of migrant worker participants were on working holiday visas, with a minimal number on 457 and RSMS visas. Migrant worker participants were from a variety of countries, including the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland, France, Estonia, Germany, The Netherlands, Canada, the United States of America, Chile, South Korea and Japan, with the majority of migrant workers originating from the UK and Ireland. Interestingly, about a quarter of the employers interviewed were also from these countries, as well as a few participants from the stakeholder group. English proficiency for this group was high, thus communication was not an issue. Despite the presence of working holiday visas, a majority of migrant workers were pursuing sponsorship, either through a 457 visa or a RSMS visa.

The stakeholder cohort covered a wide range of groups affected by skill shortages and labour migration. They include:

- Migration agents;
- Industry bodies;
- Recruitment and employment agencies;
- Trade unions;
- Local and State Government bodies;
- Mining companies; and
- Community groups, an Australian employee from Geraldton, and Police.

Evidently Australians employees were absent from the stakeholder cohort, with one Australian employee interviewed in Geraldton.

Recruitment of participants. Recruitment occurred by way of snowball effect, through institutions such as trade unions, and industry bodies. The decision to use this recruitment style was informed by previous successful experiences in recruiting migrant workers. Employer participants were recruited in the same manner, and by cold calling. The location influenced the recruitment procedures. Geraldton is located over 400 kilometres north of Perth. Factors that needed to be considered were transportation, safety, finances, accommodation, and access to study participants. Weighing up these options, it was decided that Geraldton would be used as a base while on fieldtrips, and that relocation occurred for three months as a dedicated data collection period.

However, recruitment of participants was unexpectedly more difficult than anticipated. Migrant workers were comfortable with sharing their experiences, but reluctant to consent to a formal interview process. This was due to the requirement of signing a consent form and the interview being recorded (discussed in depth in *data collection issues*). To ease the anxiety and reinforce anonymity, an online survey was added as a data collection instrument.

Employer participants were also difficult to recruit. Some employers would agree to an interview, but later cancelled, or they continued to change the time due to pressures of running a business. Arranging an interview can take weeks, is demanding and time consuming (Longhurst, 2009). An online survey was also included for employers as a way of accommodating them. Further fieldtrips were also conducted, involving the researcher travelling to work sites, and introducing the research and request for participation in person. This was a significantly successful approach. Most employer participants were recruited in this manner, with a few recruited via snowball effect.

Due to the difficulties in recruiting participants, the time dedicated to data collection was re-arranged. Instead of the relocation to Geraldton for three months as planned, the researcher conducted several fieldtrips over several months, staying for shorter periods of four days, up to three weeks.

Another strategy to recruit employers and migrant workers was to broaden the scope of involvement to include labour unions, government, and industry bodies with a connection to mining in the region based in both the Mid West and Perth.

Conceptual grounding of methods – Grounded theory. The data collection process and analysis was influenced by grounded theory. Characteristics of grounded theory include the data driving the analytical process, the subject matter focused on a process or action developing over a period of time, a development of theory, memoing, data collection comprising of interviews, theoretical sampling, and various forms of coding (Creswell, 2013; Rasmussen, Akinsulure-Smith, & Chu, 2016). Pre-data collection fieldtrip, semi-structured interviews, observational data, media reports, and online surveys exploring qualitative-like questions were methods employed to collect data, with grounded theory influences described below.

Pre-data collection fieldtrip. Data collection began in Perth (where the researcher is based), with interviews with unions and industry bodies. From these interviews, it was established there was a lack of union presence in the Mid West. Contact was made with cultural or specific migrant groups, who did not have a presence in the region either. A pre-data collection or scoping fieldtrip was arranged to gather an understanding of the environment of the Mid West.

This fieldtrip established contacts in industry bodies located in the region, where interviews were conducted. It also allowed the researcher to explore accommodation options, with a hostel chosen as accommodation. Conversations with the hostel owners/managers opened new opportunities for recruitment of participants through the hostel, informing the researcher that the majority of hostel residents were applying for sponsorship for work. Due to the lack of available housing in Geraldton, many residents were long-time boarders, some residing for two years, creating a strong sense of community amongst the residents. It was also a form of theoretical sampling, allowing the researcher to gauge the themes in the region to inform interview questions.

Semi-structured interviews. An interview captures a participant's reality on a particular event; a delicate method which hinges on trust between two strangers. Semi-structured interviews require researchers to be flexible and adaptive to each participant (Broom, 2005), as the process is conversational-like, free-flowing and open to new emerging themes (Longhurst, 2009). Qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews seek to not to count, but to represent rich subjective experiences. Broom (2005) highlights that while interviews are centred on collecting subjective experiences, they too are subject to some form of personal motivation.

The flexibility of semi-structured interviews allow for theoretical sampling. Concepts derived from data analysis shape the questions to be asked in the next interview, influencing the direction of the interviews. This gives the notion that the research is feeding itself, and driving itself forward on its own force (Broom, 2005; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Punch, 2004). Most qualitative studies continue to collect data until saturation has occurred (Mason, 2010b). However, there is the risk of perceived saturation absent of an explanation of the process (Bowen, 2008; Dey, 1999; Morse, 1995). Mason (2010b) cites Green and

Thorogood (2009) when exploring the practical limitations to saturation, including timeframes imposed on the researcher by the funding body.

Initial interview questions were based on media reports and literature pertinent to the participant group. Interview questions had two components; skill shortages and labour migration. Questions were aimed at exploring participant experiences with these two components, with sub questions touching on the mining boom, the Geraldton community, and policy. For example, employers were asked about their experiences with DIBP, and gave suggestions to improve the programme. Migrant workers were also asked about their experiences with the department. However not all stakeholders were asked about experiences with the department, rather this was reserved for trade unions, mining companies, industry bodies, and regional government. As the study data collection progressed, theoretical sampling framed the interview questions. Media reports taken from newspapers (*The West Australian, The Weekend West, The Sunday Times, The Geraldton Guardian, The Australian, The Australian Financial Review*), and online (*ABC News, The Australian, Perth Now*), were also utilised to inform interview questions, due to the nature of the phenomena constantly changing. Other resources to inform the theoretical sampling of interview questions included policy and legislation (as migration laws were constantly changing), current literature, and of course data to emerge from interviews. This process also informed the construction of survey questions.

Semi-structured interviews are an ideal method for data collection as they can provide in-depth information on sensitive topics in a private setting. However the negative aspect to the intimacy of a one-on-one interview is the participant may feel under scrutiny or pressure (Longhurst, 2009). This was an issue experienced with some migrant workers. Another weakness of semi-structured interviews is that they are time consuming (Myers & Newman, 2007). As discussed this was an issue encountered on several occasions, notably with employer participants.

Interviews commenced once ethical procedures were observed and consent was given. Interviews took place in various locations, a factor dependant on the participant interviewed. Migrant workers were interviewed in several locations. These included the hostel, Perth domestic airport, their workplace, and cafes. Employers were interviewed over the telephone or at their workplace in the Geraldton town centre, and surrounding industrial areas. All other stakeholders were interviewed in their office, cafés, or over the

telephone. The strength of telephone interviews is they are an alternative when geography is an issue. However, telephone interviews are considerably shorter than interviews in person and require more dedication from the participant and researcher (Wilson, 2014). Telephone interviews lasted between 10 to 20 minutes. The duration of face to face interviews varied greatly; from 15 minutes to two hours. This variation was dependent on the time participants could allocate for an interview. A translator was not required for the interviews, and all overseas born participants had a sound understanding of English.

Interviews conducted with participants from different cultures required an awareness of cultural differences. Awareness of the self as a cultural being, own cultural background, and the differences that exist in values ad biases between the self and other cultures is crucial to developing awareness of how contextual problems can affect how people perceive and discuss their experiences (Ivey & Ivey, 2007; American Psychological Association, 2002; Martinez, 2013). Matsumato and Juang (2004) compiled a generic guideline to critically thinking about cultural differences. This includes:

- Recognise that culture is a psychological construct- Culture is a subjective experience in which people share values and beliefs;
- Recognise individual differences within a culture- observe individuals' compliance with shared values and beliefs;
- Understand our own cultural filters and ethnocentrism- examining our own cultural biases and how it influences how we interact with others;
- Allow for possibility that conflicts are cultural-realising that negative behaviour can be culturally influenced can avoid personalising the source of conflict in our interactions; and
- Learn more about cultural influences on behaviour- culture is continually changing, and understanding ways in which culture manifests in behaviour is crucial to co-existing in the global community.

Observational data. Observation positions the researcher in a place where they can witness events and occurrences, where creative fieldwork and insights come from being steeped in the setting being studied (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Patton, 2002).

Some data was collected outside the interview setting, where migrant worker participants shared their stories of unorthodox behaviours of employers and employees, with the researcher and others in casual settings. This type of data rarely surfaced in formal interviews. When it did, it was followed with a request to be off the record.

People who shared these stories were made aware of the research, which was followed by notetaking and memoing. Interestingly, there was no hesitation to share these stories with the researcher in a communal setting such as when participants shared meals together. This could be attributed to a variety of reasons, such as they did not fear the consequences if their employer discovered what they said, they had left the place of employment in question, or there was no recording device or consent form, no pen and paper to record.

This method of data collection was not anticipated to be used at the beginning of the study. However, the decision to utilise the method was due to two reasons. Migrant workers were happy to share their experiences without hesitation nor apprehension; and this provided another method to collect data, as there was a struggle with participants to consenting to an interview with a recording device and consent form.

Online survey. Initially, this research was purely qualitative, with semi-structured interviews as the nominated method of data collection. However unanticipated difficulties in the recruitment of participants as discussed led to the creation of two online surveys; an employer survey and a migrant worker survey. These surveys were powered by Survey Monkey.

Surveys provide a range of significant advantages as a method for data collection. They are time sensitive, can be completed in a location at the convenience of the participant, and most importantly, ensure the anonymity of the participant, especially in the online environment (Helm, Möller, Mauroner, & Conrad, 2013). The disadvantage to employing a survey is cost associated with printing and postage (Roberts, 2007). However, the prevalence of the internet in society eliminates this disadvantage (MacKerron, 2011; Sing & Burgess, 2007). The internet also has the ability to maintain 'social needs', through social networking sites. Studies on social networking sites have shown it is an effective method to develop and maintain relationships through online communication (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007; Kane, Finchman, Gallaugher, & Glaser, 2009). Social networking sites act as a

way of belonging to a social group, free of the constraints of time and space (Beldad, de Jong, & Steehouder 2010; Kane et al., 2009; Lin & Lu, 2011). It was observed that most migrant workers frequently used social networking sites to maintain contact with family and friends from home, and to share experiences and maintain relationships with the friends they made along their travels (Yu, Tian, Vogel, & Kwok, 2010).

There are disadvantages to employing online surveys, such as a reliance on the server. Lack of access to an online survey due to technical difficulties indicates the probability participants will not return to complete it (Gordon & McNew, 2008). Another disadvantage to using online surveys is that it fails to capture potential respondents who are not connected to the internet (Gordon & McNew, 2008). However given the strengths of utilising an online survey, the difficulties securing an interview with employers, the anxiety of identification experienced by migrant workers, and the observation of migrant workers frequently utilising the internet, it became clear that this was the direction to follow.

There were two surveys constructed; an employer survey and migrant worker survey. Surveys were anticipated to take fifteen to thirty minutes. Surveys comprised of qualitative questions which were similar to questions asked in semi-structured interviews, with minor quantitative questions such as demographics. Survey Monkey was used as the researcher has previous experience with creating online surveys with the website. The employer survey was sent as a link via email to industry body and local government participants that were interviewed by the researcher. It was requested these participants would forward the link to employers they knew or worked with in the region. The migrant worker survey was distributed through social networking sites.

The online survey was also successful with migrant workers, in particularly with those who were based in the region or had left at time of completion. Some of the respondents who completed the survey would have consented to an interview, but had left the country earlier than planned.

Data collection issues. Past research experiences have indicated that trust, time and geographical movement of migrant workers were key factors to consider in data collection, with time being the key issue to consider in regards to employer participants as well.

While these elements were factored into the planning and timeline of the research, in reality they had more of an impact on the overall progress than anticipated, extending the data collection period. Factors included:

- *Trust*: some migrant workers were apprehensive to talk about their experiences working in the Mid West. Many were suspicious there was an ulterior motive, such as an Immigration Officer investigating them;

- *Recording Device*: overtime a good rapport was developed with most migrant worker participants. However while most became comfortable with sharing their stories in a casual setting, when it came to requesting an interview, there was considerable anxiety, especially around the recording device;

- *Geographical movement*: due to the cyclical nature of a mining boom, OPR was put on hold which led to the subsequent stall of the development of mine sites in the region, thus a slowdown in the local community. This had a domino effect, which saw many migrant workers leave due to inability to secure sponsorship; and

- *Time*: securing interviews with employers was not about building trust, but about constantly chasing an interview. Some continued to put it off, while others had very limited time. All interviews with employers occurred at their place of employment or over the telephone. Interviews took place in shared office spaces with the general office noise and distraction, or on construction sites, amongst heavy machinery. In most of these environments, the quality of the recording would have been compromised by the workplace environment noise, and sometimes not possible when standing in a middle of a workshop. Therefore, these interviews were not recorded and comprehensive notes taken instead.

Trust. An issue that delayed the collection of interviews was potential participants' uncertainty to participate in the research. This was due to a collection of reasons. One was that some participants were suspicious that I was an investigator from DIBP. This leads into the second reason: the nature of the topic. Due to the nature of the process of sponsorship, migrant workers are heavily dependent on employers to secure their pathway to residency

in Australia. The hesitance to share experiences in a formal interview setting was due to a lack of trust.

Beldad et al. (2010) note the dilemma surrounding the concept of trust is its lack of a unified, universal definition. Some definitions of trust define it as an expectation in interaction with others (Baldad et al., 2010; Barber, 1983). Some perceive trust to be an attitude (Luhmann, 1979) while others perceive trust to be psychological construct which shapes attitudes (Beldad et al. 2010). Fetchenhauer and Dunning (2009) describe different philosophical approaches to trust, from neoclassical economics of trusting another only when it serves their material self-interest to do so, to a psychological and social perspective of trust, with an awareness of vulnerability and risk taking involved with depending on the benevolence of the person being trusted (Beldad, et al. 2010; Doney, Cannon, & Mullen, 1998; Riegelsberger, Sasse, & McCarthy, 2003). Krasnova, Spiekerman, Koroleva, and Hildebrand (2010) associates trust with the amount of personal information an individual discloses. Trust is said to serve an important function in building the foundations, cementing relationships, and maintaining them (Blau, 1964). Giddens (1990) states that there is a difference in trust between individual and institution. Trust in institutions is based on public knowledge and its competencies in performing its purpose and obligations (Devosk, Spini, & Schwartz, 2002; Mesch, 2012). In an interview setting, trust comes down to what extent a participant can trust the researcher, a stranger, with sensitive information (Myers & Newman, 2007). The vastness of definitions for trust reflects how inherently complicated it is.

Recording device and verbatim transcription. Initially interviews were to be recorded. A recording application was downloaded onto a mobile phone. However, due to the knowledge of being recorded, migrant worker participants were uncomfortable with this notion. Most preferred an interview without the recording. It was also difficult to record interviews with employers, due to background noise when the interviews were conducted (Di Cicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Finally the decision was made to remove the recording aspect of the interview. But did this compromise the quality of the data?

Halcomb and Davidson (2006) wrote an article questioning the necessity of verbatim transcription of interviews. They write that authors have failed to demonstrate how verbatim transcription is superior to other methods. Transcript analysis can act as an audit trail for data analysis (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006). However, the cost associated with

transcription includes time, effort, potential for technical and human errors, and resources is significant (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006; Fasick, 1977). Halcomb and Davidson (2006) write that memoing can add depth and improve the quality of data collection, compared to transcripts alone (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Fasick, 1977; Punch, 2004). Halcomb and Davidson (2006) suggest researchers memo soon after interviews are conducted. A reflective journal can contain impressions and new themes that arise during the interview, an activity which was performed throughout the data collection process.

   Economic reasons for not participating. Another reason some migrant workers did not participate was not because of reasons in Australia, but because of the state of the economy of their country of origin. At the beginning of the data collection period, Europe was in dire economic circumstances, in particularly, the UK and Ireland. This economic environment led to the influx of English and Irish migrant workers to Australian shores. This was magnified in Geraldton, where there were a large number of English and Irish migrant workers. Australia offered economic stability with the mining boom, and a pathway to permanent residency.

   The connection between time and trust has a solid link in this research. While there was an awareness of the potential trust issues with migrant workers, action was taken to foster the growth of good rapport with potential participants such as living in the same accommodation. Online surveys were utilised initially to get around the trust issue. The survey was introduced around some months after initial contact was made with participants. However it was about this time that participants were warming to the idea of an interview. In reality, the survey still collected data, but for a different reason: due to the change in the local economy, some migrant workers left for overseas, where they had better chance of sponsorship.

   Rigour. The subjective nature of data collection and analysis in qualitative research creates a dilemma of how to measure for rigour. Attempts are made to translate positivist-based concepts into a postmodernist language (see Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However Malterud (2001, p. 483) gives her definition of rigour in qualitative research:

   I believe that qualitative research methods are founded on an understanding of
   research as a systematic and reflective process for development of knowledge that

can somehow be contested and shared, implying ambitions of transferability beyond the study setting.

In constructionism-based research, the emphasis on validity is on the studied community's ability to trust the worthiness of social inquiries made about them (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, 2000). Longino (2002) outlines questions to determine the validity of research situated within this paradigm: can the claims be supported by data? Can claims and data be supported by and accepted by the scientific community? Is there inclusiveness of community participants and critique of the inquiry within norms of standards? Community plays a vital role in validating the truth in social inquiry, with a requirement to present a balance portrayal of all stakeholders' perspectives (Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

Long and Johnson (2000), and Langer, Lietz, and Furman (2007) suggest various techniques in testing the rigour of validity and reliability in qualitative research. They recommend using an audit trail and triangulation in testing the rigour of reliability, and reflective journaling, member checking, prolonged involvement, persistent observation, and peer debriefing to test the validity of the research. These techniques are listed below, with an example of how they were utilised:

- *Self-reflecting journal*: allows for reflexivity to occur, by acknowledging the researcher's subjectivity to the research process. Reflexivity acknowledges the researcher's preconceptions and biases towards the analysis of data (Long & Johnson, 2000; Malterud, 2001; Porter, 1993). A self-reflecting journal was utilised when conducting data collection and analysis.

- *Member checking*: allows participants to review the raw data collected to ensure accuracy. This was a technique which gave participants the opportunity to add or omit information from the interview, and ensure that it portrayed their story.

- *Prolonged involvement with the community*: Kirk and Miller (1986) write this ensures the researcher has a better understanding of values, beliefs and attitudes within the context of the researched community. It also allows for themes to conceptualise with a greater understanding of the implications, and assists in solidifying trust between researcher and participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Kvale, 1995; Long & Johnson, 2000). Conducting data collection over an extended period

of time, with frequent contact with participants gave a greater understanding of the overall picture on a global scale; for example, of how Japan's economic decisions to not build a port and rail had a ripple effect on a regional community, trickling down to the impact on individuals. The prolonged involvement meant the opportunity to witness the long-term consequences of these events. Prolonged involvement also meant trust was established between the researcher and most participants, and migrant worker participants were more likely to maintain contact after they moved on, which most did.

- *Peer debriefing*: supervisors play a crucial role of ensuring credibility of research students' work (Long & Johnson, 2000). Supervisors were pivotal in not only supervising the progress of my research, but also of development of the individual as a researcher. Colleagues and friends who are situated in the same field were valuable sounding boards too.

- *Audit trail*: allows for a presentation of all data collected, methods, analysis, and decision-making along the way. The purpose of an audit trail permits readers to evaluate the decision-making process and conclusions, and to compare conclusions (Long & Johnson, 2000). An audit trail was intuitively included in a self-reflecting journal, especially when experiencing difficulties with collecting data in devising alternative methods to overcome the problem.

- *Triangulation*: reduces the disadvantages associated with using only one source or data collection method, with the use of documents to add validity to the research (Long & Johnson, 2000). However, this technique assumes there is a fixed point at which the validity of the research can be validated. Richardson (2000) suggests crystallisation to be employed in constructionist research instead of triangulation, and recommends replacing the triangle with a crystal. A crystal acknowledges there is no universal definition of valid knowledge, rather there a multiple views of reality existing at the same time (Järvensivu & Törnroos, 2010).

Ultimately, scientific knowledge is accepted as truth so long as the community is willing to critically investigate and accept the claim (Longino, 2002). The issue with this claim, as explored by Järvensivu and Törnroos (2010), is at what point does evidence and consensus begin? Who makes the ultimate judgement call? And how long does validity of knowledge

last? They suggest choosing one viewpoint at a time and examining reality from each point, so that crystallising different viewpoints can reveal new knowledge. Järvensivu and Törnroos (2010) ascertain while consensus is imperative to good valid research, it is communication and transparency that ensure the success and survival of valid knowledge.

This chapter provides the conceptual and theoretical frameworks which underpin this exploratory study. Social constructionism positions the study in an acceptance of multiple realities, through the realisation of sociology of scientific knowledge. Community psychology builds on this, emphasising the expressions of power by contextualising it in ecological conceptions. As noted, communities are a powerful force that can alienate and oppress 'others'. CLA provides a theoretical framework and set of tools to better understand this and the themes and myths pinned at the core of the phenomenon. Overall, the analysis of power as guided by the analytical ecological framework of CLA captures the vulnerabilities of migrant workers relying on their employer for sponsorship. This is evident in the difficulties encountered in the data collection phase. The framework also provides new insight into employer and stakeholder experiences, which blended together with migrant worker experiences, captures a snapshot of skill shortages and labour migration in the Geraldton community.

Chapter Four – Findings and Discussion

The previous chapter outlined social constructionism as the epistemological foundation for the study, establishing the construction of reality to be socially constructed and examinable through the power dynamics inherent in these relationships. Community psychology as the lens of inquiry gives a fresh perspective to the approach of the phenomenon of the research question. Skill shortages and labour migration in Australia are usually studied through economic and rights-based approaches, examining the topics on a macro scale of globalisation, policy, and implications for industry. A community psychology approach allows the data to be examined via ecological systems, drawing the analysis down to the micro layer, and reconstructing back up to the macro layer. This approach investigates the analysis of issues throughout the layers, guided by the value-based praxis of empowerment that is pertinent to community psychology. Furthermore, the theoretical framework of CLA enhances the uniqueness of the study, borrowing from the futures discipline. CLA assists in the analysis by depositing themes and subthemes into four distinct layers: litany, social causes, worldviews, and myth/metaphors. These three paradigms employ analysis of power and dominant discourse, complementing each other as they synergistically function to expose the major themes underpinning the issues of skill shortage and labour migration.

This chapter displays the major themes and subthemes guided by the analysis of CLA. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, data collection proved to be a difficult task, with migrant workers hesitant to participate and employers were too time poor to complete surveys. It must also be highlighted that the official name for the government department of immigration changed during data collection, and so participants referred to the department as the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), as opposed to the current Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP).

To present the findings, the chapter is divided into two sections; findings and discussion, with findings broken down into parts A, B, and C. Part A of the findings identifies major themes which emerged for employers, migrant workers, and stakeholders, and are presented in a brief summary and table in this section. Part B of the findings is an analysis

conducted on the four overarching themes which are an amalgamation of the initial major themes found in Part A. Following this, Part C of the chapter provides a discussion of the overarching themes to emerge from the research.

Part A -- Major Themes

      This section outlines themes and subthemes for employers, migrant workers, and stakeholders, with tables in the Appendix providing details of the themes and subthemes to emerge for each group. The data was grouped into these three clusters as migrant workers and employers tend to be the focus of research inquiring into skill shortages and labour migration. The inclusion of stakeholders' experiences (unions, industry bodies, government, recruitment agencies, local community, and mining companies) during the mining boom allows groups who are usually under researched in the context of the inquiry to contribute new knowledge and depth to the existing literature, and permits the study to explore the relational aspects of the inquiry.

The data collected from interviews and surveys was thematically coded. This process was guided by the influences of grounded theory, such as substantive codes and memoing, triangulation for reflexivity, as well as current literature, government policies, legislation, and media reports. Once processed, the themes and subthemes were coded again into the four layers of CLA. These themes and subthemes highlight the similarities, subtitles, complexities, and differences existing within each group (for example, Theme 1 from the migrant worker group codes differences emerging in experiences in the Australian workplace). The process of identifying themes and subthemes are also influenced by open coding in grounded theory, where codes are identified by causal conditions (factors causing the phenomenon), strategies (response to the phenomenon), intervening conditions (contextualised situational factors), and consequences (outcomes) (Creswell, 2013). The final themes for each group are listed below, with tables detailing themes and subthemes located in the Appendix.

Employers

Overall there were five themes to emerge from the employer interviews and surveys (see Appendix A). These themes included:

- Theme 1 - Lack of work ethics: Australian attitude towards employment;
- Theme 2 - Factors contributing to skill shortages: Poor education, ineffective use of labour and economic concerns;
- Theme 3 - Perception of support from government and stakeholders: Exploiting the skill shortage;
- Theme 4: Social issues in the Geraldton community; and
- Theme 5: Mixed experiences with labour migration.

Migrant Workers

There were two themes to emerge from interviews with migrant workers (see Appendix B). It is believed that this group accrued less themes than employers and stakeholders due to the economic slowdown in mining and the local economy occurring during data collection, which resulted in migrant workers struggling to find employment and subsequently leaving the region. The themes are listed below:

- Theme 1 - Experiences in the Australian workplace; and
- Theme 2 - Difficulties encountered with government and policy.

Stakeholders

There were four major themes surfacing from the interviews with stakeholders (see Appendix C). These included:

- Theme 1 - Exploitation of migrant workers;
- Theme 2 - Limited investment in alleviating labour shortages; preference for labour migrants;
- Theme 3 - Australian attitudes towards employment; and
- Theme 4 - Social barriers to economic participation.

Part B -- Overarching Themes

This section collates the data from employers, migrant workers, and stakeholders to identify reoccurring themes surfacing across all three groups and subgroups. There emerges four overarching themes which represent the eleven themes from Part A. Following is a recapitulation of causal layered analysis (CLA) and an in-depth exploration on these four overarching themes.

Following the thematic coding and subsequent CLA coding, a third round of coding was applied (axial coding) to the eleven themes and subthemes, which again was informed by literature, policy, legislation, and media reports, as well as comparative analysis. Themes were then drawn up on butcher's paper for a visual perspective on the dynamics of the themes, and how they integrated. The reconstruction of major themes back into the three distinct groups was to highlight any similarities and differences to emerge in participants' experiences, however when aligned there was repetition of the major themes. As portrayed below in the Table 3, issues with work ethics occurred across all three groups, as did difficulties with government and policy, while social issues in the community emerged across two groups.

Table 3.

Comparative Analysis of Employers, Migrant Workers, and Stakeholders CLA Thematic Codes

Employers	Migrant workers	Stakeholders
Lack of work ethics: Attitudes towards employment	Experiences in the Australian workplace culture	Attitudes in the Australian workplace
Perception of support from government and stakeholders	Difficulties encountered with government and policy	Limited investment in alleviating skill shortages; preference for migrant workers
Factors contributing to skill shortages: Employer perspectives		
Social issues in the Geraldton community		Social barriers to economic participation
Mixed experiences with labour migration		Exploitation of migrant workers

Due to comparative analysis and the similarities emerging, the eleven major themes from the three groups were reduced into four overarching themes which describe the collective experiences of employers, migrant workers, and stakeholders. They are:

- The lack of work ethics in the Australian workplace;

- The blame game: Beliefs, behaviours and policies compounding the skill shortage

- Social issues in the community: Barriers to employment; and

- Exploitation of migrant workers: Disempowerment, procedural fairness, and distributive justice.

These four overarching themes identified as the factors that contributed to and perpetuated the skill shortage during the mining boom, and confirm that exploitation of migrant workers did occur. Following is an analysis on each overarching theme.

Analysis of four overarching themes. Following is an analysis of the consolidation of eleven major themes into the four overarching themes. To reiterate the theoretical framework of CLA; the method does not reject philosophies nor ideologies, but rather acknowledges the complexities inherent in the phenomenon, and with a flexibility to embrace multiple epistemologies, it seeks to identity and uproot unchallenged assumptions adopted by the hegemonic society, to create an awareness of alternative futures. To conduct the analysis, the themes are deposited into four layers:

- Litany: opinions echoed through the media, bias fear-based assumptions;

- Social Causes: articulation of the cultural, economic, social, political, and historical factors perpetuating the phenomenon;

- Worldview Discourse: explores the ideological positioning, interest, civilizational worldviews, and epistemes underpinning the social, cultural and historical processes; and

- Myth/metaphor: the unconscious and emotive dimensions are explicated through the evocation of myths and collective archetypes embedded in the roots of the phenomenon (Inayatullah, 2004a). These dimensions of the data can be explored through the use of imagery, writing, and storytelling.

One of the unique features of CLA is the layers permit the analysis to delve further, where existing literature facilitate interpretation of data (Breen, Dzidic, & Bishop, 2016). While these layers can be perplexing, Barber (2010, p.171), as explored by Bishop et al., (2013, p.6), simply presents these layers as:

- What we say (Litany);

- What we do (Social Causes);

- How we think (Worldviews Discourse); and

- Who we are (Myth/metaphor)

Following below is a presentation of the four overarching themes deposited into the layers of CLA. As a point of reference, text from interviews which were conducted with short-hand notes are italicised, while direct quotes are italicised and in quotation marks.

Overarching Theme One - The Lack of Work Ethics in the Australian Workplace

This first overarching theme explores the constant reference by study participants to the lack of work ethics found in Australian employees. The negative work attitudes of local workers and particularly Generation Y were scrutinised by employers, migrant workers and stakeholders. Local workers and youth were perceived to value remuneration over work satisfaction. The changes in family dynamics, intergenerational differences, and dehumanisation of labour emerged as the perceived reasons for the lack of loyalty of employees. The dehumanisation of labour appeared to be unconscious dimension at the root of this overarching theme.

Litany. The litany layer presented sweeping generalisations regarding the nature of the work ethics of Geraldton/local employees. Employers cited a *struggle with motivating*

Geraldton staff and *productivity level is low*. These type of comments appeared to be consistently used across trade industries and applied to unskilled workers, and were mentioned in the context of mining: *a lot of standing around, filling out forms--some don't work hard.* However, the perception of poor quality local employees was applied to the surplus of Queensland teachers experienced six years prior: "*problem was you're getting ones that no one wants--if they were good, they would be employed*". Stakeholders found youth to be selective when it came to working: *Gen Y are too picky with jobs-don't want KFC or McDonald's jobs-want jobs like friends who work on mines; want to make big money, have a car, girlfriend, but not prepared to start from bottom and work for it.*

Social Causes. Employers believed there was a lack of available skilled people in the region in general: *find it very hard to find good quality painters; "the type of people you want are very hard to get", has always been a shortage…have been many apprentices in hope they stay on, but know it's not always the case; always been tough to find people to work.* One employer gave an example as a subcontractor on a mine site in the region. The company required 120 staff for the job, recruiting 40 to 55 staff. However 20 were asked to leave due to their lack of skills. Engaging youth in the workforce also perceived to be an issue: *young people entering the industry is limited*; *a low percentage of staff are in their 20s. With 80 drivers, ten percent are under 30*, and *"we struggle to find enough kids wanting to get into the construction-based trades"*. Some employers perceived employees to lack foresight in regards to their own career: *most young Aussies today seem to want the big money without the hard yards and don't see it as an investment in their own future. We need to shift this thinking*, and:

> *It doesn't make sense people moving to different industry. People should be encouraged to utilise the skills they have, to build on them. For example, motor mechanics. So many aren't working in their job, even though they're qualified. Likewise with plastics fabricators, doing other things. Money is a big part of not being able to keep people in the industry*.

These difficulties encountered by employers may be reflective of the difference in characteristics amongst the generational cohorts. Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964) are characterised as valuing job security and loyalty to one organisation. They are viewed as intellectually arrogant, socially mature, and critical thinkers (Kowske, Rasch, & Wiley, 2010). Gen Xers (born 1965-1980) are characterised by living in social and political changes

steeped with advancement in technology, with rising divorce rates, economic instability, and corporate downsizing. They are characterised as cynical, pessimistic, and not likely to display loyalty. They work to live, avoid long hours at work, not concerned with titles and status, and have a better work-life balance than Baby Boomers (Chi, Maier, & Gursoy, 2013; Park & Gursoy, 2012; Wong, Gardiner, Lang, & Coulon, 2008). Millennial Generation (from here on as Gen Y) (born 1981-2000) are born in an era of neo-optimism and technology. They are social, impatient, and question authority. They are described as confident, valuing responsibility and input in decisions and actions. This cohort prefer structure in their work, with tasks broken down into sub-tasks, and are shaped by economic prosperity, MTV, terrorism, and globalisation (Chi et al., 2013; Park & Gursoy, 2012; Wong et al., 2008). From these brief generalisations of each generation and the differences in work values, it is understandable that a conflict of values would arise in the workplace.

Gen Y were perceived to lack skills too: *finds they have staff who can't bang in a nail*; *when first started the company ten years ago, they did everything in house; service, maintain. Now finds guys with limitations in skills*, and "*they can operate iPhones but they don't know how to sweep the floor*". Employers highlighted a sense of entitlement with this generation: "*they show no initiative, they're lazy, they see their wage as appearance money…it's not just clocking on, they need to be doing something constructive*"; "*younger kids have an expectation that it will be handed to them*", *trend with apprentices who rock up whenever think they still get paid the same*, and …*when apprentices are questioned about their work, they respond that they will finish it tomorrow*. Gen Y were identified as exhibiting a disrespectful attitude: t*he attitudes of apprentices is disrespectful – when I was an apprentice, was taught discipline, not to speak out of line. First year apprentices in Geraldton and Karratha need to listen, not back talk, find work. Ask them to do things/grab a tool/do work: they back chat, question authority. G*en Y were perceived to be spoilt with opportunities: "*everything is cheaper, everything is given to them so easily. They don't have to work their butt off",* with the idea that there are *more opportunities, and more to acquire with less money*. Similar attitudes were present in minority youth: *…had one Aboriginal apprentice…similar casual approach to work like non-Aboriginal kids*, and *last apprentice was Sudanese…did a three month trial, but didn't make it. The apprentice was lazy, wouldn't work, and would walk around on their mobile*.

The theme of a sense of entitlement in Gen Y is found in other research, such as Twenge and Kasser's (2013) research examining American youth since 1976. They found an

increase in materialism with less focus on work, attributing this to a growth in a sense of entitlement. This growth in sense of entitlement is linked to an increase in narcissism over generations (Twenge, 2013; Twenge & Campbell, 2008; Twenge & Foster, 2010). Individuals with strong traits of narcissism have an inflated sense of self and achievements, disconnected from the reality of hard work to achieve results (Twenge & Kasser, 2013). Culture has also influenced a sense of entitlement, with advertising and reality television fostering the idea that individuals *deserve* material goods, rather than *earn* them (Twenge & Campbell, 2008; Twenge & Kasser, 2013). Overall research demonstrates an intergenerational paradigm shift from intrinsic values such as community, towards extrinsic values such as money and image (Twenge, 2013).

In general local employees are perceived to prioritise remuneration: "*no one wants to work, they all want the money but don't want to work for it*", *…not motivated, seems to be all about the money, not getting the job done;* (it is) *very difficult to get someone who will stay longer than a week and not expect a manager's wage*, and *it's always been hard to find good staff; they're offered more money, they leave*. Money was seen to be a priority over the choice of quality in jobs chosen by employees: *we have a high level of under-used skilled workers; trained fabricators go to mine sites only to hose down site…crappy jobs…just better pay*. This attitude was also found to be present with some migrant workers: *four Filipinos were paid holidays upfront…however one emailed back to say they weren't returning to the company, and two wouldn't respond, but instead submitted their resignation*. This employer later discovered these migrant workers were poached by the competition, who paid their own migrant workers a reward between $500 and $1000 for recruiting other migrant workers. Another employer lost a 457 employee to Melbourne, again due to better wages. This attitude was found amongst employers too, with one employer (who was a 457 visa holder), sponsored by one company, left for another company for better wages. One employer noted the employees demanding the better income were between the ages of 25 and 45, usually men with families.

The value of income was attributed to the money made in the mining industry, with Gen Y *not getting out of bed to work for less*; *originally had three apprentices, but two moved to the mines*; *Gen Y is a big issue: everyone wants to work on mines and make big money, especially in Geraldton and neighbouring towns; Indigenous kids mainly interested in mining*. The income earned on mine sites was not just an attractive figure for Gen Y, but others too, such as interstate employees: [we] *paid to relocate them, had three who*

worked for two months, then left for the mines; [you] *do lose a couple of people to mines for better money, mining has really impacted a lot- people make ridiculous money, welders take $35 or will not work, some earn more than managers. There's always that expectation that they will earn more*, and *believes mining has inflated workers' sense of how much they should earn.*

Stakeholders found that the money earned on mines was the impetus for people wanting to work in the industry. However they found people were not aware of the reality of it: *Aboriginal kids think the only work is mining; spoke to 20 girls, all want to go into mining. Told by their teachers that they can do it because they're Aboriginal, but kids didn't know they had to do a drug/alcohol test; all were horrified when told this; everyone wants to work on mines, but not prepared to put in the effort; perception isn't in touch with reality; even amongst different states, need a wakeup call to reality, many people would fly over, drive to Karratha or Kalgoorlie to network in pubs to get jobs, mainly amongst Australians.* One employer ceased taking on apprentices because they were used as a training pad for the mines: *"we can't compete with what they pay on the mines",* and *has many drivers leave, and then come back, but come back with the same baggage they had when they left, often using the company as a stepping stone.* However, this attitude was found to surface in other industries too, such as farming: [they] *want to sell the farm to buy yachts.*

However some employers attributed this attitude change towards employment and remuneration to a shift in family dynamics: *kids are taking longer to mature "because we want to mollycoddle you",* and *kids would come in with parents looking for apprenticeships showing initiative, but this stopped seven years ago.* Interestingly, one employer commented that they see these attitudes in their own children. Another employer had an alternative explanation, with the attitude stemming back to the school system: *ten to fifteen years ago kids were rewarded for doing nothing.*

Literature indicates that family poverty, growing up in economically difficult times, crime, non-optimal parenting, exposure to divorce and family trouble, and exposure to social, television and peer beliefs suggesting the importance of wealth for fulfilment in life are factors/coping mechanisms contributing to the importance of materialism and earning high wages (Twenge & Kasser, 2013). Adolescence is a key period of the development of work values, influenced by paid work, volunteering, peers, school and parents, with

numerous studies demonstrating parental work experiences influencing the development of a child's work values (Johnson & Mortimer, 2015; see also Mannheim, 1988; Zhao, Lim, & Teo, 2012). Changes in job security, income and prospect of opportunity impacts on the development of adolescent work values. Johnson and Mortimer's (2015) research on the effects of parental working conditions on adolescent work values during the 2008--09 recession contributes to current data that an adolescent's extrinsic and intrinsic work values are positively stronger when parental working conditions are more rewarding. Capitalist economies, limited government support, and societies that focus on promoting economic growth and consumption increase a sense of job insecurity and thus further exacerbate materialistic desires (Twenge & Kasser 2013).

While employers and stakeholders gave negative reviews of Australian work ethics, migrant workers gave mixed reports on their perceptions of Australian work ethics. Some believed locals to be fair, laidback, with a flexible attitude: *young Australians are willing to work; some are hardworking, long hours, working over a long period of time; enjoys working with Australians, not lazy, not stressful, laid back, some people leave things to the last minute; worked with Indigenous and non-indigenous Australians, got on with everyone really well, no issues, got slagged for being Irish, but all in good fun. Good work productivity; supportive, fair, made sure everyone got fair share of work; Found Australian workers to be slower, more laid back, cooler, taking it easy attitude. Not like this in France… "I need to be more like Aussies; if I do everything at once, I won't have anything to do"; flexible; enjoy their jobs; tolerant.*

However the negative characteristics of the Australian worker was also identified by migrant workers, with idiosyncrasies such as disorganisation in the workplace, and a lack of motivation highlighted: *Hard workers, but finds them stubborn, refusing to admit when they are wrong, rude, impolite, need to show you're working, but don't really need to be working. For example, sweep the floor to kill time; sometimes unorganized which causes inefficient work, …have met extremely hard and extremely lazy workers…tool theft and negative attitudes toward work; different to home…doesn't seem to be organised in Australia, and has days where* (I) *do nothing, nothing is planned; Australian work ethics "not great"; did twice as much work on the solar farm as those who had been there for months; people at work don't seem to be fussed about working, lack of motivation; observe their working hour (usually they don't work after business hour which is contracted); Inefficient.*

Words such as *supportive*, *laidback*, and *…fair share of work* are values that Australians traditionally uphold (Tranter & Donoghue, 2014). These words evoke a sense of 'mateship', which is a value that is arguably the core of Australian identity. The concept of mateship implies a shared experience and mutual respect and obligation to your fellow man (*"Mateship, diggers"*, 2007), and has been anchored in Australian history since European settlement. It is a synonymous symbol of manhood and nationhood, used to describe the camaraderie of the Australian soldiers during the Great War (*"Mateship, diggers"*, 2007). The mischievous and rowdy behaviour of Australian soldiers (the larrikin) is also identified with the ANZAC legend, portrayed with accounts of ANZACs refusing to salute officers ("ANZAC Day", 2009; Donoghue & Tranter, 2015). The larrikin charm continue to be used today by the media to describe white Australian men, from farmers to soldiers, sportsmen, and businessmen (Johnson & Byrnes, 2013; "Larrikin Beem", 2003; McMahon, A, 2015). *The Australian Legend*, by Australian historian Russel Ward (1958) describes characteristics of Australians, as examined by Alder (2008, para. 2)*:*

> He is "content with a task half done" and, although he is capable of great exertion in an emergency, he generally feels "no impulse to work hard without good cause". He swears, gambles and drinks. He is sceptical about "religion and of intellectual and cultural pursuits generally". He is a knocker of eminent people unless they are sportsmen. Probably above all, he is fiercely independent and hates officiousness and authority.

It is interesting that migrant workers noted these sentiments of Australian values clearly resonating in the present narrative (and coming through in the second layer, rather than at the fourth layer of myth/metaphor). While the intergenerational differences may be one dimension to the examination of Australian work ethics, the inclusion of migrant worker perspectives suggest the core values of the Australian identity is possibly playing a more pertinent role than imagined.

So far the data has portrayed in general employers are struggling with the attitudes of local employees, in particularly Gen Y. However, the attitudes of migrant workers were perceived to be far more positive (from employer and stakeholder perspectives), compared to local Australians: *Filipinos are thankful for job opportunities; "you have to send them home, they keep working", honest, loyal, respectful, hardworking, eager to please…don't get that with many Australians; 457- great worker, thrives on work, "why would you not*

take more of them boys on?"'; we have found the immigrants we employ especially from Europe are good hard workers; finds 457s 10 times better than Aussie workers, get the job done; …get an honest day out of 457s; Filipinos respect the job, you want keen workers, not for use of cheaper labour; foren [sic] workers understand that they are employed to actually work and therefore produce more; expat teachers are better, have given up a lot to come to Australia, "beholding to you because you're sponsoring them", all are really good; generally, migrants who come in are better workers, willing to do jobs that Aussies don't want to; and

> *"…there's a lot of people that don't want to work or don't want to work hard, and the Irish have been quite well received, can be a bit flaky at times, but they've got good skills, they want to work, they'll do the extra hours, they'll go to remote places, likewise with the Filipinos, probably slightly lesser skills, slightly lesser English ability but they'll work very hard…they'll do it, it's not 'I'll through a sickie today', they're there to work, so with most of the employers, that seems to be the main thing".*

There is a vast contrast in the description of work ethics between Australians and migrant workers, regardless of generational cohort. It is possible this contrast is influenced by citizenship status, and the bargaining power allocated to migrant workers on temporary labour migration programmes, as well as the contextual background of the Australian identity.

Worldviews. Some employers noted a shift in their bargaining power with local employees, with the latter perceived to be more empowered from greater job opportunities and a pressing demand for labour: *found in Geraldton that apprentices were not ready to be signed off…attitude problem, serious stuff ups -quality of education is compromised, thinks it's to do with the shortage of workers; Believes a decade ago we worked harder – we don't work as hard now due to vast job opportunities; believes all employees hold more power than the employer; "there's no balance, it's like tall poppy syndrome".* One employer described how some apprentices and staff used mining as a threat: *"if you don't like me doing my job not quick enough then I'll go to the mines".* A migrant worker also noted the vast opportunities in job availability and the influence on work ethics and high income: *Australian work ethics are 'not great'. Australians are not motivated, it seems to be all about the money, not getting the job done…thinks this is because so much money and work – a safety in abundance of jobs; Pay is good, almost*

ridiculous, almost as if it's not right. Doesn't know if it's good to make that much money so early in life, people don't know how to save. Some people are living outside of their means.

Employers indicated factors which possibly contributed to the formation of employee attitudes towards work. Some employers noted apprentices were not held in high regard in the workplace: *feels apprentices are used for cheap labour and aren't paid for much, with bigger teams, apprentices aren't given good supervision, not shown how to properly do things, knows older guys who won't work with apprentices; they're too far behind, never will be on the right level. Tradesmen want to retire without the hassle of apprentices lagging in education,* and *kids* (apprentices) *say the older men won't train them up.* One employer believed this issue to be ingrained in the male workplace culture.

Further elaborating, employers indicated a belief in the dehumanisation of labour to attest to the lack of work ethics in local employees: "*labour is just a commodity now, we get the materials, get the labour, put it together, that's it*"; *businesses have been dehumanised, personal relationships with clients are very business focused, that's it, we don't look after the boys (staff) like we used to;* "*businesses are different now, you need to drive a lot harder, it's nowhere near as personal, the integrity has gone out the window which is a bit of a shame*". One employer believed that employers contributed to the dehumanisation of labour; "(I) *also believe employers don't treat employees like they used to; it used to be a family away from home, but now you're just a number*".

The dehumanisation of labour began with the introduction of Frederick Taylor's scientific management of the workplace, with a purpose of achieving economic efficiency. This process included systematic removal of tacit knowledge, deskilling of workers and simplification of jobs (creating a surplus of labour), and supervision and performance review of workers by managers (Lewis, 2013). Factories were designed in a similar image to prison panopticons, signalling the beginning of the submission of the worker (Lewis 2013, 2007), and along with these labour reformations, the subsequent removal of power and autonomy of the employee (Lewis, 2013; see also Braverman 1974). Lewis (2013; 2007) cites Braverman's (1974) labour process theory as an analysis of Taylor's scientific management. The marriage of conception and execution in work is what characterises an individual worker human, with the scientific management process separating labour and capital. This process is dehumanising, as *"*(N)ot only is capital the property of the capitalist, but labor itself has become part of capital" (p. 80, cited by Lewis, 2013, p. 36).

The suggestion of conceptualising the workplace as a family was strengthened by other employers whose companies are family-owned businesses: *don't have an attitude problem with staff; people stay for a long time. Believes it's because of who we are, it's a family business which looks after its people, [Business name] is a family business, believes this is why it's a tight company. The owner is a good person, and built it up himself,* (the) *company likes to be transparent with all staff*, and *doesn't have any dramas with unions; believes it's because the company looks after the staff.*

Some employers identified the role of family as pertinent to installing positive work ethics in younger generations, by observing their parents: *believes older Australians saw parents work hard, go through tough times; that's why they're hard workers, kids would come in with parents looking for apprenticeships, showing initiative, but this stopped seven years ago*, and *there's a big generation gap. Why? Believes it's because previously children could go with their fathers on jobs, but now due to insurances, no passengers are allowed; kids aren't exposed to the industry*. The importance of family in shaping work ethics in youth came up as an issue for some stakeholders, as well as the influence of the education system: *"family is critical and many don't have that-they have to learn it", family plays a crucial role in workforce engagement; family and extended family has an impact on apprentices; for example, young adolescent would work with uncle/father around the house, fix things, see if they like it; but the family nucleus has gotten smaller, kids not doing this anymore, 12 years at school, then they have to decide what they want; attitude matters too and that parents are to blame too for spoiling it.*

The family can be theorised as a system which influences the behaviour, and decision-making abilities in a child's career development (Whiston & Keller, 2004). Attachment styles in a family influence a child's ability to adapt to new educational and vocational environments later in life, with supportive but moderately firm parents assists children in cultivating emotional stability (Aluja, Barrio & Garcia, 2005; Paloş & Drobot, 2010). The nurturing of an adolescent's career aspirations depend on the family's financial capital (material support giving access to resources), human capital (skills and ability parents can install in their children), and social capital (interactions, family's social support network) (Paloş & Drobot, 2010). Mothers are found to be more involved in guiding a child's career development, compared to fathers, school counsellors, and classmates (Whiston & Keller, 2004), and more influential in career exploration in young male adults,

while a father's influence on his daughter appears to be more prominent than a mother's when a non-traditional female career is pursued (Pizzorno, Benozzo, Fina, Sabato, & Scopesi, 2014). However an adolescent's career development was significantly influenced by a parent of the same sex (Pizzorno et al., 2014). Parental expectations of educational achievements also contributed to adolescents valuing job ambition, with Ashby & Schoon (2010) suggesting this can balance the negative effects associated with low income families.

Myth/metaphors. This layer revealed two major notions at the roots of the lack of work ethics experienced by employers; the dehumanising of labour, and the consequences of employee attitudes towards economic opportunity.

Throughout the data, certain quotes indicate the Australian workplace is losing its 'humanness'. For example, in reference to mature employees training apprentices: *they're too far behind, and never will be on the right level. "Why try to leave a legacy for everyone else when it's a problem not of their making?" Tradesmen want to retire without the hassle of apprentices lagging in education'*. This ties in with the use of family as a metaphor to describe the workplace: …*believe employers don't treat employees like they used to*, "*it used to be a family away from home, but now you're just a number",* and *"it's nowhere near as personal, the integrity has gone out the window which is a bit of a shame"*.

It is noted in the above quotes that words such as 'legacy', 'integrity' and 'family' evoke strong connotations of tradition, belonging, inheritance, membership; key qualities of community. However these terms are used in the negative, couched by "…*it's a problem not of their making"…Tradesmen want to retire without the hassle…*, and "…*now you're just a number".* These quotes capture not only the lack of work ethics in Gen Y and local employees, but also frame the attitudes of employer and mature employees. Reference to the education system failing Gen Y to be work ready merely mirrors older generations' refusal to take part in 'a problem not of their own making'. However the issue is not who is responsible to pick up on a failing education system (although a serious concern), but why have baby boomers and older Gen Xers responded in this form?

Local employees prioritising high income emerged again at this level: "*the grass is greener, but they don't think about the water bill",* and *"people always think the grass is greener on the other side".* The search for better income pertains to migrant workers too, as with the previously mentioned account regarding the poached Filipino workers. Feeling

sympathy for the migrant workers away from their families over Christmas, the employer paid their holiday leave in advanced. After discovering they were poached, the employer described the anger they felt, after investing $10,000 in sponsoring each migrant and providing a fully furnished house. This anger developed into a sense of injustice, as the competitive employer only paid $1500 to transfer the sponsorship of each migrant. Further fanning the sense of injustice was DIBP's response to the complaint: "*oh well, you've learnt your lesson not to pay their holiday pay at once*". As a result of these actions and being down three men, the employer and other staff felt "*betrayed*" by the others who left; *"it was a nightmare".* The perceived power shift emerged at this level too *'…thinks a decade ago we worked harder-believes we don't work as hard now due to vast job opportunities, no shortage*, "*they hold a few more cards in their pocket".*

These quotes above portray the consequences of employee attitudes towards economic opportunity. "T*hey hold a few more cards in their pocket"* acts as a metaphor portraying life as a gamble, a game in which these new rules are unfamiliar to employers, and employees are in a position of control. The cards are concealed (*…cards in their pocket*), and employers are struggling to navigate the game and the possibility of what comes next. As a result of this new game with unfamiliar rules, employee pursuit for better income has ostensibly had negative consequences for employers and fellow employees. They reflect the disempowerment that employers feel, with emotive words such as "betrayed", angry, and sense of injustice. Employers also mention that employees appear to be unaware of what price they will pay for this pursuit of better employment: "*the grass is greener, but they don't think about the water bill"*. The grass is greener on the other side taps into the imagery that life is better elsewhere than the present state, a desire to seek out a dream of a better life. This desire to make a dream reality could either be reflective of a manifestation of the impacts of economic instability echoing through the generations.

Both the dehumanising of labour and consequences of employee attitude towards economic opportunity can be identified as the iron cage metaphor depicted by Weber. The iron cage (*gehäuse*) signified the rationalisation of society; the abandonment of worldviews based on values, beliefs and mysticism and adoption of a modernised Eurocentric society through a method of objectification, mastery over nature, and disenchantment (*entzauberung*) (Aydin, 2010; Kim, 2007). With bureaucracies and institutions founded on rationalisation, Weber identified capitalism as the perpetuating force which underpins the reinforcement of the iron cage, becoming the dominant social construction of reality.

Weber instructs the pursuit for materialistic goods '*should be worn like a light coat that can be easily cast aside*', otherwise risk it becoming your iron cage (Weber, 1997: 159, as cited by Aydin, 2010, p.34). As Aydin (2010, p.34) put it: "the capitalist spirit nourished by rationality will lead to the removal of all an individual's personality in the course of time". The exchange between the immigration officer and employer regarding poached migrant workers is an example. The iron cage has an inherent duality at its core which is portrayed in the data. The calculability and predictability that comes with mastering all notions through scientific lens means individuals are conscious of their freedom of choice, such as Gen Y employees seeking better income (Kim, 2007). However, it is this perceived freedom of choice, in which agency is limited to the confines of fulfilment and desires dictated by the rationality of bureaucracies (*zweckrationalität)*, delivered at the cost of rationality grounded in morals and beliefs (*wertrationalität)* (Kim, 2007).

Overarching Theme Two - The Blame Game: Beliefs, Behaviours and Policies Compounding the Skill Shortage

The mining boom and consequent shortage of skilled workers was a phenomenon that impacted businesses around the country, especially in Western Australia. The government attempts to assist employers comprised of a multiplicity of measures, including lessening the restrictions on access to temporary migrant workers to ease the shortage of labour. However stakeholders such as unions perceived the increase access to skilled migrants as a threat to Australian jobs and a source of cheap labour to be exploited. Another government solution was the promotion of apprentices, however this too garnered problems, where employers criticised apprentices not to be work ready. Other examples are given in the analysis below, describing 'a blaming game'. Despite the pervasiveness of the skill shortage across the country and measures presented to manage it, employers and stakeholders lacked synergistic interaction and instead inculpated each other for the difficulties encountered.

Litany. Defining the existence of a skill shortage was a contentious issue. Overarching theme one established that a shortage of labour had existed for some industries, but the lack of work ethics and intergenerational differences between employer and employee were factors contributing to it. However, there still were mixed notions on the existence of a skill shortage. Some believed there was a shortage: *there is a labour shortage, but not a skill shortage For example: scaffolding ticket-not hard to train for,*

doesn't take too long, but much are needed in construction industry; some industries having trouble: construction, hospitality, cleaning. However others believed it was artificially created: *union doesn't accept skills shortage, but rather that it's artificially created; companies have made skills appear rare when really they're not; skill shortage in the region was relatively acute in a time sense. Doesn't believe it was as massive as industry made it out to be.*

The mining industry was in most part blamed for the loss of staff due to higher paying jobs in the first overarching theme. So employers and stakeholders were asked; "does the skill shortage exist due to the mining boom?" Participants gave three different responses, revealing that skill shortages and the mining boom were not exclusively linked. Some employers and stakeholders responded the skill shortage existed before the mining boom in *some* industries: *always been a shortage of refrigeration mechanics; has a skill shortage for the past eleven years; it's getting worse; always been tough to find people to work; has had business since 1991; always been a skill shortage with chefs.*

Some employers experienced a skill shortage due to mining: *during the mining boom, had so much work, but "was contracting at a time when we should be expanding"'; mining is sucking up the workers; skill shortage has been happening for the past four years in the Mid West, reason being is competing with mining boom up north. For example- drivers, mechanics; get on a plane, one hour flight, $40-50 more an hour; transport industry is low paid, long hours, can get good pay on mines, less hours.*

Some employers were able to thrive through the mining boom: *building industry has been booming for years in Gero; medicine is a bubble, no one goes to the mines, not even receptionists;*

> *"Agriculture is a 'period' industry for example seeding and harvest is when farmers are seeking workers – in previous years it has been hard for farmers to access workers however it has been observed in the past two to three years farmers have been able to gain skilled / experienced local farm hands for various jobs such as seeding, harvest…"*

Social causes. Education and training appeared to be a major issue in the context of skill shortages, and was mentioned in disputation by employers, educators, local government, and unions. Each stakeholder had a point of view concerned with accountability for the issues experienced, as explored below.

Stakeholders such as local government and unions perceived businesses as obliged to train local employees, but were not actively pursuing this: *no mandate to force businesses to employ a certain number of apprentices-no obligation from business side to provide number of traineeship places; Training is the bigger issue: easier for companies to bring someone in from overseas; businesses are not investing enough to train local population; apprenticeships in WA are very low, even though increase in enrolment in apprenticeships; wants jobs for locals, but industries won't train workforce; employers don't walk the talk; mining won't touch apprentices; believes companies aren't interested in training Australians.*

Over the decades the private sector has been blamed for the lack of investment in training, with a 1989 ABS survey on employer training expenditure revealed that 22 per cent of Australian employers invested in some form of training (Smith & Billett, 2005). As an impetus, the then Labor government introduced the Training Guarantee Scheme in 1990, outlining an expenditure of a minimum one per cent of total payroll costs on structured training (Baker, 1994). However there was no evidence to suggest it raised the quality of training for employees. Later the Coalition government abolished the scheme in 1996 (Smith & Billett, 2005). The claims that businesses were not investing in training workers were not entirely founded, with ABS statistics suggesting otherwise. The 1997 Survey of Education and Training Experiences reported 80.2 per cent of workers received some form of training (Smith & Billett, 2005). In 2009, the Education and Training Experience survey revealed an increase to 88 per cent of workers received some form of training (ABS, 2009). In a more recent survey by Manufacturing Skill Australia (MSA) (2015), 71 per cent of employers reported training to be crucial, and pertinent to the success of productivity. Literature also indicates employers perceive training to be the most effective solution to resolving the skill shortage (Lobo & Wilkinson, 2008; Clarke & Herrmann, 2007).

However volatile economic markets have an impact on training, where a National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER)(Healy, Mavromaras, & Sloane, 2012)

study revealed in response to the skill shortage, employers were more likely to increase working hours and demands on employees (49%), while external training programs were the least favourite (7%). Employers were less likely to train during a skill shortage due to the risk of poaching, as demonstrated in the first overarching theme (Fang, 2009). Cuts to training implies training programmes are shortened and is cause for concern, as it limits the skills base covered and constricts flexibility in applying skills to new environments. MSA (2015) argues these actions of narrowing the training covered can be an issue with careers which are listed as a skill shortage, and perpetuate the reliance on migrant workers. Concerns with the level of training employers were investing in apprenticeships and traineeships during skill shortages was also reported in federal government documents, such as the National Resource Sector Employment Taskforce (2010) (McDowell et al, 2011; DEEWR, 2010). Furthermore, the resource sector was noted for not doing its 'fair share' of training of apprentices compared to other industries (Karmel & Mlotkowski, 2010; DEEWR, 2010, p. 38):

> A related issue is the extent to which the industry contributes to the supply itself. The issue is whether the resources sector trains its fair share of apprentices. We address this issue by comparing the share of apprentices with the share of tradespeople. We find that the sector employs considerably fewer apprentices than would be expected from its share of trade employment. In fact, the sector would have to double its number of apprentices to be on par with other industries.

For employers, educational institutions in the region were targeted for the failure to appropriately educate and train the younger generation. The local secondary educational institutions were perceived to provide limited support for students' careers, and promoted traditional gender-based careers: *...private high schools push tertiary education. Public schools encourage girls to be hairdressers, nurses. Boys are encouraged to be electricians, mechanical engineers...feels kids are given basic and limited opportunities in school; "see a lack of education", guys coming in, need to be taught Year 8 maths, Year 9 geometry, additions, subtractions, English skills, spelling is atrocious. Many Gen Y kids don't know what they want to do...careers aren't promoted enough in schools.*

This perception extended to include the lack of quality of education at the local TAFE (Technical and Further Education) college. There was a perception the skill shortage had an impact on the teaching and accelerated learning, producing graduates who were not

work ready: *find apprentices are not up to standard, being pushed through…TAFE is pushing them through; believes chef lecturers aren't good, so apprentices are sent to TAFE in Perth; even TAFE is struggling to get lecturers as well; Kids are not good in TAFE- bad respect, answer back, lecturers don't appear to be organised, haven't ordered enough food for the class; apprenticeships have dropped down to three years duration, still not good enough at end of this; now an option to sign apprentice for three or four years, (I) only sign off on four years; employers ticking them off early to fill the shortage; have had kids who have no potential to be a carpenter, but they're still allowed through.*

Fast-tracking apprenticeships was a scheme to assist in alleviating the skill shortage, with the Accelerated Australian Apprenticeships package as an example (Smith, 2007). However one educator voiced a concern with fast tracking apprenticeships: *apprenticeships have changed since the 70s; they were five years in duration. Believes shortening apprenticeship duration now impacts on employer attitude towards apprentices; now they expect to get more out of them.* Employer complaints about graduates not being work ready can be due to courses failing to meet the needs of industry, and possibly the expectations of graduate skills' are not realistic (Beddie, Creaser, Hargreaves, & Ong, 2014).

While employers remarked on the lack of competency of students, the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA, tests mathematics, science, and reading skills of 15 year olds from 65 countries) indicates Australian students rank significantly above the OECD average, as seen in Table 4 (Thomson, De Bortoli, & Buckley, 2013).

Table 4.

2012 PISA Australia Ranking

	Australia ranking/points scored	OECD average	Difference between 5th and 95th percentiles - Australia	OECD average for 5th and 95th percentiles
Mathematics	17th/504	494	315	301
Science	8th/521	501	329	304
Reading	10th/512	496	318	310

(Thomson, et al., 2013)

While Australia ranks above the OECD average, the difference between 5th and 95th percentiles portrays the range of score between the lowest and highest performing students. Australia has consistently ranked higher than the OECD average, indicating there is a larger gap between the highest and lowest achieving students (Thomson et al, 2013).

So how it is that employers were reporting a lack of quality in education when Australia ranks above the OECD average? A possible explanation may be in the difference in percentiles found in the first table. There appears to be a growing gap between high and low performing students, and where Australia scored higher than the OECD average. Furthermore, the 2012 PISA revealed Australian Indigenous students are performing lower than Non-Indigenous students and the OECD average in Table 5:

Table 5.

2012 PISA Australia Ranking of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Students

	Indigenous	Non-indigenous	OECD Average
Mathematics	417	507	494
Science	440	524	501
Reading	428	515	496

(Thomson et al., 2013)

The 2012 PISA study also revealed that geographic location had an impact on performance, with the country divided into metropolitan (100,000 people or more), provincial (variation in subcategories, 25,000-49,999 population), and remote zones. Geraldton ranked under the provincial zone, as portrayed in Table 6.

Table 6.

2012 PISA Australia Ranking of Geographic Location

	Metropolitan	Provincial	Remote	OECD Average
Mathematics	511	486	444	494
Science	527	509	470	501
Reading	520	490	452	496

(Thomson et al., 2013)

As it can be seen, students from Provincial zones have a mean score lower than the OECD average for mathematics and reading, but a higher than OECD average mean score for science. PISA data has shown that while Australia may be ranking higher than the OECD average, over the years there has been a decline in performance, Indigenous students are ranked poorly, and geographic location has an impact on ranking. These elements may account for the reports employers are making about the quality of education in Geraldton. Further supporting the decline in quality of education, the Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency (2012) reported a decline in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects amongst Australian students. The report revealed a decline in Year 12 enrolments between 1992 and 2010, with physics dropping from 20.8 per cent to 14.2 per cent. The report also highlighted engineering faculties in universities struggled with students lacking the adequate advanced level of skill and knowledge in science and maths (Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency, 2012). Numeracy and literacy skills are also an issue, with studies demonstrating secondary school teachers and VET practitioners lacking in skills, experience, expertise, and confidence to meet the needs of industry (Beddie et al., 2014). A survey by the Australian Industry Group (2012) found 93% of employers had experienced issues with poor numeracy and literacy (Beddie, 2015). Employers criticise new workers lack the proficiency to problem solve and do not enhance value to the workplace. These experiences lead to a lack of trust in the competence of VET qualifications, a lack in response to the needs of industry, a perception of TAFE as out of touch with the needs of businesses and in a constant state of reform, and a lack of innovation in teaching methods, portraying a weak underdeveloped relationship between industry and VET providers (Harris & Simons, 2006; MSA, 2015).

However stakeholders at tertiary institutions highlighted employers held an outdated perception of TAFE that was disconnected from the current reality of education offered: *There's a disconnection to what employers want and think is available at [local tertiary institution]. Have the perception that hasn't been tested…aware that employers think they're not responsive to their needs, procedures, delivery context, in many cases, employers think they can't perform certain tasks with upskilling /educating staff, but believes these are old fashioned views of TAFE…in many cases employers surprised by [local TAFE], can deliver training at their workplace, use their equipment, teach in the workplace, but finds most employers are unaware if this.*

The perceived meagreness of training and education explored above was an equivocal issue creating tension between employers and stakeholders. Another such issue was the perceived lack of effort by employers failed to manage the skill shortage, with labour migration framed as an easier option. Employers reported labour and economic factors contributing to the skill shortage, such as a competitive market (*can't manufacture like overseas companies; they do it for a third of the price. Costs in Australia are too high),* and high costs of labour (*New Zealand has a big plastics industry…it's now competitive due to mining. Clients will get a design of a prototype, then they go overseas to manufacture it…would consider taking work overseas to Vietnam, cheaper labour than Australia).* Subcontracting was a strategy some employers adopted to work around the high cost of labour (*have had to subcontract to local companies, has turned away 80% of potential work in the past five years*).

As a result of the high cost of labour and competitive market, employers attempted to manage the skill shortage themselves, such as advocating for traineeships to be taught locally (*Traineeships run out of Durack, in the evening.[Business name] and another company had a hand in pushing for this*), advertising locally and interstate (*advertised locally, online, no response; advertise for six months-no one applies*), and advertising internationally (*in last three years did three campaigns in twelve months in New Zealand for drivers…had a 20 per cent success rate with this campaign).* Some employers transferred managers from other branches to Geraldton, while others engaged in in-house training to assist with managing the skill shortage (*Prefer to train their own staff in their own way*). Incentives were also used to manage the skill shortage (*at one point…sat down with all the staff, asked what they wanted as an incentive to stay with them. They (staff) asked for a seven per cent increase in pay. The company gave it to them, but people still left*). However employers emphasised the difficulties of enticing potential employees to change location (*Making Perth people move is hard-people don't like to relocate, those with experience often don't want to leave Perth; there are Australian doctors, but they don't want to come to the country*).

However some stakeholders, such as unions, local government, and local workers, took aim at employers for their lack in management of labour shortages, perceiving employers as favouring migrant workers over locals, and utilise the temporary labour migration programme as a scheme to access cheap labour. One such issue was blacklisting:

_____: *a database which holds peoples' qualifications. Need to be registered as a pre-*

requisite for employment…believe people are blacklisted…150-200 can't find work but are on this list; HR blacklist you if you refuse to work, answer back. They don't return calls, won't speak to you if in office in Perth…frustrating as your economic freedom lies in their hands. Happens across the board in Australia.

A few stakeholders gave examples where 457 visa holders and interstate workers were chosen over local employees: *…sees companies putting ads in for deck hands, engineers, mates, other services, but local people are available to work in these positions; increase in Queenslanders, eastern states members; more eastern states staff working at [Business name] than local; believes that unions are allowing companies to employ more 457 visa holders; Christmas is traditionally busy with oil and gas, but letting go of Australians, cheaper, easier to put Australians on the beach than ship. Companies will prefer to keep 457 visa holders as process unfolds, whereas Australians won't leave the country, companies will call them whenever they need them again. Happens all the time, since 2008/09, 457s need to be paid continuously.*

Moreover, there was an increase use of backpackers: *Due to tightening up of visas, employers are utilising backpackers in businesses such as small goods, poultry; went through twenty people to fill twelve positions-mostly filled by backpackers for jobs that aren't hard manual labour; ''that's also been sort of a gateway to the Australian visa system; that a lot of people are coming over on the working holiday…employers like that because they can try before they buy…"*

These experiences and attitudes of migrant and interstate workers favoured over local employees was acknowledged by migrant workers too. However migrant workers believed they were not replacing Australians, but rather working the jobs Australians refused to do: *backpackers do the crap jobs that Aussies don't want to do …old and young Australians accuse them of taking their jobs, causing trouble. Has had this experience all over the country; Australians need foreigners – Australians are complaining foreigners are taking their jobs, but the industry would fail if it wasn't for foreigners; "if you get Australians to do the job, there's no way they would do it"; "it's tough work, hard labour"… Believes Australians wouldn't do it because of their attitude.* One labour hire company commented on a dire situation one Mid West town was in, and that it relied on the work ethics of backpackers: *Meekatharra is staffed by backpackers, yet 400 people are unemployed.*

Some employers reiterated migrant workers were an important element to the success of their business during the mining boom: *"Australian public are led to believe that 457s are nicking jobs off Aussies, but we need 457s, without them we would have to shut our doors, not even able to employ Australians"; believes they're (migrant workers) not replacing people they could get already*. However it must be highlighted not all employers endorsed the use of migrant workers, and would attempt to continue their operations until they desperately needed another strategy. Even in these circumstances, some preferred to subcontract to local companies than sponsor migrant workers.

Literature illuminating the impact of migrant workers on the local labour market reveals conflicting evidence. There is research to suggest in circumstances of shortage of work, locals portray a preference for occupations which are higher paid than occupations perceived as migrant worker-suited (Park, 2002). Some articles assert migrant workers have little impact on wage and employment competition (Shapira, 2010), while others noticed some impact on the employment and wages of domestic workers (Borjas, 2003). The Mariel Boatlift over four months in 1980 was a significant study that examined the impact of 125,000 Cuban immigrants on the Miami labour market, which led to a seven per cent increase in the workforce, and with no evidence of affecting the unemployment and wage rates (Card, 1990). One possible explanation identified the city's industry sectors were conducive to absorbing low skilled workers (Card, 1990). Migrant workers interviewed in this study experienced no difficulty obtaining employment during the mining boom, with some holding down two jobs at a time. However a report released from Monash University (2013) revealed working holiday visas increased from 185,480 in 2010/11 to 249,231 in 2012/13. This leads to the assumption that young, unskilled Australians were at risk of missing out due to the increase in working holiday visas.

While the data portrays a great deal of focus scrutinising the actions of employers and their perceived lack of management of the skill shortage, other stakeholders were blamed by employers for not providing better support. This included DIBP's interpersonal skills (*Not friendly, vague, unclear; having difficulty getting info from DIAC; Find DIAC difficult to communicate with; could not reach them on the phone*), and apparent failure to monitor employer compliance on the 457 visa (*DIAC doesn't have resources to check monitoring; DIAC is failing to police program-can't convict employers for breaching act-can continue to do it until department is embarrassed).* Labour hire companies were alleged to

have exploited the skill shortage to their advantage: (*…approached ____, sent resumes, but felt could find them off the street; some applicants had an E licence; Agency pushed for people with a visa; …asked for $4000 from each Filipino, but forwarded the fee on to the company…wasn't sure what this fee was for…mentioning his name to DIAC and other agencies, and they all know he's dodgy).* Migration agents interviewed were aware of other migration agents exploiting migrant workers, in particularly those based overseas *("…it's happening, it's happened, I'm sure it still will because there's no way you can really enforce or try and stop that happening, how do you, do you have the resources to check every bogus document? You can't"; "I know it happens because I've been asked, I've been asked by some employers…").*

The litany and social causes layers revealed several responses to the skill shortages experienced during the mining boom, and the impact of the mining boom distinctly affected different industries, resulting in a collision of experiences. This study demonstrates that generalisations cannot be given to each stakeholder's experience. Caution is required with this data due to an inclusion of all industries, it could possibly create an impression that the reported practices applied to a generalisation of organisations in the industry. For example, the accounts of employers blacklisting employees surfaced from the construction and maritime sectors based in Perth and Geraldton. However it is unknown if these practices are exclusive to these particular industries, and these locations. Detailed, qualitative studies which divide the data into industries would give the inquiry greater grounding, and greater scope to identify and weed out problems. However in the current context, a coordinated approach to solving the skill shortage is repeated throughout the literature (Lobo & Wilkinson, 2008; Fang, 2009).

Worldviews. Rurality was presented as a major issue at this level, with a negative sense of community and attachment to place presented in the data: *…left Geraldton, but came back; not many people who are Geraldton-raised, get Perth-uni educated, come back to town. People think he has failed, that's why is back in Geraldton.* As mentioned in the social causes layer, employers struggled with attracting potential employees to Geraldton. Some attempted to explain this, while others were unsure as to why this occurred: *found when advertising the position, had to sell Geraldton first, and then the job; "People are still reluctant to move"...people are still set in their ways; major issue is finding doctors to come to the country; has no idea why Australian GPs won't go country…has been working there for two years, still doesn't understand why; work in Perth meant young graduates are not*

prepared to come to the country, started happening six years ago; local med students study at CUCHR, then leave Gero.

Participants and those who were previously members of the Geraldton community hesitated to associate themselves with the city, questioning the nexus of sense of community and identity. Reiterating the concept of sense of community, McMillan and Chavis (1986) posited four distinct features: membership, influence, integration and needs fulfilment, and a shared emotional connection. Identification with a community can be geographical or relational (Mannarini, Rochira, & Talò, 2012; Landini, 2012; Pretty, Chipuer, & Bramston, 2003). Mannarini et al. (2012) explored sense of community in context of place identity and identity with community, demonstrating that in-group/out-group relationships shape sense of community, with cohesion (preserving social relationships) and entitativity (group perception of social unity) as dimensions to in-group community perception. The dissociative narratives pertaining to community identity do not explicitly indicate if these are an outcome of a negative sense of community, as a positive/negative connection cannot be drawn directly from community to outcome (Mannarini, Rochira, & Taló, 2014). However an explanation may be imbued in an urban/rural dichotomy.

Research has demonstrated a negative association of rurality based on comparison of rural and city life. Landini's (2012) research depicted rural identity to be steeped in suffering, lacking in education, and future prospects. These images or rather the fear of them are echoed in Australian literature. Australian rural students desired to leave rural communities to explore opportunities that were not available to their parents, with a disdain for work in low-paid low-status retail jobs (Dalley-Trim & Alloway, 2010). Education was also perceived as a ticket out of town (Dalley-Trim & Alloway, 2010). Other research has shown that adolescents' preference to stay in rural towns was contingent upon the quality of support from the town meeting their goals (Pretty, 2003). Despite this, Australian identity is an embodiment of rural mythology, and an ideological construct applied to urban settings (Kapferer, 1990). The urban/rural dichotomy is considered to be a false construct by Kapferer (1990), but rather influenced by globalisation and laissez faire capitalism. Alston (2009) writes that globalisation has had a profound impact on rural Australia, arguing that rural communities are becoming socially excluded from opportunities to be competitive in the global market due to neoliberal policies and microeconomic reforms, through lack of access to training and resources. Examples of these exclusions in education are identified below.

The quality of education on offer in the region was under scrutiny again at this layer; suggesting this was due to Geraldton as a regional city: *…daughter is tired of being asked if she wants to be a hairdresser or nurse…believes this mentality is because Gero is a regional city, and due to limited work and education opportunities.* A mining company also noted their inability to employ local was due to the lack of quality of education offered in the region:

> "*Why don't you focus on getting your people trained so they can actually take those roles? So whilst we'd love to use them for everything, the reality is you can't and most of it is an educational issue. There's no point in putting someone on a mine site where there's blasting if they can't read the sign that says there's going to be blasting in ten days…."*

As Geraldton is a regional city, training for apprentices in some industries was not available and this had a negative impact in the workplace: *TAFE only notifies us a month before they (*apprentices*) are required to go to Perth. This usually happens in the summer months, which is the company's busiest time of the year; everyone goes to Perth, no TAFE training for paint apprentices locally, not enough demand to keep them trained in Gero.*

Employers and educators had issues with the education system on a whole, perceiving education in Australia to be focused on graduating numbers, rather than quality: *children's woodwork class can pass it without actually making something. All about design, administration, how to order the parts, planning, but no focus on building it. "Get in there, make the mistake, just as much to be learnt as in succeeding"; currently can get easier topics to do; so many different levels of maths, but it seems to be about graduating, but at what level and quality?; generally has more students in Gero graduating in VET; Formula for funding is driven by student numbers. Getting minimal number of students to do a course in some regional places is hard, sometimes only four students, not enough for funding. Smaller the number of students, the increase in per capita cost for training. In these circumstances, [local TAFE] can't meet the needs of community.*

The criticism of education in Geraldton, and larger Australia, highlights how neoliberal policies have commodified knowledge into a product. This devalues education, the practice of learning, and the needs of students, with an emphasis on skill needs rather than knowledge and learning underpinning the process (Polesel, 2010; Waters, Simon,

Simons, Davids, & Harreveld, 2015). Research on how deregulation and privatisation of VET training in Australia impacted on the quality of education revealed a narrowing and loss of transferable skills, and a general lack of training taking place, with 'tick and flick' assessment procedures (Snell & Hart, 2007). Deregulating education minimises government responsibility, however quality can be compromised by other factors, such as the lack in an employer's capacity to deliver a training program, concern with costs equalling shortcuts in training, a lack of valuing the process of learning, and training not perceived to be employers' social responsibility (Snell & Hart, 2007). This was demonstrated at the worldview layer in Overarching Theme One, and raised as concerns earlier in the current overarching theme.

Myth/metaphor. The final layer reiterated the lack of cohesive action amongst stakeholders which compounded the skill shortage. In this layer it emerged that an employer used prostitution as a metaphor to describe a recruitment agency's actions that exploited the skill shortage:

> *[recruitment agency] gets kids to sign up, find a job, pay apprentice minimal wage and mark up the price to the employer, and believes [recruitment agency] is making a profit….calls it prostitution… it's easier and cheaper to find an apprentice and pay them higher than an apprentice from [recruitment agency]. Believes [recruitment agency] goes into schools to recruit kids.*

Juxtaposing prostitution with the actions of the recruitment agency is a means of raising concern about the ethical conduct of the agency. Prostitution implies negative connotations and the process to be debasing, as appropriated in this metaphor. However the perceived issue is not the 'prostitutes' being the apprentices, but rather the transaction between recruitment agency and employer. The employer was restricted by the skill shortage, and struggled to recruit employees with good work ethics. The savvy recruitment agency was aware of the problems induced by the skill shortage, and was most likely aware of the expenses associated with employing a 457 visa holder. Identifying these factors, the recruitment agency was profiting from the skill shortage, and it was this transaction that appeared to be likened to prostitution, as it was also exploiting the precarious position of the employer and their access to the commodity of labour.

The use of prostitution as a metaphor would imply the recruitment agency's actions are underscored by hints of unscrupulous intent. Is there anything 'morally wrong' about this action taken up by the recruitment agency, despite it disadvantaging the employer? The recruitment agency engaged local youth in the workplace. From that position, it appears to be a scheme which benefits members of the community; they encouraged local youth to work in local businesses, assisted with the loss of staff to the mines, and generated a profit too in the process. One of the biggest critics of capitalism, Marx, does not relay the ideology as unjust, but does allude to capitalism as a moral concern. Marx describes labour to be central to the essence of human nature, assisting the individual to self-actualise and maintain control over their wellbeing and material needs, the production of these needs are materialised on their own accord, and fortifies the association to the product of the labour (Morrison, 1995). It is the theory of alienation which demonstrates the dislocation of these facilities to the individual that causes the alienation. The theory of alienation portrays capitalism not to be an ideal existence for human beings, but rather as a barrier to 'human flourishing' (Wolff, 2011). It breaks down the collective society into a stratification of class, where labour is owned and dominated by one class, and entices individuals to be competitive for personal gain (Morrison, 1995). It is this theory that suggests Marx's criticism of capitalism is a moral concern (Wolff, 2011).

Marxist analysis aside, prostitution as a metaphor depicts the morality of this overarching theme and of the skill shortage phenomenon. It informs in the context of economic prosperity (as Australia experienced with the mining boom), the modus operandi was to address subsequent issues with neoliberal policies. The increased demand for labour to service the mining boom amplified the pressure on a labour market already constricted by an education system struggling under neoliberal policies, a perceived lack of work ethics as explored in overarching theme one, and negativity attached to rural communities. This theme also depicted the nature of relationships between stakeholders and employers at the micro level, recounting how employers and stakeholders lacked synergistic interaction, cooperation, and cohesive action, and emphasised the demoralising accounts of friction, alienation, and precariousness nature of the skill shortage and labour migration phenomenon. The third overarching theme continues to explore existing obstacles to employment, by addressing the social issues in the Geraldton community acting as barriers to employment.

Overarching Theme Three – Social Issues in the Community: Barriers to Employment

The focus of this overarching theme was rather a surprise, as during the mining boom, social issues were not associated with skill shortages, nor discussed by media, industry groups, or government in the same context. However the data illuminated social issues, such as drug and alcohol abuse, to be significant constraining factors paramount to a lack of people participating in the labour market in the Mid West region, and thus further exacerbated the skill shortage. Below is an analysis of the theme, unpacked through the lens of CLA.

Litany. Some employers and stakeholders commented on those who received government welfare support, creating an impression that drug use and government support were associated. Government support was also construed to be a deterrence to employment: *people prefer to stay on dole, stick to weed than get paid good money for work; "Australian workers did not want to do the job as they were getting paid dole money"; reliance on the dole; thinks people peddle drugs on the side.*

Social causes. Drug and alcohol abuse was highlighted as a significant concern for both employers and stakeholders in the region. Drug accessibility was perceived as common, with cannabis, methamphetamine, and ecstasy identified as drugs found in the work environment and community. Employers expressed their concerns for the prevalence of drugs and alcohol, and strategies to eliminate the problem: h*ave random drug/alcohol testing-done at some point each month. When staff found out about this policy, three handed in notice of termination of employment; drugs is biggest problem…people passing drug tests for employment, drugs are the main issue with staff retention, Trade assistants with social problems are always switching jobs, last three months max, therefore puts newcomers on three month probation period, no company policy on drug testing…believes would have a problem with keeping staff if they were drug testing, a big problem in Geraldton; workers who need to complete D and A test [Drug and Alcohol test], … problem exists usually because of lack of employment and boredom, more alcohol related problems-as a result, anti-social behaviour and domestic violence occur.*

Alcohol use and abuse in the Australian workplace appears to have a higher prevalence amongst men, young adults, and Indigenous employees (Roche, Lee, Battams, Fischer, Cameron, & McEntee, 2015). Alcohol use influences employee absenteeism (Bacharach, Bamberger, & Sonnenstuhl, 2010; Holden et al., 2011), employee turnover

(Hoffmann & Larison, 1999), reduced functioning (Holden et al., 2011), and disharmonious workplaces. Work-based factors are identified as influencing alcohol use, such as job satisfaction, physically stressful environment isolated work, and low supervision (Roche et al., 2015). Others also included low levels of support from supervisors (Grunberg, Moore, & Greenberg, 1998), abusive supervision, and high levels of workplace team conflict and workplace harassment. Manual and unskilled workers are at greater risk of alcohol abuse than skilled workers (Bamberger & Bacharach, 2006; Hemmingsson, Lundberg, Diderichsen, & Allebeck, 1998). A negative connection was identified between income and heavy drinking as a coping strategy (Grunberg et al., 1998).

Roche et al. (2015) conducted a systematic review of the association between alcohol consumption and worker wellbeing in male-dominated industries. They found that employees in male-dominated industries (construction, mining and manufacturing), engage in higher levels of alcohol consumption than other industries in Australia, with these industries substantially contributing to the Australian economy (Roche et al., 2015). Combing through the demographics of these male-dominated industries, they established male, middle-aged, and less educated workers were in general at a higher risk of alcohol abuse (Roche et al., 2015). Low occupational status, manual workers and low income were all associated with alcohol abuse (Grunberg et al., 1998; Hemmingsson et al., 1997).

Socioeconomic status and substance use is explainable by factors such as social acceptance of substance use (Frone & Brown, 2010), and stress from poor working conditions and financial instability (Frone, 2008). Patterns of alcohol consumption are influenced by social norms such as community and family (Frone & Brown, 2010), as well as cultural norms in the workplace, such as management style, peer pressure, and acceptance of drinking norms (Roche et al, 2015). Delaney and Ames (1995) found positive team attitudes equalled less drinking norms in the workplace, and an association between positive work attitudes and lower drinking problems.

Geographical remoteness is also associated with the increase of high-risk drinking (Livingston, Laslett, & Dietze, 200). Studies have demonstrated rural communities are at greater risk of alcohol consumption than urban communities (Roxburgh, Miller, & Dunn, 2013). However Roxburgh et al., (2013) found geographic location was not significant in reporting problematic cannabis use, rather the authors found geographic location was only significant for problematic alcohol use.

Other social barriers to employment reported by stakeholders included homelessness and the high cost of living (*Rent is high in Geraldton-took off 6 years ago-rent is $450 per week, like Perth; living day to day),* disqualification of a driver's licence (*If don't have licence and drug problem, then can't get a job; many have had brush with crime, reason why lose licence*) (Roxburgh et al., 2013), and teen pregnancy (*Meekatharra-huge achievement with no young mums in year 10-12…first time achieved in fifteen years; pregnancy is one of the biggest problems with Aboriginal girls).*

Stakeholders such as recruitment agencies and employment agencies funded by government support described the unique challenges of engaging the Aboriginal community into the workforce: *Recruitment agency dealing with mix, but high indigenous case load; sometimes will give these people to Indigenous groups who would be better suited; Indigenous kids; it's what happens when kids leave school that counts; tread carefully with Indigenous; due to culture, can get nasty, no favouritism; Four main barriers for Aboriginal employment-driver's licence, alcohol, illiteracy, housing; some are great, some are slack. Some have three generations of unemployment. If don't have support network, very hard to engage them. There are many cultural issues centred on work. Called "whitey" if they work, and it's expected that their pay is divided among the family; people are being picked on for being 'white fella' regarding work-happens all the time.*

Given the brief contextual insight into the difficulties of engaging Aboriginals into the workforce, the data revealed the presence of migrant workers further created challenges for Aboriginal workers. As it was demonstrated, migrant workers were seen as a solution to the skill shortage dilemma: *over the years have had Australian workers sent home due to drug/alcohol abuse-not a major issue, now that they have Filipinos.* However the blend of migrant workers in the workplace indicated some stakeholders found Aboriginals to experience unintentional racism: *Aboriginal apprentices are finding racial discrimination/harassment issues with co-workers…first six months of 2013; 50 per cent workload was assisting people around workplace racial discrimination…they were able to help them by teaching coping mechanisms, understanding what's acceptable and not, working with employer to stamp it out. One example is a company where through working with, they've created a nation-wide policy on anti-discrimination; …found English migrants don't realise what they were doing was inappropriate, agency steps in to educate them; "Aboriginal people need fairly high degree of support in those situations"; many people are*

resentful that 457s are getting attention. Biggest issue with migrants is cultural; foreigners don't know how to deal with Aboriginal people; need to look at Aboriginal people as a separate culture; migrants can be culturally inappropriate without knowing it; causes more people to fall out of work.

The Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), provides measures of socio-economic conditions in geographical areas. In terms of measuring access to resources, the index of relative disadvantage ranks from one to 10, with a high score indicating a lack of disadvantage. Geraldton scored two on the scale, indicating a greater disadvantage marked by a lack of access to social and economic resources (ABS, 2006). The data is supported by statistics which illuminate the challenges confronting Aboriginals. In the Mid West region, the highest year of school completed for Indigenous is Year 10, while non-Indigenous is Year 12 (ABS, 2011). The unemployment rates in the region revealed Indigenous unemployment sat at 24.3 per cent, compared to the non-Indigenous rate of 4.1 per cent, while in the town of Geraldton 22.7 per cent of the Indigenous population was unemployed (ABS, 2011).

These statistics are couched by issues unique to the Aboriginal population, including perpetual poverty, distrust of white power structures, incarceration, substance abuse, educational disadvantage, health issues, unemployment and urbanisation (Bandias, Fuller, & Holmes, 2012; Miley & Reid, 2013; Sammartino, O'Flynn, & Nicholas, 2003). Aboriginals, and in particularly females, are more susceptible to experiencing economic disadvantage (through dependency on social welfare), cultural marginalisation, and political exclusion (lack of representation in politics) (Keddie, 2015). Biddle, Howlett, Hunter, and Paradies (2013) suggest Aboriginals decrease labour supply to avoid discriminatory situations, possibly reducing the individual's sense of self-efficacy and expectations. In the workplace, Aboriginals face challenges as demonstrated by the data, including skills recognition (Maher, 2014). Sammartino's et al. (2003) study revealed the demand for Aboriginal employment was shaped by CEOs' perceptions of their human capital, with CEO participants expressing a concern for absenteeism and retention, and a shortage of job seekers. However the authors concluded this was due to the lack of adequate policies in businesses to address these concerns.

The assumption of equity in the workplace discounts the unique challenges facing Aboriginals (Maher, 2014). Fairness is hinged onto the justice scales of the hegemonic

society, which is predominantly a white Eurocentric narrative. As such, cultural differences implied some employers and employees who lacked cultural awareness could misconstrue skill recognition of Aboriginal employees (Maher, 2014). Another issue concerned with fairness are the standards and procedures of skill recognition (Maher, 2014). With Aboriginals scoring below the average mean in PISA assessments on numeracy and literacy, these standards and procedures may be further excluding Aboriginals from skill recognition. Formal procedures are likely to be perceived as ensuring equality (Light, Roscigno, & Kalev, 2011), and reinforce a potent neo-colonial discourse, interchanging meritocracy with equality (Light et al., 2011; Maher, 2014).

Practices which have been successful in increasing Aboriginal employment rates include increasing the skill level through education and training, tailored to the individual's needs, non-standard recruitment policies, cross-cultural training by employers, mentoring and family support, and Aboriginal-specific targets to increase employment within the company (Gray, Hunter & Lohoar, 2012). Bandias et al., (2012) emphasises the importance of mutual reciprocal transfer of knowledge between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal in the workplace and community. Cultural understanding is imperative, as is an appreciation for barriers and disadvantages challenging Aboriginals. Sustainable Aboriginal development requires recognition of cultural diversity and planning at local grassroots and regional levels (Altman, 2007). Additionally, the formation of genuine partnerships is required to build on the strengths of community by listening to Aboriginal aspirations (Altman, 2007). However Bandias et al., (2012) warns that an unwillingness to participate will continue until Aboriginal people gain confidence in relationship building and mutual respect through equal partnership with non-Aboriginal people.

Stakeholders, such as employment agencies, were faced with aggression from clients accessing their services, due to the threat of losing government support: *Clients coming in don't want to work. Get training for one hour a day, become angry; staff are threatened when dole gets cut off; many cause damage to building, staff property... dealing with dodgy people, very demoralising for staff.* Centrelink was perceived by a stakeholder to create a sense of safety for some unemployed: *Centrelink creates a safety blanket; if a person has good self-esteem, they will get out of system, if not will do part-time work....* However confidence and support were perceived to be the primary tools to empower the unemployed: *people just need confidence and to be believed in; need to give youth hope*

and meet their aspirations, if work hard enough, they can get there; concerns that hope can dwindle.

The issue of welfare surfaced in the first two levels, where some perceived welfare to be a deterrent to employment and exacerbated the preference for drug use. Work for the Dole, or colloquially the dole, a form of workfare introduced in 1997, and radicalised citizenship. The policy was underpinned by mutual obligation, and exchanged the right to government support with a responsibility to participate in community and employment programmes, thus ensuring a contribution to society (Bessant, 2000; Burgess, Mitchell, O'Brien, & Watts, 2000). The programme was designed to discourage citizens from relying on state support, through the means of eliminating a culture of dependency, deterring anti-social behaviour, and increase motivation and self-efficacy, ensuring a meaningful contribution to economic participation (Burgess et al., 2000; Kelaher, Dunt, & Dodson, 2007). The 'fairness' in the Dole, is to ensure society is not exploited, with "indeed it appeals sentiments of virtue that strikes at the consciences of many Australians who like to identify their moral life in terms of fairness, honesty and equity" (Bessant, 2000, p.78). The concern with this rhetoric is it stigmatises the recipient based on the rectitude of the hegemonic society, characterising an individual to be deficient in work ethics. What also appears to be absent from the fairness rhetoric are the obstacles caused by the structure of the labour market, such as an increase in a competitive market (Besant, 2000). Arguing in the context of morality and state obligation, Burgess and Mitchell (1998) asserted it is a violation of the fundamental human rights that government does not take more action to remove unemployment obstacles, with the forced work that the dole creates violating Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ("Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment…") (Burgess et al, 2000). For Australian Aboriginals, welfare casts a different set of challenges, with previous state-provided welfare laden with historic overtones of cultural dislocation to 'civilise' the population. In the present, "passive welfare", as described by Pearson (2000), has undermined the underpinnings of a culture of sharing and reasonability "…Our traditional value of responsibility has become the responsibility of non-drinkers to feed the drinkers and their children when the money is gone". (Pearson, 2000, as cited by Brandis, 2012, p.67).

Encouraging personal agency, building on coping efficacy and outcome expectations were tools recruitment agencies employed to support Aboriginal and non-

Aboriginals in entering and maintaining a presence in the workforce. As outlined by Lent, Brown and Hackett (2000), barriers and support networks can concomitantly exist in the same space, that support is not a 'neutral condition'. In the context of this study, despite the challenges faced by the community, employment agencies provided support above and beyond their call, with some *feel(ing) like unqualified social workers.* Other support included: *staff do more than suppose to; will pick up clients, take them to work for the first week while helping them to get licence; above job description; travels to Carnarvon, Exmouth, sometimes to Perth too. touches base with apprentice, drives them down to Perth, be supportive for them, pastoral care; focus on looking after client, not company… no one helps the good people; mentoring-suggest it, guide them, have a coffee, weekly, ask how's their life going, work, etcetera. Needs to be tailored to the individual; recently had someone who was unemployed for eight years, bad drug/alcohol addiction, but they overcame it, now working and happy. "As you empower them, you take a step back", but they still have access to you; "mentoring is the key to employing Aboriginal people".*

Worldviews. This layer shifted the focus from drug and alcohol abuse impacting on the workforce, and the challenges specific to Aboriginal employment, to the hostility employers encountered, directed towards workplace regulations, and outsiders of the community: *find Gero staff don't take drug/alcohol policy or any other policy seriously-believes it's a country mentality; "never been in such a gossipy town before"; never had so much problems with staff as has had in Gero.* Racism and exclusionary practices in the workplace and community were also emphasised by employers: *racism in Geraldton is still alive and well, has lost one staff due to it; thinks racism in Geraldton is covert; finds staff still have deep seated racism; some resentment in building industry towards migrants-some draw blatant racism on their hardhats; living in Gero is very different to living in Perth; finds people don't like her because she took over the job a local was previously doing; when there's a newcomer, much animosity towards them; still redneck mentality with Aussies-us versus them mentality.* However other employers perceived a friendlier vibe to the community: *Believes Geraldton is friendlier, more laidback than Perth; get on well with staff and customers. Some good customers will come to staff dinner parties, feels the local community has matured--more sophisticated; finds more older, mature people are moving to Geraldton, everything is close, good lifestyle benefits.*

These exclusionary practices present in the Geraldton community were aimed at outsiders to the community, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or nationality, reinforcing

social identity theory's claims of an individual to engage in in-group bias through attitude, belief and behaviour. These attitudes, beliefs and behaviours can function to serve protecting the status quo in social hierarchies and preserving self-esteem, as well as reducing subjective uncertainty for the individual (Blumberg, Kent, Hare, & Davies, 2011; Dasgupta, 2004). It is interesting to highlight this issue of community identity surfaced at the Worldview layer for overarching theme two and this theme. Overarching theme two explored the perceived failure projected onto those who returned, and difficulty of attracting employees to the region, suggesting an urban/rural dichotomy as the source of the issue. However the reporting of racism and ostracising newcomers to the community suggests Geraldton was a tight community, possessing a robust sense of cohesiveness and entitativity, and a resilient, positive sense of community, at the exclusion of outsiders. However, further research is required to explore this suggestion, and whether the exclusion of outsiders was a major deterrent to solving the skill shortage phenomenon.

The influence of family emerged at the worldview layer, in particularly in reference to how family shapes the younger generations. Examples included broken families, and family feuding, which was more pertinent to Aboriginal families: *…150 people rioting recently due to family feud which was alcohol and drug related, broken families happen frequently, lateral violence throughout the region, feuding families is an ongoing issue, teach them to self-manage themselves. "That's the way it is", some kids don't know why their families are feuding; big problem with Indigenous families feuding, however many have left now, town is much better.* Some stakeholders described how family was integral to shaping the worldviews of their younger generations, by demonstrating unemployment and drug and alcohol usage was a cycle that repeated throughout generations in some families: *will find that three generations of families are not working; very hard to break cycle, for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous; third, fourth generations unemployed, never see family members go to work. Health issues also related; early school leavers-similar issues to adults-drug, alcohol abuse. Stems from families. Hard to break it.* One stakeholder was left asking: *"Clients need to have desire to learn… How do you make people want to work?"*

Lateral violence is endemic in Aboriginal communities, with 95 per cent witnessing it at home and amongst themselves (Korff, 2015). Common to oppressed groups, the aggressive behaviours of individuals towards members of the same group stems from colonisation, oppressive hegemonic structures, and intergenerational trauma, which are

perpetuating issues that reverberate and marginalise Aboriginal communities in the present (Bennett, 2014; Doyle & Hungerford, 2015; Korff, 2015).

Literature indicates the usage of drug and alcohol is greatly influenced by family, especially in the formative years. Research has shown individuals exposed to socially disadvantaged environment in the early years are more likely to pick up smoking early on in life (Hayatbakhsh, Mamun, Williams, O'Callaghan, & Najman, 2013). Frequent changes in maternal marital status can leave adolescents feeling lonely and more exposed to peer pressure and illicit drug use (Hayatbakhsh et al., 2013). Children who are exposed to alcohol abuse experience variations of consequences, depending on the gender of the parent. Alcohol abuse committed by a father contributes significantly to premature death, while a mother's alcohol abuse contributes significantly to child abuse or neglect, and the increase chance of children convicted of crimes. In general, parental alcohol abuse leads to family separation, youth unemployment, and social exclusion (Christofferson & Soothill, 2003). An association between family dysfunction, such as disputes, leads to an increase reporting in high-risk drinking in young people (Livingston et al., 2008). Prevalence of alcohol and illicit substance use is reported to be twice as much in Indigenous communities than non-Indigenous (Roche et al., 2013).

Myth/metaphor. The pervasiveness of alcohol has permeated throughout the layers of this overarching theme, compounding the difficulties of employee attitudes employers encountered in overarching theme one. In this overarching theme, the deleterious effects of alcohol and drugs are explored in the context of the workplace, and associating the source of these issues to be embedded in a lack of confidence and self-efficacy, family issues (broken families, family feuding), and lateral violence and colonisation. This theme emerged again in this final layer, postulating alcohol to be imbued in the social archetype of the shearer and miner: …*finds that people don't want to stop the use of alcohol; it's entrenched and attached to the myth of being a shearer; you drink, and being a miner; you drink…it's a social norm.*

Alcohol has been an aspect of the Australian identity since the early days of colonisation, with heavy drinking established as a cultural norm in this period of history, a practice adopted from Britain (Moodie, 2013). As currency was in short supply, rum was adopted as payment for convict labour, while spirits were used to barter (Moodie, 2013). Alcohol has been encapsulated in Australian literature, in works by late nineteenth century

iconic poets such as Henry Lawson, on an assortment of topics such as marriage – "'Twas a common sordid marriage, and there's little new to tell/Save the pub to him was Heaven, and his own home was a Hell…" ("The secret", n.d.), alcoholism—"And, sunk in hopeless, black despair/that drink no more has power to drown/upon the beer-stained table there/the drunkard's ruined head goes down…" ("The drunkard's", n.d.), and prostitution -- "Deeper, deeper sink the women, for the veriest drunken clown/has his feet upon the shoulders of the women of the town…" ("The women", n.d.). Not only was alcohol accepted as a social norm early in white Australian history, but was used to distinguish Australians from other nationalities, as described by the novelist Marcus Clarke in the late nineteenth century: "They are not a nation of snobs like the English or of extravagant boasters like the Americans or of reckless profligates like the French, they are simply a nation of drunkards." (Kirby, 2006, p. 203).

Mining and shearing were part of the social fabric in the emergence of new society in the colony, and their prominence in contributing to the economy lead these working lifestyles to be the topic of poetry and folk songs. One such folk song, *The bare bellied-ewe* (1891), describes the life of the shearer, with the chorus:

Click goes his shears; click, click, click.
Wide are the blows, and his hand is moving quick,
The ringer looks round, for he lost it by a blow,
And he curses that old shearer with the bare belled ewe

The song ends with shearer in the pub for a drinking session, with the "work and bust" binge drinking after a period of hard work of early colonial times continuing in the present (Moodie, 2013). The gold rushes in New South Wales and Victoria from the 1850s saw mass migration to the fields, with the state population of Victoria grown from 77,000 to 540,000 in two years (Wells, 2015). However with a large population concentrated on the gold fields, tensions appeared, with workers abandoning towns in search for gold, food becoming scarce and expensive, high costs of licencing fees, and racial campaigns to remove Chinese miners from the goldfields due to competition and decrease in gold discovery. These factors led to alcohol-fuelled riots, with government attempts to control the riots by banning alcohol, were unsuccessful (Wells, 2015).

As with overarching theme one, the Australian identity was explored in the context of mateship, larrikinism, and anti-authoritarianism. Alcohol, and the myth of the shearer and miner further elaborate on the Australian identity, and again, reinforce a Eurocentric male narrative, as in this poem, *The Shearers* (n.d.), by Henry Lawson:

> And though he may be brown or black,
> Or wrong man there or right man,
> The mate that's honest to his mates
> They call that man a 'white man'!

The iconic Australian; the white man who works manual labour, and likes to drink with his mates, again makes his appearance in the overarching themes. Overarching theme one explored the qualities of local Australian employees depicting the archetypal Australian; fair, larrikin-like, and anti-authoritarian, as described by migrant workers. Emerging again in this overarching theme, the socialisation of alcohol is depicted to be entrenched in the Australian archetype, as explored by the poetry. Bridging the historical and creative literature from the past to analyse the data in the present assists in illuminating the unconscious roots of the phenomenon. The summation of the Australian archetype resonating in the current narrative and the theme of alcohol abuse presented casts a disconcerting shadow. Attempts to manage the skill shortage were compounded by existing acute social issues, underpinned by the myth of identity and in regards to Aboriginals, the structures in society perpetuating the impact of colonisation. While the skill shortage was conceptualised by government as an economic problem, the data suggests social problems contributed significantly to the skill shortage in Geraldton. Rather than applying neoliberal economic solutions to social problems, the research suggests recapturing the skill shortage in a framework that embraces the social, political, and relational dimensions, as well as economic, and explore these facets with equal attention.

Overarching Theme Four - Exploitation of Migrant Workers: Disempowerment, Procedural Fairness, and Distributive Justice

The final overarching theme in the study shifts the focus from exploring issues related to the skill shortage, to the experiences of migrant workers. The data produced less themes for this cohort, which was due to a series of push and pull factors. Push factors included delay to the development of OPR, and downturn in the local economy during the data collection phase. This downturn in the local economy mirrored the national economy,

with participants leaving Geraldton struggled to find work in other major Australian cities. Pull factors included an increase demand for skilled workers to rebuild Christchurch, New Zealand, after the 2011 earthquake. The variation in themes in the data collected and increase in out-migration, against the backdrop of an economic downturn suggests that migrant workers were not used as a source of cheap labour as previously claimed. Despite this, exploitation emerged to be a major concern, especially for unions and migration agents based in Perth. However, only a small number of migrant workers reported exposure to exploitation in Geraldton. This could be due to a variety of reasons, including the downturn in economy, most spoke fluent English, or were from the United Kingdom, or that it was possible exploitation rarely occurred.

Litany. Migrant workers mentioned rumours surrounding the recruitment process, suggesting there was a theme of underhanded behaviour by companies: *[Business name], a Korean company based in Sydney, with someone working for this company complained they didn't advertise the job in newspapers, but in Korean newspapers.* At the time of the study, employers were required to advertise locally for three months to justify the need for migrant workers. Working abroad fairs were also mentioned, where one migrant worker believed the Australian government used deception at these expos: *info is not clear, ambiguous, and vague.*

One stakeholder suggested exploitation claims were sensationalised by the media, which could have consequences for temporary labour migration programmes:

> *"…making it sensational, and hitting the press, and not necessarily being the full set of truths, and generalisations and that sort of thing, and so it's saying it's appearing a lot of the time which we know it's not, so I prefer to just try to nip it in the bud wherever we see it rather than it just become a major issue…"*

> *"I think if we overreact too much, if we've got any sort of recovery in the economy, it's going to be a big sell to try and attract migrants back to Australia, I think we're already seeing that"; lots of media hype around exploitation of 457s.*

Social causes. While most migrant workers perceived a general sense of wellbeing while living in Geraldton, some reported experiencing exploitation. One migrant worker described working for a fishing company that was downsized from seven employees to just

this one migrant worker. They were not entitled to holidays, worked 70 hour weeks, driving around 450 Kilometres one way from Geraldton and Fremantle and back three times a week. This migrant worker gave a rundown of a typical day:

> receive stock from 9am to 2pm. Break in the afternoon from 2pm to 6pm. Carry boat from Abrolhos Islands comes between 6pm and 9pm. Eats dinner, wait until 10 or 11pm to leave Geraldton. Must be in Fremantle 6am the next day. Stays until 11am (sleeps in the truck), then drives back to Geraldton, arriving 4pm. While away, someone else is managing the factory.

However this routine proved to be hazardous, and due to the lack of sleep, they fell asleep at the wheel while driving to Fremantle, crashing the truck. After the accident, the employer offered an alternative to the working arrangement, and organised for the migrant worker to drive half way to Jurien Bay, where the stock was handed over to another driver to deliver it to Fremantle. However at the time of the interview, the migrant worker experienced uncertainty with their employer, who would reiterate the migrant worker was easily replaceable. This caused tension and frustration for the migrant worker, who was relying on the employer for sponsorship.

Some felt disempowered to speak out to the manager and unions for fear of losing their job: *did find it unusual that two companies subcontracted to do the same job are being paid differently. Wanted to bring it up to the union, but didn't want to cause trouble; doesn't want to kick up a fuss, make it worse, just want to get visa, that's why not going to the papers.* One migrant worker felt disempowered to contact the authority: *was meant to be employed as second head chef, but instead worked as a kitchen hand. The manager delayed signing of the contract…worked 45 hours, believed there was at least $800 there, but didn't get paid for it. He wanted to go to the police, but felt he couldn't because he didn't have a signed contract.*

Another migrant worker felt disempowered to report injuries, believing that *reporting an injury can make your job harder*, and health and safety is *only important when people are watching*. The example provided was an incident on a mine site, where their helmet fell off down the back of the ball mills and into the gearing system that drove the mill. If they were caught by the equipment, they would most likely be killed. However to recover the helmet, the manager would have had to shut down the entire site. Eventually

the supervisor allowed the migrant worker to retrieve the helmet while the site was operating, without detriment to their safety.

Evidence of exploitation also surfaced from stakeholder interviews, in particularly from unions: *Employers are required to provide proof that they are paying 457s the same as Australian workers, through pay slips. However union found out that the boss was going around to employees house on weekends and demanding half of pay back to cover for flight or other expenses; Up to 35 people sleeping in one house in 24 hours-on rotation/shift. Housing is proving to be an issue too; …hears bad cases once a month, but don't have resources of their own to investigate it; some employers pay leader of group to keep others quiet; employer exploitation incidents; not many, but can be extreme… found with student visas, not pertaining to one industry.*

Interestingly one manager interviewed was aware of an employer abusing the tax system by subcontracting to migrant workers, rather than employing them: *believes Koreans are on student visas, but using it to find work; boss makes backpackers have an ABN even though the employer knows it's illegal…doesn't know how he gets away with it.* Some migrant workers on working holiday visas reported they were informed by the employer an Australian Business Number (ABN) was a requirement for employment. By obtaining an ABN, the migrant worker was declaring they were an enterprise operating in Australia with commercial sales of products (Australian Business Register, 2015). This violates visa stipulations, and also exempts employers from paying superannuation and other costs associated with hiring employees. While some had their application for an ABN rejected on these grounds, one English migrant worker reported visiting the ABN Lookup website and retrieving the ABN details of a person with an identical or similar name. They described this process as a method backpackers utilised to meet the requests of employers refusing to employ without an ABN.

Some stakeholders noted migrant workers were willingly putting themselves in positions to be exploited by employers and migration agents, while some put blind faith in the migration agent:

> *"…people are desperate, they want to move to Australia, and if they're getting two dollars a day or ten dollars a month in the Philippines or whatever, and they're*

getting paid even two hundred dollars here, they will still do it, and there's nothing you can tell them"

"…a lot would have varying levels of English, and so there's a certain amount that are just trusting that the agent that they're dealing with is doing the right thing, but I think equally there's a lot that are just trying to find ways around the system, getting into employment possibly when they shouldn't"

"I think as soon as you've got English and a bit of in trepidation of dealing with the Immigration and those sorts of processes, that someone steps in, represents themselves as an expert; 'just follow what I say, pay me what I want and I'll sort you', that's the sort of model where you see abuse occurring"

Prilleltensky's psychopolitical validity offers an examination of power by exploring the categories of wellness (the balance of personal, relational, and collective needs), oppression (a state or process of domination, and exploitation), and liberation (resisting oppressive forces and gaining rights) (Prilleltensky, 2008). This is achieved by integrating politics and psychology to contextualise the influence these structures have on wellness, oppression, and liberation through the nexus of power, thus conceptualising a value-based praxis for community psychology. The power intertwined in politics and psychology is also multidimensional, transpiring the layers of a social ecological system, providing analysis at personal, relational, and collective layers (Prilleltensky, 2008; 2003). Epistemic validity and transformational validity come under the rubric of psychopolitical validity, with epistemic validity investigating a phenomenon through the ubiquitous nature of power in the current political and psychological dynamics pertinent to wellness, oppression, and liberation, presented in personal, relational, and collective domains. Employing the framework in the context of this study, there is evidence of powerlessness, where participants experienced barriers to self-actualisation as they perceived they could not seek assistance when exploited or in life-threatening situations. This indicated the powerlessness was a product of political and psychological power operating as oppression in the relational domain of the framework, derived from the absence of citizenship.

Political oppression encompasses barriers to self-actualisation, economic sanctions, and degradation of culture (Prilleltensky, 2008). Psychological oppression manifests as powerlessness, learned helplessness, conformity, and fear (Prilleltensky, 2008; 2003;

Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). Oppression is not limited to political, social, or economic issues, and can be perceived by a boundary dictated by culture or society, internalised and psychological, weighing down on self-esteem (Prilleltensky, 2008). Research indicates the exploitation experienced by migrant workers subjects them to psychological oppression. Migrant workers can experience hostility from the local community as a threat to social stability, blamed for crime and stealing jobs from the unemployed, and as a result experience low self-respect, decreased sense of self, and lower social status (Shaokang, Zhenwei, & Blas, 2002; Wong et al., 2008). Trafficked migrant workers reported anxiety, depression, post-traumatic symptoms, psychiatric morbidity, and apathy for the future (Turner-Moss, 2014). The stress associated with being a migrant worker included financial difficulties, job-related stress, employment uncertainty, language barriers, discrimination, lowered social stratification, employer exploitation, illegal status, lack of social support, absence from loved ones and health and safety concerns, all having a significant impact on the mental health and wellbeing of migrant workers (Araujo & Borrell, 2006; Cislo et al., 2010; Ismayilova et al., 2014; Joseph, 2011; Magaña & Hoovey, 2003; Nicklett & Burgard, 2009; Wong et al., 2008; Yip, et al, 2007).

The demands placed on migrant workers by employers have been reported as inducing a sense of dehumanisation, with Potter and Hamilton's (2014) study on migrant workers in Northern Ireland revealing some employers engaged in practices which reinforced the unequal power dynamics between employer/migration agent, and migrant worker. These practices included using language to exclude and confuse migrant workers, withholding information and contracts, manipulating residency status, pay slips missing information, constant threats of dismissal, and written warnings for minor incidents despite the absence of contracts. Joseph's (2011) research also describes labour migration as a dehumanising experience, with a lack of solidarity amongst Brazilian migrant workers due to the obsession to earn money.

Wong's et al. (2008) study on the mental health of Chinese workers found 25 per cent of the male migrant worker participants suffered from mental health issues, including obsession and compulsion, sensitivity, depression and anxiety. They correlated these findings to the working conditions of manual workers, where it was reported they were overworked with a lack of access to medical and social security. As oppression is a form of power socially constructed and permeating through all aspects of life, it can manifest as a consequence of culture, and was identified as a factor impacting on migrant worker

wellbeing. Wong et al., (2008) identified that the Chinese cultural value of work and Confucian work ethic as having a great effect on men with pressure to provide for families, thus impacting on mental health and wellbeing.

While the degree of awareness of exploitation varies from case to case, the literature validates migrant workers are more willing to accept low-skilled jobs and employment situations which do not comply with legislation (Morgan & Finniear, 2009). Potter and Hamilton (2014) identified three reasons as to why migrant workers continued to position themselves in precarious positions: enduring until a more attractive job was available, expecting working conditions to improve, and wanting to move on to other employment as soon as possible. However the topic of retributive justice revealed migrant workers feared accessing government support networks put in place to manage exploitation: *"…we see instances of migration agents doing the wrong thing then we'll recommend clients to go to the MARA* [Migration Agents Registration Authority is operated by the Australian Government to ensure the regulation of migration agents and protection of the rights of migrant workers]:

> *"…I would suspect a small proportion of these applicants actually express their concerns to the MARA, and I don't know if it's whether they are afraid of being involved with the government body, or it might somehow impact themselves, etcetera, but you see really bad abuse cases where people are paying thirty, forty, fifty thousand dollars for advice that's just not going to lead them anywhere and yet they still won't make that complaint to the MARA"*

The slow processing of the justice system was seen to be a deterrent to access to recourse: *Justice system takes too long, migrant workers leave, people lose interest; issues with prosecuting employers is that it takes too long, about nine months,…by the time it goes to court, migrant workers have moved on to another job, another country; ABCC* (Australian Building and Construction Commissioner) *polices construction industry. Their prosecution cycle takes 18 months; in reality exploitation occurs, employee leaves, reporting ends, close of case.*

The limits of Australian jurisdiction were an obstacle to persecuting unregistered migration agent perpetrators, and again was a barrier reported to hinder distributive justice:

> " …you've got a lot of people that are coming in on permanent residency organised by unregistered agents, who MARA has no power over those individuals, and so quite often you'll see a lot of the abuses originate from overseas-based agents; It's a jurisdiction thing more than anything, but how do you regulate an overseas jurisdiction?"

" …you're also looking at more broader issues about Australia's place in the world, and whether they have a right to say Australian laws will cover any area which may not be Australian, which cannot be considered in the sense of the word to be Australian". Equally Australian migration agents were at risk of exploitation by overseas agents:

> "Using this loosely, somebody in India say "I'd like to use [migration agent's name] licence, I'll put [migration agent]'s name on ad in India somewhere, and say she's the migration agent because we're affiliated with her", and yet I know nothing of it, for example, and that's scary. Thank God that's not happened to me so far, but I've heard it happening"

After exploring the psychological oppression of migrant workers, the analysis continues with epistemic psychopolitical validity, exploring political oppression at the relational domain drawing the attention to concerns of neoliberal-like political structures which permit the continuance of oppression and exploitation of migrant workers. Most temporary labour migration programmes are developed and implemented to serve the economic growth of countries, often tailored for and driven by employer-demand. They are inherently restrictive on the rights granted to migrant workers, and are denied social and political privileges offered to citizens, despite paying taxes (Dauvergne & Marsden, 2014a). These imposed restrictions can make it harder to seek out other employment in the event of exploitation (Oke, 2012). The fear of seeking help demonstrates the prospects of obtaining sponsorship and improving life options for the migrant worker is not only at the discretion of the government, but also of the employer; the gravity of the process elevates their position in society from an average citizen to an individual installed with the power to alter the life chances of transnational workers. Despite the process guided by the context of economic concerns regulated by the government, in reality the equity in temporary labour migration programmes hinge on the moral compass of the employer. As such, migrant workers automatically assume a precarious position when engaging in transnational

employment. Temporary workers cannot have permanent rights as inequality is fundamental to the concept (Dauvergne & Marsden, 2014a,b).

On the subject of rights, Ruhs and Martin's (2008) numbers versus rights equation describes a trade-off between migrant worker rights and the number admitted to a temporary labour migration programme. They posit that from an employer's perspective, the more rights for workers generally equate to an increase in labour costs, using an example from Sweden, the UK and Ireland granting rights to eight Eastern European countries in 2004. Migrant workers in Sweden had access to full social welfare benefits, which contrasted with the UK and Ireland restricting the accessibility of social welfare benefits to migrant workers. By 2006, a million found work in the UK and Ireland, while only 5,000 found work in Sweden. The latter figure was attributed to assigning labour migrants equal employment rights as citizens, and thus the same costs as employing citizens. Concomitantly, assigning labour migrants similar rights to citizens could increase the difficulty of employment due to a lack in language proficiency compared to locals speaking in their native tongue. This demonstrates that "the advantage of inequality is what makes migrant workers desirable" (Reilly, 2011, p. 133).

Ruhs and Martin (2008) suggest these programmes should be a triple win situation for the employer, migrant, and state. The 'triple win' scenario is supported by the existence of global inequality, where migrant worker desires to improving life options means a willingness to tolerate harsh conditions in Western countries (Dauvergne & Marsden, 2014a). The 'willingness to accept' undesirable working conditions as Ruhs and Martin (2008) suggest may be because migrant workers know despite this, life is better in western countries compared to third world countries. However in the context of this study, all migrant workers were from countries which had similar economic and political structure as Australia. A possibility for this study is the willingness to accept these conditions was the trade-off; it was easier for these people to move on to find other employment due to the skill shortage and demand for labour. In addition, study participants were on working holiday visas, which put a six month time expiration on their employment with a particular employer. However Reilly (2011) critiques the triple win situation, implying this is the rhetoric of dominant Western countries and their perspective on labour migration, with any benefits to the migrant as incidental.

In light of psychopolitical validity, transformational validity examines possibilities to reduce the oppression in political and psychological structures present in society to establish wellness at the personal, relational, and collective domains (Prilleltensky, 2008). Prilleltensky and Nelson (2002) warn community psychology programmes assist the oppressed rather than working to alter structures in society. Instead they call for greater focus on political action. Following this lead, the monitoring and compliance of temporary labour migration programmes were under constant scrutiny by stakeholders. While some were satisfied with DIBP's running of operations, most expressed contempt for the integrity of the programmes: *can't convict employers for breaching the act; they can continue to do it until department is embarrassed; reports to DIAC are harder to make in remote areas; no checking mechanism to ensure sponsors are complying with rules; programme is almost self-regulatory, broad descriptions of pathways to enter company, no capacity to see if need for people is realistic, or just an attempt to source cheap labour; sanctions don't take away ability to sponsor.*

However it must be noted DIBP was making efforts to strengthening the integrity of the programme, altering legislation reportedly every two weeks: *legislation has improved integrity, for example, market rate now matches Australian; more equality ensures employers are not accessing cheaper labour;*

> *"…every two weeks, so every time they renew, they change the law…everything-language or even the fees, application fees, or a slight wording, because it's a passage and different making, or some loophole, they try to take them out. Once they release the new law and they see how it goes, and then they adjust it slightly, altering, and changing, or some big decision like the government policy change, and then it's going to be dramatically changed"*

These changes demonstrate the government's attempts at transformational validity operating at a relational domain. However, while changes to the programme were required to ensure the protection of the rights of migrant workers, some stakeholders noted increasing the language level requirement also excluded many potential migrant workers and future Australian citizens: *…you think this family could have been a positive contribution, make a positive contribution to Australia and yet the door is shut on them because the English is too high for example, I don't know, are we shutting the door on people that can make a positive contribution and actually want to be here and are*

passionate about being here and yet can't?; …IELTS [International English Language Testing System] is obscure, some questions don't relate to the industry they are working in; their guy spoke good English, was just one obscure trick question in the comprehension section that constantly tripped him up. Another dilemma with raising the language level was it did not apply to working holiday visas holders. In fact there is no specified language minimum, employers do not need to pay a large sum to sponsor them, and with an increase in backpackers contributing the Australian labour market, it would appear these migrant workers are at a greater risk of exploitation than 457 visa holders.

However there were stakeholders who engaged in monitoring of their own volition, unaware of other stakeholders taking this stance. These individuals functioning as 'floodgates' reflected power as liberation. One regional government body carried out their own monitoring to ensure the recruitment process was fair: *By an actual person visiting the employers, believed it made it harder to rort the system. Believed having to look someone in the eye; …When they did checks, did so to ensure there was a job in existence, but they didn't check payslips or records. Checked if Aussies were laid off for skilled labour.* Migration agents perceived themselves to play a role in ensuring compliance and the integrity of the programme:

> *"…Speaking for myself, I like to be helping in the 'floodgates' if you like…if the gatekeepers for example like migration agents can stop that happening, I think that will have more effect than the law saying you're not allowed to exploit workers because people will, there needs to be involved people involved in the scheme".*

The literature indicates temporary labour migration programmes are inherently unequal, despite framing migrant worker rights in the context of moral, political, and citizenship discourses permanently rooted in liberalism and sovereignty. Reilly (2011), cites Gibney's (2009) analysis of the precarious status of migrant workers, asylum seekers, and illegal immigrants, positing the elements of voice (participation in political discussions) and security (safety from the threat of deportation) are benefits of citizenship which are not conferred to the migrant worker. Reilly (2011) captures these exclusions in a liberal framework of freedom, asserting a change of balance of power between employer and employee is required to empower migrant workers. However even the inequality of temporary labour migration programmes serve as an ironic advantage for the migrant

worker in obtaining employment, as explored in Ruhs and Martin's (2008) numbers versus rights article.

Rather than discussing the temporariness of transnationals' rights against the contextual background of permanent moral and political philosophies woven into the structures that are the foundations of society, the data of stakeholders assisting with the 'floodgates', suggests removing the discussion of rights from a temporal space altogether. Instead, reconceptualising transnational rights in the context of a relational domain continues to support empowerment of migrant worker rights with the additional support of stakeholders. In the case of this research, stakeholders adopted the role of assisting with the 'floodgates' for a variety reasons, which included maintaining the integrity of their own occupation, compassion for the exploited, and to ensure local Australians were not excluded from employment. These reasons are naturally self-serving but do relate to protecting the rights of migrant workers, without imposing restrictions (such as language level) which could exclude labour migrants from economic participation. Installing greater influential power in stakeholders does not remove the existing power conferred to employers which hinges on their moral compass, but rather supports the strengthening of accountability, the integrity of temporary labour migration programmes and thus the rights of migrant workers.

While not a dominating theme, the informal assistance of monitoring of the temporary labour migration programmes by stakeholders provides insight into an alternative approach to managing the exploitation of migrant workers. These individuals acted according to their own moral compass, yet were unified in the variety of reasons presented. This could provide a framework that encourages solidarity amongst stakeholders, contrasting with the diffusion of responsibility and lack of synergistic interaction explored in overarching theme two.

Worldviews. Some stakeholders such as unions and migration agents identified culture to be a significant impediment to protecting the rights of migrant workers: *When unions get ready for case (to prosecute employers for exploitation), migrant workers get scared to stand up. Union believes some cultural issues come into play (Chinese are very loyal to employers/leader of group). Unions find they need to convince leader of Chinese group that they're being exploited, and rest follow suit.*

Stakeholders also identified the exploitation of migrant workers by migration agents and employers of the same ethnicity. This is a violation of a sense of community, explicitly the notion of membership. In Chavis and MacMillan's (1986) model, membership is represented by boundaries, emotional safety, sense of belonging, and identification. The abuse of these qualities are represented in the quotes: *In India, I find there's a lot of prevalence of bogus documents, because that's India, certain countries, the culture is to survive any way you can…;*

> *"…that's generally a situation where it might be a Chinese employer, Chinese recruiter, Chinese individual, and I think things slipping through the cracks that the wrong sort of person is turning up into employment, now they're probably totally innocent, in that all that they're thinking that everything's been done correctly, but they are being charged large sums to get work in Australia…I can't say it in a broad sweeping statement, typically it will be agents or recruitment companies of the same ethnicity that rip off, because there is that trust within the community, they think they're being looked after by one of their own, but it's quite often it will be Filipino agents that rip off Filipinos, Chinese with Chinese etcetera"*

In the context of the workplace, a psychological contract explores the dynamics in the relationship between employer and employee, analysing the individual's perception of the terms of a reciprocal obligation agreed upon by the employer and employee (Le, Santos, & Ferreira, 2015; Morgan & Finniear, 2008; Rousseau, 1989). Breeching a psychological contract often implies diminished commitment to the organisation, negative attitude, perceived sense of distributive unfairness, organisational injustice and erosion of trust (Le et al., 2015; Restubog, Bordia, & Bordia, 2009). The psychological contract has been well researched in Western individualistic societies, but applying the concept to collectivist cultures may lend an explanation as to why migrant workers appear to be more easily exploited by employers and migration agents of the same ethnicity. In studies of Asian cultures, employees have a perceived dutiful obligation to employers, with the relationship with the organisation perceived to take precedent for employees over procedural fairness policies in organisations (Cohen & Eyal 2015; Farh, Earley, & Lin, 1997; Westwood, Sparrow, & Leung, 2001). Cohen's (2010) study of Arab teachers in Israel found collectivist values, such as maintaining status quo, respect for tradition, cooperation, minimal action to jeopardise group solidarity, the value of family, and concern for others' welfare, were positively connected with workplace commitment (Cohen & Eyal, 2015).

These features are commonly identified with collectivist cultures, with nonconformity less likely to be tolerated (Akande, 2009; Chen & Kao, 2012; Husted & Allen, 2008). Conceptualising the workplace as family (familism), included perceiving the organisation to be nurturing while reciprocating with loyalty, as prevalent in Filipino culture (Restubog et al., 2009). This paternalistic view of organisations is also evident in research on Indian organisations (Aggarwal & Bhargava, 2010). These studies contrast with the literature on psychological contracts within individualistic cultures, where autonomy, personal goals, and emotional independence are prioritised (Chen & Kao, 2012). However it is unknown to what degree migrant workers are aware of the exploitation. Quotes from migration agents earlier indicated some were cognizant but refused to seek retribution, despite assistance from migration agents. More research would be required to indicate if this was due to preserving the solidarity of the group, or a fear of utilising government support and the unknown implications which could follow.

Myth/metaphor. There emerged two themes in the myth/metaphor layer, both emphasising the oppressive nature of labour migration. The first theme highlighted the lack of procedural fairness experienced by one migrant worker. This particular situation involved a company subcontracting to two other companies to work on the silos at the Geraldton Port. The migrant worker, employed by subcontracting company A, was concerned with the different conditions of remuneration for the two subcontracting companies. They decided not to speak to the union about the situation for fear of unknown consequences. However around the same time a union representative appeared on site, recruiting new members and demanding the contractor to almost double the wages for subcontracting company B. Whether or not linked, subcontractor B did not have their contract renewed (whereas subcontractor A whose employees did not join the union had their contract renewed), and a friend (another migrant worker) of the migrant worker who signed on to the union in this incident was not employed since. The migrant worker described this as if they were *…cutting the tree I'm sitting on*, mimicking a sawing action with their hand, as if to saw the branch they were sitting on.

This example emphasises the lack of procedural fairness associated with being a migrant worker, navigating the workplace with minimal leverage. It also reinforces that when migrant workers attempted to increase the value of their rights, they were met with greater oppression, which possibly served as an example to other migrant workers not to attempt this course of action.

Employing a tree as a metaphor serves to demonstrate the importance of work to life. A tree represents life, and the cosmological connection between all living creatures and worlds in some mythologies (such as Yggdrasil in Norse mythology). In religion the tree symbolises ascension of wisdom, such as when Buddha attained enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree, or the Tree of Knowledge bearing fruit which led to original sin in Christianity, while in some Australian Aboriginal language groups, trees were utilised to conceal the dead within or in branches of a tree, allowing the spirit to return to the land. As a tree symbolises the interconnectedness of life, wisdom, and knowledge, so too is an occupation in modernity.

Using the tree as a metaphor for work demonstrates the importance of work to living and surviving. This importance highlights the nature of living in today's globalised world of neoliberal policies. This quote also emphasises despite work vital to survival, migrant workers are not given a considerable range of power to bargain their position. To voice concern about a perceived sense of exploitation, could possibly mean the migrant worker was cutting themselves off from the lifeline of a job. However it was not so much the quality of the job itself was of importance, but rather the remuneration. Remuneration was a key impetus for local workers to leave employers for the mines, and the value of money was repeatedly expressed to be a positive by migrant workers too (although this is not included in this chapter). The tree serves a similar purpose in religion too; providing access to knowledge in Christianity, and a place to shade Buddha during attainment of enlightenment. As the tree was a source to obtain power of knowledge and enlightenment, so too it serves the metaphor of symbolising the access to power inherited in remuneration and financial stability. The power ingrained in the value of money permits the migrant worker the opportunity to move on to another employer and to regain rights. However depicting a tree as a metaphor for an occupation illustrates the sacredness of the tree and its encompassing qualities of life, wisdom and power imbued in it, translated to the modern day necessity of work for survival, encompassing the qualities of money, security and power imbued in it.

The second theme shifted the focus from a lack of procedural fairness, to highlighting the negative attitudes towards 457 visa holders. One migrant worker (looking for sponsorship while on a working holiday visa) reported communication difficulties with Korean migrant workers in a subcontracted organisation on a mine site: *…ask for tools, but*

the Koreans don't understand. This migrant worker reported these 457 visa holders were sponsored as trade assistants, fitters, boilermakers, plant operators, but all performed trade assistant duties. The recruitment of these 457 visa holders was also a contentious issue, with some complaining the company did not advertise locally, but rather in the Korean newspapers. On this same site, an incident continued to occur which reinforced the unwelcoming attitude towards 457 visa holders:

> *Every toilet cubicle has '457' written above the toilet rolls. Cleaners keep removing the graffiti, but people keep writing it…because of this I don't want to get a 457 visa. Are people writing this because of the visa, or because the visa holders are Korean?*

This symbolic gesture connotes the 457 visa scheme conveys the same value as toilet paper in serving hygienic purposes for excretion, and while it invokes vivid imagery, ultimately it infers disrespect and exclusion of 457 visa holders. The contextual background of the Korean migrant workers may provide insight into why workers were disgruntled and continued to vandalise toilet cubicles, especially as it appeared the organisation may have exploited the labour migration programme, creating a ripple effect to generate misplaced frustration and exclusion of 457 visa holders by their fellow employees.

The hesitancy in applying for the 457 visa because of this incident portrays the power installed in the action, where it is discriminating the out-group in the workplace. Graffiti is a means to communicate political and social expressions, and in this scenario illustrated a potent message that 457 visa holders are not welcomed in the workplace community. Whether or not the act was directed towards a specific nationality is not significant, as it focused on identifying and deprecating the out-group; the migrant worker.

Both metaphors emphasise the precariousness of labour migration. Migrant workers enter the country with a set of rights restricted by their non-citizenship status, exposed to vulnerabilities in the workplace. These concerns are portrayed in the first theme, where a lack of procedural fairness influenced the migrant worker not to seek assistance through the unions at the expense of their job. Applying a tree as a metaphor for work emphasises the significance of employment to securing stability in survival. It also reinforces Marx's theory of human nature as mentioned in the myth/metaphor layer in overarching theme two. The essence of human nature is realised through labour and the

ability to self-actualise, interconnecting labour to existence. Adopting a universal rights schema, encroaching on rights subjects migrant workers to dehumanising experiences. The second theme also subjects migrant workers to dehumanising experiences, by way of exclusion communicated through graffiti. Positioning '457' above toilet rolls imply the temporary labour migration programme to be disposable in quality, inferring labour to be construed as a mere element in the overall process of accomplishing the necessities and objectives of the employer. The 'disposable' construct of labour is a distinct contrast against the first theme of the importance of work through the significance of the tree in mythology and religion, however both collide in the nexus of dehumanisation of labour. This theme of dehumanisation previously appeared in overarching theme one, underscoring the impetus for a lack of loyalty to organisations, as expressed by employers.

In conclusion, eleven major themes from employer, migrant worker, and stakeholder interviews were narrowed to four overarching themes. These overarching themes include the lack of work ethics in local workers, the blame game, social issues in the community, and the exploitation of migrant workers. Each one of these overarching themes illustrated issues pertinent to the skill shortage phenomenon and treatment of migrant workers in Australian society. The lack of work ethics in local workers highlighted the attitudes of Gen Y and lack of loyalty to organisation, with the value of money and Australian identity to be the driving force. At the deeper layers of the analysis, dehumanisation of labour attested to the lack of work ethics. The blame game emphasised the lack of cohesive action amongst employers and stakeholders in the context of education and management of the skill shortage. Employers were inculpated for a lack of investment in training, while employers blamed educational institutions for the lack of educating youth. Migrant workers were accused of stealing local jobs, whereas migrant workers highlighted local lack of interest in working particular occupations, and rurality and sense of identity were explored. The social issues in the community accentuated the drug and alcohol problems employers encountered in the workplace, suggesting social issues played a greater role in perpetuating the skill shortage. Particular attention to Aboriginal experiences in this overarching theme explored unique challenges attached to this community, and acknowledging pastoral support, mentoring and building confidence as a means to empowering those suffering from alcohol and drug abuse provided a greater chance of engaging locals in the workforce. However this was proven to be a difficult task, especially with alcohol attached to the myth of the miner and shearer in the Australian identity. The final overarching theme shifted the focus from themes perpetuating the skill

shortage to the exploitation of migrant workers. While only a handful of migrant workers reported exploitation in Geraldton, the severity was life-threatening in some instances. Stakeholders also explored the implications of exploitation, citing the difficulties associated with retributive justice. The data demonstrated stakeholders and government endeavoured to monitor the compliance of temporary labour migration programmes, suggesting reconceptualising the rights-based political discourse, to a relational domain, with stakeholders empowered to provide greater support to buffer the exploitation of migrant workers. These overarching themes guide the discussion in explicating the skill shortage and labour migration phenomenon that occurred as a result of the mining boom. Exploring the subject matter in the context of community psychology through the theoretical framework of causal layered analysis lends to capturing this phenomenon from a fresh perspective, elucidating issues previously unexplored in the context of this phenomenon.

Part C – Discussion

This final section of the chapter explores the interpretations and implications of the findings. The research question set out to explore the experiences associated with skill shortages and labour migration during the mining boom in the Mid West and Perth regions of Western Australia. This was a significant query proposed at the time as the mining boom was evident in every facet of life, including, social, political, and economic domains. Despite the ubiquitous nature of the issues, there is limited literature on the vulnerabilities exposed to migrant workers due to the asymmetric power formations in sponsorship arrangements.

This section puts forward two propositions. The first proposition contrasts the findings with the State Government's approach to the skill shortage through exploring the five key issues raised in the *Skilling WA* report (2010) highlighted in Chapter Two. This analysis explores the discrepancies between the approach and findings, positing the State Government took a neoliberal, macro level approach to address the social issues present in the micro and meso levels in the community.

The second proposition elucidates on this, suggesting failure to recognise the interconnectedness of the phenomenon resulted in a misunderstanding of the power embedded in the relational capital, as portrayed by the themes of dehumanisation, accusation, oppression, and exploitation emerging in the findings. Four paradoxes are presented to draw attention to the interdependent synergies which are necessary to solve the skill shortage and uphold the rights of migrant workers. A handful of examples of acknowledging interdependent relationships emerge, reinforcing the call for a raising of consciousness in solving issues affecting communities and on a larger scale, society.

Proposition One: Applying Neoliberal Macro-Level Solutions to Micro/Meso-Level Social Problems

The first proposition explores the State Government's approach to satisfying the skill shortage, and contrasts this with the findings of the research. The Department of Training and Workforce Development (DTWD), presented the *Skilling WA* report (2010), which after consulting stakeholders, identified five key issues pertinent to solving the skill shortage in WA, with a detailed examination in Chapter Two. While these key issues were templates to guide the interview questions, they emerged as minor themes in the findings. The discrepancy between the key issues identified and the overarching themes to emerge illuminated at a predominantly macro level approach by State Government, which attempted to implement strategies onto existing micro and meso level structures. This is realised through the neoliberal solutions offered by the State Government, to solve the social problems employers, migrant workers, and stakeholders experienced in relation to the skill shortage. Following is a discussion of each issue contrasted with the findings.

State Government Response and Research Findings – Exploring the Discrepancy

To reiterate the literature in Chapter Two, the *Skilling WA* report (2010) identified five key issues to solving the skill shortage. These issues addressed:

• Barriers to labour force participation;

• Issues impacting migration;

• Attraction and retention issues for the state;

• Issues impacting skill development and training; and

• Issues impacting the strategic planning and coordination of workforce development between government, industry, and enterprise.

Addressing barriers to labour force participation. The *Skilling WA* report highlighted four key issues impacting labour force participation, including a prediction of a fall in labour force participation, an ageing population, an increase use of under-utilised sources of labour, and removing employment barriers to under-utilised sources of labour. Under-utilised sources of labour included women, youth, Aboriginals, mature-aged workers, and people with disabilities.

In this research employers were asked if they engaged these underutilised sources of labour to manage the skill shortage. Interestingly, the research did not generate data on

these groups, with the exception of the criticism about Gen Y attitudes, which emerged as part of overarching theme one of exploring the lack of work ethics in Australian employees. This was a salient barrier perpetuating the skill shortage in Geraldton, and its significance was realised through the nature of the study capturing the effects of the skill shortage at the micro and meso levels of analysis. As an exploratory study, the research opens up further questions as to why Gen Y attitudes was a significant issue at the micro and meso levels, but not the macro. This is most probably due to the approach by the State Government, where broader interest groups were identified as key issues requiring greater focus to better alleviate the skill shortage. However this focus appears to be scant in extending support to these key issues that are required to support the mining boom. In other words, the State Government approach explored how groups and dynamics in society could better support the mining boom, rather than inquiring into how the State could better support the groups and dynamics in society to foster State economic prosperity. Another question to be explored is why employers did not utilise these potential sources of labour identified by the report?

This may be due to the nature of the industries, with a majority of employers interviewed from trade industries. These industries are traditionally male-dominated, and so introducing or increasing the presence of women, mature-aged, people with disabilities, youth, or Aboriginal people may be perceived as extending membership to an outsider of the group, which the findings indicate has not harmoniously transpired. This is evident in the myth/metaphor layer in Overarching Theme Four, where graffiti in toilet cubicles publicly ostracised 457 visa holders.

This theme of exploring the nexus of identity and group membership did not pertain exclusively to the workplace, extending to the general community, and continuously emerged throughout the findings in the worldview layers. Overarching theme two explored the negative attachment to Geraldton, attributing this to an urban/rural dichotomy where rural communities were perceived to be lacking in social infrastructure. The worldview layer in overarching theme three explored the hostility exhibited towards outsiders and employers, with one employer experiencing resentment and exclusion, suggesting this was due to the company relocating them from Perth to manage the business in Geraldton, and thus replacing a local. Others described racism to be publicly displayed, and a characteristic of a redneck, country mentality. Supporting this explanation is the prevalence of national identity, where the Australian identity emerged in the social

causes layer of overarching theme one, exploring the work ethics of local employees. In this layer, quotes from migrant workers identified the qualities of local workers which represented the idiosyncrasies found in the Australian identity, such as sharing the workload to be fair and a laid back attitude towards authority/employers. The findings established national identity to be synonymous with manhood, and it also emerged in overarching theme three, attaching alcohol to the characterisation of the shearer and miner in the myth/metaphor layer. It is possible aspects of this sense of identity based on a Eurocentric narrative of manhood are ingrained in local employer perspectives by virtue of employers sharing national identity with employees, thus blinding the employer from employing under-utilised sources of labour.

However, while not included in the findings, interviews with industry bodies suggest some businesses were successfully engaging under-utilised groups in society, including culturally and linguistically diverse people, repeat offenders, and in particularly women and Aboriginal groups (although there was some suggestion that social and cultural barriers were impeding Aboriginal women's engagement).

Issues impacting migration. The report ascertained that natural population growth would not meet the demands for labour, identifying migration to be the second issue essential to addressing this forecast. However labour migration programmes at the time of the report were considered to be limiting in their responsiveness to the demand for labour.

While emphasising the economic benefits of skilled migration (such as job creation, support of trades, and enhancing skill level of industries) (DTWD, 2010), the report does not capture the risks and costs associated with the use of migrant workers, as a barrier to solving the skill shortage. The findings of this research explored the costs associated with skilled migration, such as the employer who recounted their experience of their sponsored 457 visa holders poached by the competition. There were massive costs associated with that particular experience; not only was it a financial loss but also a loss which impacted on team morale and wellbeing. The report, however, mentioned amendments to temporary labour migration programmes, which while not stated, allude to key issues emphasised in the *Visa Subclass 457 Integrity Review* (2008), such as altering the minimum salary level, training benchmarks, and English language requirement.

Due to exploitation claims in the past, The Federal Government consistently modified temporary labour migration programmes to ensure the functionality and integrity of these programmes. Listed as a minor theme in the findings, employers found the changes created even more difficulty in sponsoring migrant workers, with the example of the increased language level required for semi-skilled occupations meant they could no longer sponsor some of their current migrant workers. The data also found a preference for backpackers, with a minimum language level absent from the working holiday visa. Government crackdown on exploitation through increasing the language level may have worked theoretically, however in practice this created another barrier to solving the skill shortage by way of excluding migrant workers in semi-skilled occupations and employers utilising backpackers as a quick and easy solution.

Some interviewed stakeholders indicated that claims of exploitation of migrant workers created additional obstacles that could impact the resolve to manage the skill shortage, with a couple of examples located in the findings. One migration agent cited that legislation pertaining to temporary labour migration programmes altered fortnightly in 2013, due to loopholes, and exploitative claims surfacing among other issues. There are additional costs imposed on migration agents to have their records of current legislation updated each time this occurs. Another migration agent believed exploitation claims surfacing in the media was a disincentive for migrants to come to Australia (amongst a series of other issues), with their own anecdotal evidence based on a decline in migrant workers arriving in Australia, and an increase of migrant workers in Canada at the end of 2013.

The report also highlighted the need to promote the state's quality of life, lifestyle benefits and job opportunities as a way to further recruit migrant workers (DTWD, 2010; CCIWA, 2010). While one employer relayed the need to sell Geraldton before the job, migrant workers perceived skilled migration expos in their home country to be ambiguous, and in line with deceit.

Addressing attraction and retention issues. Key issues listed in the 2010 report emphasised the role of government and enterprise in attracting and retaining a workforce, in particularly regional and remote WA, and the delivery of social and physical infrastructure to retain workers in these areas. The report highlighted the effects of globalisation, and competition for skilled workers as compounding skill shortages.

This key issue of attraction and retention emerged in the findings, where some employers believed the crisis was not a shortage of skills, but rather a lack of willingness to relocate outside of the major cities and into regional Australia. This example was repeated across industries, including the health, automotive, and IT industries. Again an employer emphasised the necessity of selling Geraldton before the job description, further highlighting the reluctance of city dwellers to relocate. To alleviate the dilemma, the findings revealed employers attempted to solve the skill shortage through a variety of methods, including a push to educate apprentices locally or within the company, relocating already existing staff to Geraldton branches, and financial incentives to retain employees. The sense of urgency attached to the mining boom insisted labour be sourced in a timely and efficient manner, with some businesses utilised temporary labour migration programmes as a short term solution to their dilemma.

However for every solution offered, a new obstacle emerged. Labour migration was an expensive risk, and while the benefits were reported to be substantial enough to allow employers the ability to continue their operations, risks associated with labour migration were also noted, with one employer losing three sponsored migrant workers to the competition. Some employers reported apprentices used them as training pads to move on to the mines. One employer provided the financial incentive employees requested, however this did not satisfy employees, who left for higher paying jobs on the mines.

Taking a step back from these temporary recruitment strategies, serious consideration needs to be given to the undercurrents of the unwillingness to relocate to regional Australia, or rather, gain a better understanding of the perception of rural Australia. This issue emerged in the findings in the rural/urban dichotomy in overarching theme two, and warrants further exploration. The lack of social capital in education and training was a strong point in the findings, as explored in overarching theme two. Australia's vastness and neoliberal policies implies regional communities have suffered due to lack of funding based on population numbers, as mentioned in the worldview layer in overarching theme two, with students completing their education in Perth due to the lack of quality in education, availability of teachers, and lack of funding for regional educational institutions. While the mining boom has ceased, the untapped sources of iron ore in the Mid West region will be mined sometime in the future when global demand for iron ore gains traction. In such circumstances, these issues will likely be presented again.

Addressing skill development, utilisation, and training. This theme identified the competitive market as a result of globalisation, increasing pressure on government and enterprise to increase competitiveness. Training and education were highlighted as requiring to be more flexible and responsive to the needs of employers. With globalisation applying pressure on enterprise to be more competitive, the report forecasted an increase demand for higher education, with a bachelor's degree to be the most sought after qualification by 2017 (DTWD, 2010).

Increasing participation in vocational education and training was cited as pertinent to solving the skill shortage crisis. These themes are pronounced in the findings, with a focus on accountability and lack of synergistic interaction in the relational capital between employers and stakeholders. Tensions were identified in the social causes layer in overarching theme two, where employers were perceived as failing to preference training for local workers. Equally employers blamed educational institutions for failure to educate students to a work-ready. The local TAFE was reported to be suffering from the effects of the skill shortage, lacking in quality teachers. Educational institutions responded with an awareness that employers held outdated perceptions of TAFE, which evolved to better support the needs of businesses. Overall a blame game was played out between stakeholders, with the findings endorsing a shift in perception of vocational training and the necessity for cooperation and collaboration highlighted in the report.

The report also highlights Australia's investment and participation in education is falling behind other countries (DWTD, 2010), with literacy and numeracy level in the workplace were also identified as important in alleviating the skill shortage. The findings identified literacy and numeracy to be major issues, with employers complaining youth struggled with these skills in overarching theme two. The worldview layer revealed funding to be driven by student numbers and a focus on graduating, rather than quality of education, attributing this to neoliberal policies in the Australian education system. Accountability for the decline in student outcomes turned towards the quality of teachers, with the Queensland Government exploring the idea of testing teachers for literary and numeracy skills in 2009 (Butler, 2009). Concerns have grown over the years regarding the quality of teaching standards, with some universities supposedly accepting students into teaching degrees with marks lower than 50 per cent in Year 12 exams (Maiden, 2015). As of August 2015, the Australian Federal Government's Department of Education and Training

(DET) implemented a trial literacy and numeracy test for teacher education students to ensure students are graduating from university with adequate skills, before rolling out the test nationally in 2016, with the cost of sitting the test the students' responsibility (DET, 2015). This test is part of a holistic, multi-level approach implemented by the federal government to increase student numeracy and literacy. The *Students First* approach involves assessing the quality of teacher education students, advocating for school autonomy, engaging parents to assist in their child's education, and strengthening the curriculum through STEM subjects (DET, 2015). The focus on quality of education is a welcomed shift against the backdrop of the findings where stakeholders believed graduating numbers overshadowed quality of education. The findings and literature indicate the deregulation of VET training has commodified knowledge, and compromised the quality of education as a result of neoliberal policies. Poor performing teachers who are now subject to government testing next year is possibly another example of how neoliberal policies have compromised the quality of education. However how this transpires for regional and rural Australia remains to be seen.

Addressing planning and coordination. This final theme in the state government's 2010 report addressing skill shortages identifies the necessity for consistent coordination, planning and knowledge sharing, and a shared responsibility between government departments, industry, and employers. This issue emphasised focus on knowledge sharing, outlining the type of information that would be expected to share, the inter-dependent nature of the issue and expected cooperation and shared responsibility between government, industry, employers and stakeholders.

This level of coordination and cooperation to address the skill shortage was explored in interviews with industry bodies, however did not emerge as significant themes in the findings. Although not included in the findings, in general industry bodies were sympathetic to employer experiences during the skill shortage, forming alliances with educational institutions, advocating for increased use of under-utilised sources of labour, and easier access to labour migration. However communication, coordination, and cooperation were not shared among all stakeholders.

Unions were absent from the discourse in the report. Interviewing union representatives, they echo similar sentiments as the state government, which was stressing the importance of training and upskilling Australian workers to solve the skill shortage.

Previously unions held a staunch stance against foreign workers, with the perception employers utilised these workers as a source of cheap labour; however most unions now acknowledge the participation of migrant workers in the Australian labour market. As explored in this study, unions extend their membership to migrant workers, with some utilising translators to better connect with migrant workers and combat exploitation when it did surface, and highlighting the cultural implications in these exploitative circumstances. However a couple of unions continued to perceive migrant workers as quick and cheap method to overcoming the skill shortage, an argument which ran parallel to the call for greater investment in training local Australians. Despite omission from the report, unions were contributing to solving the skill shortage, by advocating for greater investment in training for local Australians, and raising awareness of the exploitation of migrant workers.

Overall, The *Skilling WA* report (2010) identified five key issues pertinent to solving the skill shortage. The data revealed the key issues identified by the state government emerged in the findings, however were relatively minor issues. This suggests the neoliberal approach at the macro level did not adequately address the social and cultural obstacles present in the micro and meso levels to emerge in the findings. The state government's approach was to identify and explore the stakeholders in society that could contribute to economic prosperity: 'the State needs people with the right skills, in the right place at the right time' (2010, p. 129), rather than address what these stakeholders required in order to contribute to the economy. Instead, a sense of mutual obligation between State and citizen emerges throughout the report in the State government's approach to the skill shortage: 'Responding to this challenge will require a carefully planned and coordinated effort, not only by government, but also industry, community and individuals' (2010, p.129). This style of rhetoric is also present in Chapter Two, in the RfR investment fostering the economic growth of the SuperTown of Morawa, highlighting what the community can do "to serve the region" (Shire of Morawa, n.d., p. xii; Department of Regional Development, 2014). These quotes illuminate government expectation that communities are posed to serve national interests while becoming self-reliant in the political economic environment of neoliberalism.

Proposition Two – Addressing the Power Dynamics in the Relational Capital between Stakeholders

Proposition one contextualised the findings within the State Government's approach to solving the skill shortage, identifying a discrepancy in the macro level

orientation in governance which did not transpire into the micro and meso levels in which this research was conducted. It also revealed the former offered neoliberal solutions to the social issues that emerged in the findings. Proposition two elaborates on this discussion, exploring the power dynamics in the relational capital between employers, migrant workers, and stakeholders, through a series of paradoxes.

Interconnectedness

As explored in the literature review, the skill shortage issue was primarily couched in economic and population analyses, with a gradual academic awareness of migrant worker oppression. Applying an ecological framework such as CLA permits distance from the phenomenon, and with the inclusion of stakeholders, captures a fresh perspective. Despite the research anchored in micro and meso levels in a specific community, the framework revealed that participants were interacting with all levels of the ecological system in different spatial dimensions, vertically (for example, global demand for iron ore impacted on an employer's ability to retain staff) and laterally (Australian workers ostracising migrant worker colleagues with graffiti). While detailing four overarching themes pertinent to the Geraldton community, overall the findings espouse a cognizance of interconnectedness between participants.

The interconnectedness in the study is reflected in the mining boom and subsequent skill shortage as a predicament which effected an entire nation and infiltrated every facet of society. The skill shortage crisis reverberated throughout society, influencing every individual who participated in the Australian workforce and economy, and thus was the axis which employers, migrant workers, and stakeholders gravitated around. An element of this interconnectedness is the power imbued in the relationships between employers, migrant workers, and stakeholders throughout the different levels of the ecological model. Guided by the analysis and grounding in the community psychology discipline, a critical consciousness of this relational power explicates the issues embedded in the specific context, and the processes by which these issues manifested. In the context of this study, it appears the State Government and stakeholders held a lack of appreciation for the interconnectedness of this phenomenon, which as a result manifested in expressions of dehumanisation, accusation, oppression, and exploitation. The concept of paradox is utilised as a tool to enhance the operatives of power in relational capital.

Relational Capital: Exploring the Heterogeneity of Relational Power

In this research the term relational capital is adopted as a rubric for the power imbued in a variety of relationships emerging from the totality of the phenomenon. This includes relationships encompassing social, economic, political and other dimensions of the skill shortage, at all levels of the ecological framework, as well as myths and ideologies. Relational power is heterogeneous and conceptualised in different modalities. For example, despite being grounded in community psychology, this study identifies Marxist analysis of employer and employee/migrant worker relationship, as well as psychological contract and Weber's iron cage metaphor. The theoretical framework, causal layered analysis, also analyses relational power in a futures paradigm. In community psychology, there is no synthesised term. There are however multiple analyses contextualised in specific settings, such as the relational component in psychological empowerment (Christens, 2012), social power in an organisational setting (Speer & Hughey, 1995), and wellness, liberation, and oppressive power in multiple settings (Prilleltensky, 2008).

The interconnectedness in the findings can be stripped back to an exchange of valued resources, which are actualised in the context of relationships. Social exchange theory propounds the analysis of this multi-contingent and interdependent dynamic (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Emerson, 1976). Meeker's (1971) framework explores the quality of exchange as subject to the individual's agency, and posits six factors: reciprocity, altruism, group gain, status consistency, and competition (as cited in Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Emerson, 1976). Exchange rules are contingent upon the types of resources exchanged, and vary in value based on source and tangibility (Foa & Foa, 1980). However a theoretical ambiguity occurs when exploring the causality of relationships and resources and whether they are contingent on how the exchange occurs, or what is derived from the exchange, with Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) suggesting both modes are complimentary; that is exchanges alter the nature of relationships and relationships alter the nature of exchanges.

Macro level analysis of social exchange theory involves the conception of productive exchange, whereby groups operate in a process of production, and contribute value-adding to resources, with exchange networks provide the social structures between groups (Emerson, 1976). Stakeholder theory can also be applied to the examination of relational capital and reinforce the interconnectedness of the skill shortage as a national phenomenon. Stakeholders are in an interdependent exchange with an enterprise,

affecting and affected by the process and outcomes (Rowley, 1997; Freeman, 1984). To elucidate, stakeholders are conceptualised as possessing some form of capital, and hence are subject to gain or lose depending on an organisation's process and outcome (Rowley, 1997). Stakeholders are said to have interdependent relationships not just with the enterprise but with each other as well, with enterprises not the focal point of the relationships, but one of many focal points in a constellation (Freeman & Evan, 1990; Rowley, 1997). From the enterprise's position, organisations are subject to external pressures including compliance and expectations from stakeholders and institutions such as governments (Rowley, 1997). Rowley (1997) utilises social network analysis to explore the multiple interactions of stakeholders and enterprises. He identifies two aspects to the model; network density (measuring interconnectedness by the number of relationships in a network), and centrality (positioning of a body relative to others in the network).

Continuing on with the macro level analysis of relational power, Speer and Hughey (1995) contextualise power in community organisational settings, bridging the link between psychological and organisational empowerment through the means of social power. They describe social power as a multidimensional construct, consisting of instruments of power including reward or punishment, as an obstacle to participation and framing of the issue at hand (Bachrach & Baratz, 1962, as cited by Speer, 2008), and shaping ideologies in a shared consciousness (Lukes, 1974, as cited by Speer, 2008). Principles of empowerment in community organising are contingent upon the success of the organisation itself as a collective entity to strive for the social power while competing with other groups. Interpersonal relationships are stressed as a source of social power, and the sharing of values and emotions strengthen the cause, alluding to a sense of community. The action-reflection dialectic enforces the praxis of principles, where individual components of psychological empowerment are cognizant in the domain of the organisation.

Prilleltensky's (2008) psychopolitical validity ascertains power to be a political and psychological construct expressed within the scopes of wellness, oppression, and liberation, and is explored as a suggestion to embed migrant worker rights in relational capital with stakeholders in overarching theme four and methodology. It encompasses the ability to influence, through a combination of agency and external structures (opportunity), positing power as contingent on the reciprocity between intention and ability, and contextual setting (Prilleltensky, 2008). Speer's (2008) instruments of power, as explored by Speer and Hughey (1995), harmonises these conceptualisations of power into psychopolitical validity,

enhancing the framework by understanding the mechanics of power in epistemic and transformative psychopolitical validity. These include instruments as power (reward vs punishment, barriers to participation, and shaping shared consciousness); sources of power (personality, property, and organisation), and the significance of the role of conflict (power countervails power), while measuring the scope of transformative psychopolitical validity consists of tuning, incremental change, and restructuring (Speer, 2008).

Neal and Neal (2011) formulate a quantifiable equation to measure power as a structural phenomenon, building on the foundations which conceptualise power in an exchange context. The essential features of power include resources (a value that which is transferable between two agents, tangible or intangible), awareness (cognizance of how to operate power in context of own setting as well as setting including other larger agents who hold power), asymmetry (power operates when distribution of resources is uneven, although not a requirement), conflict (present in settings evoking social change, however is not a requirement when exercising power), and relationships (power is rooted in the critical structure of relationships). While they list five features to power, resources and relationships still are the main two elements present, echoing similarity to social exchange theory. Neal and Neal (2013) have also reconceptualised Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, elucidating that the relationship between systems is unclear. Instead, they suggest moving away from the nested model, to a social networked model, as explicated in the methodology chapter. The theory allows for different focal points to be explored, and to discover systems affecting these points, drawing similarities to Rowley's (1997) application of social network analysis to enterprises and stakeholders, and Perkins, Hughey and Speer's (2002) reference to the significance of capturing the interconnectedness of issues as crucial to generating social capital.

Paradoxes

Paradoxes depict interrelated perspectives which contradict (Lewis, 2000; Browne & Bishop, 2011). A paradox can denote perspective, emotions, identities and ideologies, and are socially constructed in such a way that permits tension (Lewis, 2000). It is this tension that embodies the interconnectedness of the phenomenon in question, however perception obscures the realisation of this tension through simplification of complexities embedded in the phenomenon, creating a binary logic which further polarises the possibilities of resolving tensions underlying paradoxes (Lewis, 2000). These underlying tensions are either reinforced, eliciting defences and refusal to confront the fallacy of the

construct, or moving in a direction towards change, which involves transcending the boundaries of binary logic and reconceptualising the construct to include opposites, made possible through self-reflection (Lewis, 2000; Smith & Lewis, 2011). Lewis (2000) suggests the use of various methods to identify paradoxes, including a multiparadigm approach. This approach entails the application of an alternative or opposing theoretical framework to the paradigm in which the phenomenon is usually constructed in, hence generating new perspectives. This study intuitively adopts this approach (CLA in the paradigm of community psychology) as themes to emerge from the study varied from the issues posited by the State Government in proposition one.

Following are four paradoxes to emerge from the findings, which illuminate the power imbued in the relational capital between employers, migrant workers, and stakeholders. This relational power is depicted by dehumanisation, oppression, accusation, and exploitation in the four overarching themes. Following is a brief exploration of the power in these relationships and why they have manifested in such negative connotations.

Paradox One – Dehumanising the Interdependency of the Employer/Employee Synergy

This first paradox explores the complexity embedded in the relational capital between employer and employee. At the core of this dynamic, these two groups are interdependent of each other for definition and functionality. The paradox resides in this synergy; they rely on each other to achieve their own aims. This illuminates stakeholder theory and the interconnectedness in the relationship, highlighting that both employer and employee hold capital affecting and affected by each other's processes, contingent on the specific setting of the mining boom (Rowley, 1997). However the findings portray an abuse of this synergy and asymmetry of power between the two groups. A Marxist approach would concur with the interdependency of the employer/employee relationship, but would emphasise the aim of capitalism is to commodify labour which surpasses its cost in value (attributes of labour power) (Morrison, 1995). The employer/capitalist make a profit through purchasing the labour power, while the employee/worker sells their commodity. The latter are disadvantaged by the lack of means to sell the products of their labour, and the constant maintenance of the worker (food, shelter) is a depletion of the labour power, and requires the worker to renew this process each day to carry out the labour to exist.

Morrison (1995) cites philosophers such as Smith and Ricardo who establish equality to be ingrained in the buyer/seller exchange, ensuring capitalist and worker are

free to partake in these exchanges in the context of the free market. This setting projects the appearance of free labour as both freely enter the exchange; however the worker is compelled to partake in this process to survive, disadvantaging the employee, and also working for surplus labour; labour of no value for the employee but adds value to the product (Morrison, 1995). The importance of this exchange of buying and selling labour as a commodity is made explicit by the skill shortage explored in this study. The disadvantaged employee is dehumanised, as explored in overarching theme one in the worldview layer, where employers verified their role in dehumanising labour. This has come to be accepted as the dominant narrative, as demonstrated through the guidance of the CLA framework into the worldview and myth/metaphor layers. The emergence of dehumanisation of labour as explored by employers suggests the issue is deeply ingrained in the psyche of the phenomenon.

The dehumanising of labour by employers is embedded in their source of power. As Speer (2008) (citing Galbraith, 1983) ascertains, money is utilised as both a source and instrument of power. As a source, the employee is dependent on remuneration for labour for survival in society, which is given in exchange for labour with the employer. As an instrument of power, money is imbued with the power to shape shared consciousness, and thus the ideology of the work relationship between employer and employee. This is presented in the economic theory of homo economicus:

> …homo economicus is deeply shaped by substance thinking. An individual human being, typically conceived as male and understood in this way, relates to others only through contracts, which have no effect on what he is in himself. The task of the economy is to satisfy his desires, but these are understood only in terms of possession and consumption of goods and the accumulation of wealth. His desires for good relations with other people play no role. He tries to get as much as he can for as little as he can. This is his rationality. There is no place for questions of fairness or honesty or responsibility. Only external relations are considered (Cobb, 2007, p. 574, as cited by Neesham & Dibben, 2012, p. 64).

The findings reveal that the relational capital described above does not rationally serve homo economicus to its full potential, as employees also engaged in dehumanising the labour process. The findings and literature suggest reciprocity can have a positive

influence in the exchange of the labour resource, such as in the experiences of family-owned businesses in overarching theme one (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

However the dehumanising of the labour process calls for an understanding of the sensibilities related to the value of work. Marx cites labour to be part of the essence of being, connecting humans to nature for survival, self-affirmation and well-being, and to the product which embodies the value of labour (Morrison, 1995). Despite this, the theory of alienation dislocates these values from the essence, thus alienating human beings from a society which is an extension of themselves (Morrison, 1995). Labour is also indivisibly connected to the dignity of human beings, with religious undertones emulating from the Judeo-Christian God's six days of creation (Awoniyi, 2013). Continuing the line of theological conceptualisation of work, the Roman Catholic Church releases encyclicals on capitalism, with Rerum Novarum (Rights and Duties of Capital and Labour) promulgated by Pope Leo XIII in 1891. It explored the conditions and rights of the working class, in attempts to outline the duties of the employer, employee, the church and state. Aware of the deplorable conditions of the working class at the time, the social justice piece outlined the Church's response to the consequences of industrialisation:

> In any case we clearly see, and on this there is general agreement, that some opportune remedy must be found quickly for the misery and wretchedness pressing so unjustly on the majority of the working class…working men have been surrendered, isolated and helpless, to the hardheartedness of employers and the greed of unchecked competition. (The Holy See, n.d., para. 3)

It rejected socialism as an answer to regulate unrestricted capitalism, as it was contrary to natural law. It shamed the misuse of labour, branding it to be inhumane and condemned by human and divine laws. Instead, it called for the employee and employer to work in harmony through realising the necessity of the interdependence of their nature. The encyclical states the significance of labour for man as a means to living, enacting self-preservation as an inherent component to natural law. Due to this interdependence, the Church urged the state to establish sanctions to protect the welfare of the working class, including avenues for protection through trade unions and collective bargaining. For Weber's Protestant Ethic, labour was a measure for human worthiness and salvation. With the lack of repentance, religious prescription of sola fide (faith alone), and predestination, meant the Protestant conduct of self-control from the temptations of worldly pleasures and

self-denial served God, was a means to dealing with damnation. The worker creates their own salvation through hard work, frugality, and self-discipline (Morrison, 1995).

Regardless of a theological or Marxist positioning, labour is conceptualised to be anchored in the essence of human nature. However despite this, the asymmetry of power (Neal & Neal, 2011) in favour of the employer, and the source and instrumentality of power in money (Speer, 2008), overshadows the divine laws and dignity of labour with the configuration of ideology through homo economicus. Working from the bottom of the CLA layers to the top, the ironic twist occurs in the social causes layer, where there is a shift in the power imbalance between employer and employee. The urgent demand for labour during the mining boom unexpectedly empowered employees, from the disadvantaged seller of labour, to the buyer looking to purchase the highest wage offered by employers, and mirroring the dehumanising of labour as a process established by employers. While it has been established that labour is the essence of human nature, why has it emerged in the findings that this essence is devalued by both employers and employees?

A suggestion can be found in a dialectical paradox similar to Marx's alienation of the worker. Framing the paradox in the social constructionist epistemological grounding of this study, Berger and Luckmann (1966) assert that the habitual ritual of solidifying institutionalisation in society is a process of typified actions reciprocated between actors. These institutions, (in this study the dehumanising workplace), typify the actions and the actors (employers and employees), embedded in a shared historicity through the socialisation of a new generation, and imply control over human functionality through a prescribed code of conduct. Agency permits actors to continue, alter, or abolish their habitual actions, however as institutions are embodied by new generations, the process casts a shadow over the objective reality of the institution to permeate consciousness. Despite a product of our humanness, these institutions become externalised over time, and thus illuminate a dialectical paradox stressing the relationship between the producer (human), and the product (society) (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). An additional component to the equation is internalisation, where subjective meanings attached to institutions are adopted as one's own understanding. In short, 'society is a human product. Society is an objective reality. Man *(sic)* is a social product.' (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 61).

In a sense, Berger and Luckmann's works can be adopted as a social constructionist template which describes the process of alienation of the worker, and can be applied

throughout the remaining paradoxes as an explanation as to how current institutions exist. Furthermore, the conceptualisation of roles explores them as the embodiment of institutions, objectified by language and permits the actor to participate in the social world, while internalising the experience (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). By sharing the experience with other actors, this process becomes standard knowledge of what actions actors will play in their role, further serving to enhance control and the code of conduct, and represents the institution intersecting action. With employees dehumanising the labour process, this ties in with the metaphor of 'they have a few cards in their pocket', referring to employers no longer understanding the role of the employee/actor due to them operating outside of this shared knowledge of roles. However the conduct of employees, while operating outside their role in the traditional sense, continued to embody the institution, which is the dehumanised workplace. The legitimisation of this institution is a process of "knowledge" precedes "value" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 94).

The example of employees dehumanising the labour process and thus placing employers in a precarious position is an example of knowledge preceding value. The 'knowledge' of experiencing dehumanising of labour in the workplace is the subjective reality made to be a shared objective reality, with this knowledge informing the values based on the mechanics of how and why. The 'value' of work appears to be deficient in the findings (save a few examples of family businesses), despite the interdependency between employer and employee for definition and functionality.

Paradox Two – Dehumanising the Links in Stakeholder Synergies at the Meso Level
Paradox two explores the dynamics between all participants involved and affected by the skill shortage at the meso level, framing the phenomenon as the focal point which links participants together in a network of interdependent relationships. Similar to paradox one, this paradox asserts that the dynamics between participants is established as an interdependency of definition and functionality between each group (for example, a trade union cannot accomplish their interests without employers and employees). Again the paradox resides in the overall lack of synergistic interaction at the meso level between participants in this study.

The importance of synergistic interaction derives from the study situated in the contextual background of the mining boom in WA, and as of such is the axis which binds all participants together in an intersection of self-interests and shared experiences centred on

the skill shortage and labour migration. By virtue of these shared experiences occurring in the same temporal and geographical space in attempts to alleviate the skill shortage, stakeholders (including employers and migrant workers) held the capacity and capital to influence each other, even more so due to the pressures and tensions of the mining boom on existing structures and relationships. From the findings it is apparent these tensions illuminated features of the Geraldton community (and furthermore, Australian society) which were obstacles perpetuating the skill shortage.

Recognising aspects pertinent to solving the skill shortage, the State Government identified collaborations between government, industry, and enterprise, through knowledge dissemination, and shared responsibility as a key issue, as explored in proposition one. Hints of a collaborative approach surfaced in the data. Even though omitted from the findings, industry bodies in both Geraldton and Perth formed alliances with communities and educational institutions to alleviate the skill shortage, such as representatives from mining companies speaking at schools to expose students to the industry, and in particularly encourage female interest in the traditionally male-dominated industry. Another example of collaborative approach was identified in interviews with tertiary educational institutions, who tailored their programmes to the individual needs of employers and students in the workplace to assist in alleviating the skill shortage, as highlighted in the social causes layer in overarching theme two. However a lack of awareness by employers meant some continued to hold outdated beliefs on educational institutions, as relayed by this organisation.

The strengths of a collaborative approach are in the relational capital, empowering stakeholders to address macro level social and economic issues which an organisation alone cannot solve, and give an adaptive advantage to solving the dilemma (Javdani & Allen, 2014; Savage, et al., 2010; Speer & Hughey, 1995). While individual stakeholders can hold conflicting interests, this can positively motivate collaborative action, through preservation of identity (Rowley & Moldoveanu, 2003). Literature indicates successful collaborations are fostered through trust, commitment, perceptions of interdependence and advantages from the collaboration (Savage et al, 2010). Building collaborative capacity encompasses four dimensions; member capacity within organisations (utilising skills and knowledge and positive attitude towards collaboration), relational capacity (developing social relationships to provide the setting for collaboration, through positive internal and external relationships), organisational capacity (strong leadership skills, detailed work plans,

effective communication), and programmatic capacity (clear objectives, innovative, realistic goals, ecologically driven) (Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson, & Allen, 2001). A shared philosophy can significantly impact systems change, however paradoxically fundamental differences in worldviews can present as a barrier to collaboration (Nowell, 2009).

While there are hints of a collaborative approach in the data, overall the findings express a different narrative. A dissection of accountability and diffusion of responsibility takes place in overarching theme two, where stakeholders blamed other stakeholders for their concerns and problems, in which responses passed on the blame by targeting another stakeholder. The findings gave examples from the social causes layer of overarching theme two, such as unions and some members of regional government bodies believed that employers were not adequately investing in training and reskilling of local Australian workers. Literature indicated there was some truth to this (MSA, 2015). In turn, employers had their own complaints, and experienced difficulties with the lack of availability and access to training facilities in educational institutions.

In the tensions and pressures which engulfed stakeholders during the mining boom, the use of money as an instrument of power emerges as homo economicus materialized in overarching theme two, such as the myth/metaphor layer where the employer referred to the recruitment agency employing apprentices and marking up the costs for employers, 'prostituting' the youth, suggesting this economic rationality is deeply ingrained in the psyche of stakeholders. As mentioned in paradox one, this was visible in the behaviour of local employees, and also some migrant workers, who left sponsors for higher paying jobs as explored in overarching theme one. So why did the majority of stakeholders blame others for perpetuating and taking advantage of the skill shortage, and concomitantly other stakeholders collaborated to alleviate the pressures experienced from the phenomenon?

Suggestions can be drawn again from the social constructionist understanding put forward in Paradox one. Institutions are solidified through a shared historicity that enables socialisation of each new generation of actors. The shared understanding of the roles played by actors (in this case, the stakeholders), permits the continuation of the shared reality (in a neoliberal economic context). Unpacking the phenomenon, the complexity of the skill shortage is grounded in the notion of realising the interconnectedness, or sharing the blame. A stakeholder may be blamed for their lack of effort in solving the skill shortage,

with literature to validate these accusations, however in response the stakeholder passed on the blame to another stakeholder, and this too was validated by the literature. These accusations were inextricably intertwined in an epistemological understanding, and the interpretations of the skill shortage from stakeholder perspectives further enhances the paradox that these groups rely on each other to function to their fullest capabilities. The paradox demonstrates additional research is required to better understand the instrumentality of power in the processes and outcomes occurring in these networks.

Paradox Three – Exploring the Relationship between Australian Identity and Current Neoliberal Policies

The previous paradoxes explored the relational capital between individuals and organisations at micro and meso levels. This paradox extends the analysis to capture how the mechanics of power ingrained in Australian myths shaped the skill shortage at the macro level. The findings identified elements of the Australian identity which were barriers to solving the skill shortage, such as idiosyncrasies and use of alcohol, and thus lead to questioning the significance of power in identity. Concurrently, the findings indicated that current economic policies were shaping Australian identity, including the erosion of rurality as a feature of identity and myth, also contributing as a barrier to solving the skill shortage.

The subject of Australian myth and identity saturated several layers over various overarching themes, suggesting this to be a ubiquitous and critical topic, from the presence in rituals and mechanics of everyday life, permeating into the depths of the psyche of the phenomenon. Bell (2003) highlights historical representation and constant re-negotiation of identity in social interactions, suggesting a social constructionist approach to understanding collective memory, the product of conceptualising national identity. Individuals and groups gather to participate in acts of remembrance of past events, thus solidifying the institution (or myth in this scenario) in successive generations.

Temporal and spatial dimensions are vital elements in the construction of national identity (Bell, 2003), situating Australian myths in colonial and federation periods (late nineteenth/early twentieth centuries), depicted by convicts, settlers and pioneers from the United Kingdom in the arduous task of taming the wilderness, including indigenous population and external threats such as foreigners (Phillips, 1996; Tranter & Donoghue, 2007). While there was strong allegiance to the British Empire, there was equally strong anti-British sentiment. Anti-authoritarian, mateship, and pursuit of egalitarianism were

qualities which represented the resilient pioneering male Anglo-Australian (Pinnington & Lafferty, 2004). This image was also portrayed by bushrangers (outlaws), Australian soldiers during the landings at Gallipoli, and even sporting heroes (Gerster, 2001; Pinnington & Lafferty, 2004; Tranter & Donoghue, 2007; 2014).

Examining the findings, overarching theme one revealed a reiteration of Australian idiosyncrasies profoundly resonating in the social causes layer, where employers highlighted the lack of work ethics in employees, such as an anti-authoritarian streak in nature. The inclusion of migrant worker accounts on local employee attitudes echoed Australian peculiarities, such as a laid back nature, and distribution of a fair share of work. The findings also revealed in overarching theme three employees were irreverent towards company drug and alcohol policies, and employers attributed this to a 'country mentality' in the worldview layer. The final myth/metaphor layer also explored alcohol as implicitly connected with the identity of the miner and shearer, suggesting the association of alcohol with these figures from a colonial past ingrained alcohol in the underpinnings of national identity, embodied in literature by iconic Australian poets such as Henry Lawson. This however was suggested to reverberate in the present, exacerbating drug and alcohol related issues, and consequently as an obstacle to employment. Current literature also indicates alcohol use and abuse was most prevalent in men, young adults, and Aboriginal employees (Roche et al., 2015).

The qualities which define the archetypal Australian are born from the early pioneering years out of the vastness, isolation, and harshness of the outback. The bush was tantamount to Australian identity, and news magazines such as The Bulletin reinforced this preference over city dwelling early in Australian history:

…The features of this image were those of the bushman, and its dimensions the colonies of Australia and New Zealand, but its pattern was conceived and constructed in the urban world of Sydney. The bush fed the city, and the city responded by giving back the bush as the image of the true Australia (McLaren, 1989, p. 44, as cited by Evans and Jacobs, 2010, p. 380).

Poets glorified the bush and the resilient men who worked the land, juxtaposed against the unfavourable living conditions of the city, where the freedom of those living on

the land was to be envied, as portrayed in A.B. "Banjo" Paterson's Clancy of the Overflow (n.d.):

> I am sitting in my dingy little office, where a stingy
>
> Ray of sunlight struggles feebly down between the houses tall,
>
> And the foetid air and gritty of the dusty, dirty city
>
> Through the open window floating, spreads its foulness over all

The literature portrays a narrative of Australian identity of longing for the bush, however the findings represented a starkly contrasted account of a rural/urban dichotomy. While employees exhibited characteristics identifying strongly with the Australian myth, employers struggled to comprehend the difficulty in attracting staff to the Mid West region, with one employer stated when advertising, they would sell Geraldton before the position. Even government findings indicated regional Western Australia to be one of the hardest locations to recruit (DEEWR, 2012).

This dichotomy is rooted in the influences of neoliberalism, with literature indicating rural life to be steeped in suffering, a lack of opportunities, and lack of education. The quality of education was questioned by some participants, where the formula for funding is driven by numbers, and the commodification of knowledge and deregulation of VET training meant a narrowing and loss of transferable skills. Literature indicated neoliberal policies were excluding regional and rural communities from opportunities as a result of the requirement to be competitive in a global market (Alston, 2003; 2009). This is a key issue identified by the *Skilling WA* report (2010) in Proposition One, which also cited globalisation and competitive markets as compounding the skill shortage in regional Australia.

Pinnington and Lafferty (2004) assert globalisation significantly impacts the myth of the Australian landscape and archetypal Australian. Compared to the masculine imagery, present Australian workforces are cosmopolitan, suggesting the colonial conceptualisation of the bush to be outdated (Pinnington & Lafferty, 2004). The bush reinforces Australia's geographical distance from other economies, with neoliberal policies encouraging an increase in self-governance in regions, despite literature indicating the attempts to shift power structures have not been successful, and instead are weakening democracy, with an inability of local government to meet regional needs, a lack of trust in government,

disorganisation between government bodies, a breakdown in social solidarity, and a lack of social infrastructure compared to cities (Pick et al., 2008).

The power explicated in this paradox is embedded in the clash of two ideologies; the Australian way of being, informed by the glorification of early settlement by the Anglo-Australian man and the bush, and neoliberal economic policies, informed by globalisation. Despite an increased sense of interconnectedness, a global conscious erodes ties to place and settings (Melluish, 2014), creating a bicultural identity formed from acculturating local/national identity with global culture of individualism, neoliberalism, and consumerism imported into the local political economic setting (Chen, Benet-Martínez & Bond, 2008; Melluish, 2014; Nafstad, Blakar, Carlquist, Phelps, & Rand-Hendriksen, 2009). This paradox depicts a setting of conflict, with '…the sense that identity is now commodified as a consequence of patterns of consumption, shaped by advertising and a constantly shifting set of images' (Melluish, 2014, p. 539). Herein lies the challenge in navigating a setting where a sense of value and meaning is challenged, negotiated, or abolished (Marsella, 2012). Ariely's (2012) study on the impact of globalisation on national identity across 63 countries concluded that higher levels of globalisation negatively related to patriotism, willingness to fight for country, and ethnic national identity. Paradoxically, high levels of national identity did not negatively impact on globalisation, such as Australia, Ireland, Canada, New Zealand, and the USA (Ariely, 2012). Ultimately the paradox leaves the question lingering, will globalisation colonise a society historically underpinned by colonisation?

Paradox Four– Exploiting the Dependency on Migrant Workers and the Commodification of Rights

This final paradox touches on the relationship between migrant workers and employers in the context of the governance of temporary labour migration programmes. Some stakeholders protested the necessity of migrant workers during the mining boom, with overarching theme two revealed migrant workers played a crucial part to solving the skill shortage, with accounts from employers: *Australian public are led to believe that 457s are nicking jobs off Aussies, but we need 457s, without them we would have to shut our doors, not even able to employ Australians*. The insistent calls for greater increase and flexibility in temporary migrant workers to solving the skill shortage against the backdrop of globalisation informed a neoliberal approach by government. This approach commodified the rights of migrant workers, where employers are able to purchase the right to buy labour

through visa application fees paid to the government. The paradox resides in the dependence some employers placed on migrant workers, while concurrently others exploited this dynamic, situated in the interface of neoliberal policies informed by globalisation and sovereignty.

The issue with the lack of power assigned to migrant workers was explored in overarching theme four, where the appeal in utilising labour migrants is due to their inherent lack of rights, thus creating an advantage for the migrant worker searching for greater economic opportunities. The findings suggested offsetting this inherent lack of rights by exploring the relational power between other stakeholders, and empowering them to better protect the rights of migrant workers. This would be possible due to the rights of migrant workers indirectly influencing the interests of stakeholders, such as migration agents wanting to uphold the dignity of their profession. This nonetheless warrants further in-depth exploration.

However further exploration is required into the government's role in upholding the rights of migrant workers. As explored in overarching theme four, stakeholders believed government needed to be humiliated to step up the monitoring and compliance of employers. Government did attempt to deter exploitation through increasing the language level required for the 457 visa, however findings revealed this excluded potential permanent residents from economically contributing to Australian society, and secondly, employers were utilising backpackers instead, who had no language level requirement. The exploitation of migrant workers in the findings was at the hands of employers, however stakeholders perceived government's reluctance to punish employers. Questions of procedural fairness and distributive justice emerge, as does a call for greater understanding of governance, as this occurred in Australian jurisdiction by Australian citizens.

Prompted by Prilleltensky and Nelson (2002) and Prilleltensky's (2012) call for greater attention to political action in psychopolitical validity to promote wellbeing and empowerment, further exploration is required to delve into the political structures supporting asymmetric power in the relational capital between employers and migrant workers. Turning to neoliberalism, O'Neill and Weller (2013) assert the ideology has never dominated Australian federal politics, but rather over the decades a shift towards 'third-way' variegated neo-liberal policies as a reluctant response to globalisation (Weller & O'Neill, 2014). Furthermore, the liberalism embodied in Australian democracy denotes

negative liberty; "freedom is the absence of external constraint", with limited government intervention in an individual's realisation of their endeavours (Bottomley & Parker, 1994, p. 17):

> I am normally said to be free to the degree to which no man or body of men interferes with my activity. Political liberty in this sense is simply the area within which a man can act unobstructed by others. If I am prevented by others from doing what I could otherwise do, I am to that degree unfree; and if this area is contracted by other men beyond a certain minimum, I can be described as being coerced, or, it may be, enslaved….(Berlin, 1969, p. 122, cited by Gaus, Courtland, & Schmitdz, 2015, para. 5).

The significance of government upholding the rights of individuals under its jurisdiction are detailed in Hobbes' Leviathan. Hobbes described the state of nature (humankind) to be depicted by power struggles, violence, and systems which support preservation, such as economies, could not flourish in such a solitary and unpredictable environment, which is likened to a state of war (Lloyd & Sreedhar, 2014). However through rationality, individuals would attempt to uphold peace, and with this a reciprocity between the individual transferring their rights to the state, and the state protecting their rights from the interference of others, portrayed as a social contract between the individual and the state (Philpott, 2003). This is emanated in constitutional governments (like Australia), where the people rule through the body of law (Philpott, 2003). The rights bestowed upon citizens are extended to non-citizens, as explored by tacit consent to government in Lockean liberalism as a process of the individual transferring their rights to the state to join and obey the rules of society and thus legitimise the government (Tuckness, 2012).

Despite the focus of rights in a sovereign jurisdiction, rights also have a presence in a global setting, such as the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Here there is a consignment of rights in a global forum, a political commitment to the global interconnectedness at the interface of sovereign jurisprudence. However with the qualities of globalisation and neoliberalism penetrating societies (as explored in paradox three), and the presence of homo economicus in interdependent synergies (paradox one and two), the question emerges is negative liberty enough to protect the rights of migrant workers?

Lockean Liberalism expresses that individuals are free because they can be rational. Therefore, the premise signifies the freedom to obey and disobey the law, and the responsibility to accept the consequences of these actions (Zuckert, 2007). Negative liberty posits the onus on the individual to self-actualise with minimal government intervention. Government bodies such as the MARA and unions are present as demonstrated by the findings, however cultural norms and a perceived sense of disempowerment impede access to recourse. This psychological disempowerment reverberated throughout all four layers of the analysis, such as when migration agents reported gross exploitation of migrant workers at the hands of overseas migration agents, however revealed these victims did not seek retributive justice despite its availability and guidance from migration agent stakeholders willing to assist them. Further investigation is required to ascertain factors compounding the lack of access to recourse, such as intrapersonal (perceptions of powerlessness), and interactional (awareness of sociopolitical setting) components of psychological empowerment (Zimmerman, 1995).

The asymmetry of power that temporary labour migration programmes permit between employer and migrant worker relies heavily on the goodwill of the employer. A minor note must be mentioned regarding the implications for the employer. As the findings have demonstrated, these programmes place enormous pressure on employers, where the onus is on them to source the labour, examine an individual's skills and suitability, sponsor the individual (which some paid up to $10,000 per sponsorship), and inform the migrant worker of the cultural mechanics in their workplace and new country. A large quantity of time, money, and energy is invested by the employer, who also risk a great loss too, as with the example given in overarching theme one where three migrant workers were poached by the competition. Ultimately, a commodification of rights emerges in the context of labour migration programmes which rely on the moral compass of the employer. The penetration of neoliberalism and globalisation into the sovereign state requires further examination as to what extent it influences policies and the dehumanisation of the workplace, and the processes which stakeholders can better handle the functions of power in this setting, ensuring the integrity of temporary labour migration programmes do not compromise the rights of transient workers and employers. As Zuckert (2007) asserts, human dignity is defined by the underpinnings of human rights and justice.

Acknowledging Interconnectedness: Promoting an Exchange of Wellness

While the findings which arise from the data revealed overall themes of dehumanisation, accusation, oppression, and exploitation as expressions of the power emerging from the interdependent relationships, there were a handful of participants who acknowledged the interconnectedness of the skill shortage, and thus promoted relational wellness in the interdependent dynamics (Prilleltensky, 2008).

An example of this in the employer/employee dynamic emerged from family-owned businesses. Overarching theme one (worldviews layer) highlighted these businesses (except one) did not experience issues with work ethics, retention, drug and alcohol, or trade unions: *don't have an attitude problem with staff; people stay for a long time…believes it's because of who we are, it's a family business which looks after its people.* Here there is an insight into the employer's awareness of power functioning in an interdependent dynamic between employer and employee as explored in paradox one (Neal & Neal, 2011). The interaction with employees which considers their interests reflects the employer's worldviews. Although not in a strictly defined community setting, this approach and the reciprocity that describes the employees' loyalty to the employer is an example of bridging social divisions in the relational component of psychological empowerment (Christens, 2012). The quote can also be likened to a sense of community, including the elements of membership (such as personal investment), and influence, as both are dependent on each other, and possess capital that can be gained or lost, as in stakeholder theory (Rowley, 1997, McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Qualities such as respect, support, and connection are implied in the sense of family and community, and as such are elements which solidify relational wellness (Prilleltensky, 2008).

Another example is sourced from a stakeholder who barely featured in the findings; mining companies. This was due to the interviews conducted during the gradual downscaling of the mining boom. As of such, mining companies downsized or shelved explorations and operations until economic conditions improve. Despite a lack of movement, these companies were one of the major promoters for collaborative partnerships, especially with Aboriginal communities:

> *…we've always made the point we will be there, we sit down and have lunch with them and just treat them like bloody human beings, and it's worked brilliantly for us, we've never had a problem with them, never. In fact, some of our colleagues*

have and asked us how we get along with them, how did we do it, but they don't want to play the game.

…we know quite a few members of the community, because there's no exploration agreements in place, there's more just falling back on the Aboriginal respect policy, which is if there's an opportunity to employ locally, we will…

A similar attitude was also utilised in working with trade unions:

At the end of the day, if I go back on experience and other previous roles, I found unions are like Indigenous. If you sit down and talk and work it through with them, invariably there is a middle ground…I always use the example of when Reynolds was the secretary [of CFMEU] and Buckeridge [construction entrepreneur], opposite ends of the political spectrum, and yet they got on famously, because they were both pig-headed, bald-headed bastards, but they could sit down and talk, because they talked the same language. They might come at it from different angles, but they resolved most issues. It's when you get the idiots like McDonald [former CFMEU secretary] when you have problems, militant for the sake of militant.

Migration agents rely on cooperating with government to meet the needs of their clients, and so expressed a similar approach:

…my approach to the department's probably changed over time that in the early days it was probably a lot more adversarial, more argument and counter-argument etcetera, but at the end of the day you're working with people and you've got to establish good working relationships, and there's good case officers, there's bad ones, there's ones that have been there and have plenty of experience, and there's very inexperienced ones…

Again these quotes demonstrate the awareness of the interdependent nature of relationships with other stakeholders in a multilevel analysis. Quotes such as '…*play the game', '…falling back on the Aboriginal respect policy', 'sit down and talk and work it through with them',* and *'…talked the same language',* imply a set of rules in which the nature of these exchanges unfold in. By abiding by these rules, stakeholders achieve their goal. These alternative approaches reflect a tuning of the social change process, where

businesses are adapting to the awareness of interdependent dynamics and synergies, by tempering negative elements in the relationship with empowered approaches that foster greater reciprocity to achieve wellness (Seidman, 1988, Speer, 2008).

However attempts to harmonise the relational capital were not always successful, as in the example of the three migrant workers poached by the competition. This employer felt compassion for the migrant workers who were away from their families, and paid their holiday remuneration early. However, the migrant workers did not reciprocate with the 'rules' of exchange and left the business, with the employer and staff feeling betrayed. After reporting the incident to DIBP, the officer informed the employer *…you've learnt your lesson not to pay their holiday pay at once*, thus portraying a clash of worldviews.

As social change is concerned with equality and fairness (Newbrough, 1995), these quotes briefly indicate possible steps forward in empowering groups in the context of a skill shortage, by a raising of consciousness of the interconnectedness of the skill shortage. In doing so, an awareness of the interdependent nature of relationships nested within the network becomes apparent, and thus informs an empowered approach to achieving wellness for all stakeholders involved (Liu & Robertson, 2012; Pavlovich & Corner 2014).

This chapter presents the findings and discussion in three parts. Part A addressed the themes to emerge from employer, migrant worker, and stakeholder interviews. Further examination revealed reoccurring themes across cohorts, collating the themes to create four overarching themes. Part B constitutes the four overarching themes, in which issues of dehumanisation, accusation, oppression, and exploitation are scattered across these overarching themes. Part C guides the discussion on these issues, by first identifying the discrepancies between State Government solutions applied to community issues. These discrepancies occur due to the lack of capturing the totality of the skill shortage crisis by solely focusing on an economic framework which is informed by neoliberal policies, which however neglects other forms of capital in society. In this study, the neglect is most pertinent in form of relational capital. Four paradoxes are presented to illuminate the interdependent synergies required to solve the skill shortage and wellbeing of migrant workers, offering a new direction for future inquires.

Chapter Five – Conclusion

This thesis set out to capture the experiences of employers, migrant workers, and stakeholders influenced by the mining boom in the Mid West region. It sought to frame the totality of the skill shortage crisis and contentious labour migration solution within the community psychology paradigm, guided by Causal Layered Analysis. The application of this combination is significantly unique, as elucidated by the reliance on media and lack of research as outlined in the Introduction and Literature Review Chapters. The difficulty of obtaining data from migrant worker participants in Chapter Three illuminated the precarious nature of labour migration. Guided by CLA, the findings revealed four overarching themes contributing to and perpetuating the skill shortage, as well as exploitation of migrant workers. The thesis progressed to discuss these findings in the format of two propositions. Reflecting back on the literature in Chapter Two, the first proposition emphasised the discrepancies between the State Government's response to the skill shortage, and the overarching themes emerging from the Geraldton community. It posited this was a result of neoliberal solutions embedded in the macro-level applied to the social issues found in micro and meso-levels in the community. Continuing on the trajectory of this exploratory study, the second proposition espoused the central focus of the findings reflected in the cognizance of the interconnectedness of the phenomenon. However the lack of this awareness was explored in four paradoxes, while a third proposition presented examples of the acknowledging this relatedness. By capturing an awareness of the interconnectedness, participants were able to negotiate the power embedded in the relational capital, which overall satisfied a sense of wellbeing. As this is an exploratory study, the findings act as guideposts providing suggestions for future research.

Key conclusions and implications for future research

A significant conclusion drawn from this study is that skill shortages cannot be resolved through solely economic understandings. This is reflected in proposition one which purports the State Government neoliberal economic solutions are applied to social problems in the community. In overarching theme one employers reported the lack of work ethics in Australian employees. Intergenerational differences were problematized as Gen Y were accused of being lazy, ungrateful, and lacking in skills. It was also emphasised in light

of migrant worker attitudes, who were perceived to have a contrasting positive work ethic, characterised by loyalty and hard work. Further examination guided by the structure of CLA uncovered the archetype Australian emerging in the social causes layer. The larrikin character emerges again in overarching theme three, in the worldview and myth/metaphor layers. In these layers, employers relay the difficulties in dealing with employee attitudes which are irreverent to company policy on drugs and alcohol. Alcohol was identified as being entrenched in the identity of the miner and shearer, and accepted as the norm. The prospect of national identity interfering with national economic prosperity presents an ironic situation, which requires further in-depth investigation. This presents a need for distance to address to what extent Australian culture and myth are playing an influential role in perpetuating the skill shortage. This could potentially provide a new perspective to capture the skill shortage dialogue on a national level.

Concurrently the findings revealed globalisation has an adverse impact on Australian identity, through the urban/rural dichotomy discussed in overarching themes two and three. Traditionally the outback defines Australian identity, however through the pervasive influences of neoliberalism, has gradually eroded (Pinnington & Lafferty, 2004). As the literature review demonstrated, communities are expected to be self-reliant and autonomous to compete in the free market with global enterprises. This has adverse impacts on regional communities as well. The literature review revealed that Geraldton was an animated community which sought collaborations and partnerships with mining companies, proving to be successful. However the findings revealed a different side to this community.

This different side draws back into the urban/rural dichotomy explored in overarching themes two and three. A negative sense of community emerged in these themes, which questions attachment to place and identity. Some community members interviewed believed their return to the community is perceived as failure. The negativity connected to Geraldton was implied to be a result of neoliberal policies. This was due to regional communities lacking social infrastructure, which determined if the community was able to foster the ambitions of its members, while competing with urban communities (Alston, 2003, 2009; Pretty, 2003). This was also identified as a key issue to employee attraction and retention in regional communities highlighted in the *Skilling WA* report. The difficulties of attracting potential employees to the region is also emphasised by employers.

They discussed the need to sell Geraldton before they provided a job description, providing a sense of commodification of a community.

Another key conclusion is drawn from the complexities and nuances of the Geraldton community. This community appeared to have a clearly defined moral boundary pertaining to who was accepted in the community and who was not. Throughout the findings, employers refer to exclusionary practices found in the workplace, 'othering' individuals regardless of ethnicity, gender, and nationality. Some Australian employers who relocated to Geraldton as part of the company's response to the skill shortage reported being excluded. Some employers also highlighted the overt racism present in the workplace. Examples were drawn from the construction worksite, where employees would write racist comments on hard hats. This same worksite was also reported to have migrant workers working fulltime on student visas and backpackers on subcontracts with their own ABN, which violated visa stipulations for both the student and working holiday visas. Overarching theme four, myth/metaphor layer provided an analysis on the example of staff at a mine site writing '457 visa' above toilet rolls in cubicles. This repeated act was a deterrent for one migrant worker to seek sponsorship on that visa. Again, this worksite had 457 visas holders who reportedly could not speak English, with employees suspecting visa rules violated. This key conclusion opens up the dialogue for further investigation; were these contributing reasons as to why the community struggled to attract potential employees? Or are these overtly racist behaviours a result of Australian employees protesting against the use of foreign labour over employing local Australians?

However, the scope of the thesis was not able to capture the depth of the complexity inherent in the psyche of the Geraldton community. Although not included in the findings, a community-based anti-human trafficking group formed in Geraldton, on the basis of a local newspaper investigation into the trafficking of sex workers in the community. Their aims were to educate locals, to assist trafficked women out of sex slavery, and to uphold respect and dignity for all in the community. However an incident which contrasts with the anti-human trafficking group was the community's response to a refugee vessel which drifted a few hundred metres from the Geraldton shore in April 2013, which also coincided with the data collection phase of this study. I was in the café conducting an interview as the boat drifted in the water nearby, with 66 Sri-Lankan men, women, and children on board, who were at sea for 44 days (Taylor & Wilson, 2013). Later at the port where the boat was towed in by authorities, locals gathered to watch the scene

unfold (including myself), to which locals commented with dehumanising remarks, suggesting to '*blow them up*'.

These two sharply contrasting examples demonstrate the community's moral boundary to include those who have their rights abused, and to exclude those who seek employment and refuge. Further research needs to be conducted into what effects a community's moral compass has on the migrant population, and whether or not this perpetuated the issue of attracting and retaining people in the community. A critical examination of these influences is crucial to understanding the power dynamics in the community if any wellbeing is to be achieved. Given Australia's past is coloured by racist ideology depicted by the White Australia Policy, further investigation can be conducted into historical influences reverberating in the present.

This research contributes knowledge to the relationship between Aboriginals and migrant workers in the workplace. Overarching theme three briefly presents an insight into the experiences of Aboriginals working with migrant workers, and the culturally insensitive behaviours of migrant workers. In these instances, Aboriginal support workers identified a lack of awareness of the insensitivity, and expressed the difficulties for Aboriginals in overcoming these issues. These workplace issues are compounded by already existing issues pertinent to the Aboriginal community, including teen pregnancy, family feuding, and lateral violence.

However the key finding which captures the entirety of the study is the exploration of the depth of critical consciousness encompassing the totality of the phenomenon. This is generated from the application of the CLA framework, reflecting on participant interactions with all levels of the ecological model, laterally and vertically. The nature of the skill shortage, being a national issue which affected everyone employed in the labour force, reinforced a sense of interconnectedness. Although this was established, the lack of awareness of the interdependent synergies (such as in overarching theme two and inclusion of stakeholder theory and social exchange theory) to achieve wellbeing signified a lack of understanding of the mechanics of power embedded in these synergies. Due to this lack of appreciation of power in the relational capital, oppressive themes emerge, including dehumanisation, accusation, oppression, and exploitation. These themes are guideposts for future research, however the key conclusion is establishing the depth of critical consciousness. The use of paradox serves to highlight the issues present, but also guide

future research directions. The paradoxes are reflected in the layers of the ecological framework, emphasising the interdependency between employer/employee, amongst stakeholder groups, between national identity and global forces, and between employer and migrant worker/sovereign state.

An awareness of the expressions of power in the relational capital demonstrated to have a positive effect on achieving wellbeing, such as the case of mining companies collaborating with Aboriginal communities in the Mid West region. This perspective was also employed in overarching theme four as a suggestion to empower migrant workers. Literature ascertains the benefits of labour migration reside in the inherent lack of rights conferred to migrant workers (Dauvergne & Marsden, 2014a,b). However this is offset by stakeholders whose interests overlapped with maintaining the integrity of the 457 visa programme. This was a fragmented approach, however the research advocated for the possibility of crediting more powers to these stakeholders by way of supporting the rights of migrant workers. This could provide the impetus for further investigations into decreasing the vulnerabilities of migrant workers. Suggestions for further research on this particular topic would be guided by stakeholder and networked models, such as Neal and Neal's (2013) networked model of ecological systems. This model shifts the focus to relationships, permitting multiple systems to co-exist. This network model, along with stakeholder theory, are possible tools to be utilised in promoting the wellbeing of migrant workers. However while this study identifies stakeholders defending the rights of migrant workers and offers direction for further research, an inherent tension remains. Theories which examine power dynamics, such as Prilleltensky's psychopolitical validity, would explore the structures in communities which reinforce the oppression (or liberation) of migrant worker wellbeing.

The thesis also advocates for community psychology to take a greater interest in labour migration, as the discipline's coverage on labour migration is limited (Liu, 2015; Negi, 2013; Palmer, Perkins, & Xu, 2011). This group suffers from some of the worst cases of exploitation reported, with the difficulty of promoting wellbeing embedded in the transient nature of this group. The difficulties in conducting interviews with migrant workers in this study reflect the vulnerable position migrant workers are in. Focusing on the political dimensions which support asymmetric power structures leading to the vulnerability of migrant workers serves to enhance empowerment of this community (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002; Prilleltensky, 2012). The final paradox demonstrates negative liberty as

purporting the role of government is to prevent others from interfering with the rights of the individual. However evidence of psychological disempowerment and the prevailing influences of culture discern negative liberty may not be sufficient in ensuring the rights of migrant workers. This is further evident with measures taken by government to protect migrant workers from exploitation, such as the inclusion of criminal convictions in the event of employer prosecution for violating visa stipulations, and the DIBP overseeing the regulation of migration agents under MARA. There needs to be greater inclusion of migrant workers in community psychology literature. The focus on the presence of this community in the context of the study reiterates the pervasiveness of globalisation. It is important that the discipline widens its scope on what constitutes community beyond the borders of the sovereign state, to critically reflect on global influences which compound political economic, social, relational, and environmental components of community.

Limitations

Limitations include the study confined to one location. There is no certainty that the pervasive issues present in Geraldton would be found in other regional communities. Also the number of interviews for some stakeholders was limited compared to the number of interviews collected from migrant worker and employer groups. Further interviews with a larger number of participants is required, to ensure saturation is achieved. Australian employees were not interviewed, with one exception. There were attempts to interview immigration officers from DIBP. Officers in Perth agreed to an interview, however were not given clearance by Canberra. A request was also made to sit in on a presentation by DIBP addressed to employers regarding 457 visa changes in 2013, which was met with hostility from the immigration officer. An interview with DIBP could potentially contribute to the topic, however the experiences with government transparency (or lack of) in this study indicate otherwise. The migrant worker and employer impact on employees requires further investigation, especially with the amount of data surfacing in regards to the dehumanisation of labour, not just for migrant workers but for Australian employees also. The examples of employees ostracising migrant workers with racist comments occurred on work sites where there were suspicions of migrant worker exploitation. If migrant workers are being utilised as a source of cheap labour this could possibly influence Australian employee contempt for the 457 visa. Another limitation was the migrant workers interviewed were predominantly European or North American. This presents a narrative of themes which echo qualities located in individualistic cultures that differ from collectivist cultures.

Overall, the overarching themes and subthemes in the findings illuminate the tensions and frictions which emerge when a community is under pressure to feed the global demand for iron ore. Interdependent relationships are challenged, social structures being to falter, and aspects of Australian culture may have been the impetus for the perpetuation of the skill shortage despite government and industry attempts to implement strategies to resolve the crisis. Issues were highlighted in every level of the ecological system, and in between employers, migrant workers, and stakeholders, laterally and vertically throughout the levels. For any real change to occur, there needs to be a raising of consciousness. The theoretical framework of CLA has created the space to reveal themes and ideologies operating in the unconscious realm of the phenomenon. It is the realisation of the interconnectedness of this phenomenon and thus, the interdependency of relationships amongst employers, migrant workers, and stakeholders, and ideologies, which is at the heart of the study.

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Appendix A

Thematic and CLA Codes of Themes and Subthemes for Employers

	Theme 1 Lack of work ethics: Attitudes towards employment	Theme 2 Factors contributing to skill shortages: Employer perspectives	Theme 3 Perception of support from government and stakeholders	Theme 4 Social issues in the Geraldton community	**Theme 5** **Mixed experiences with labour migration**
Litany	Generalisation of work ethics	*Is the mining boom to blame for the skill shortage?* Skill shortage existed before the mining boom in some industries Businesses experiencing a skill shortage due to mining	*Mixed notions on how government should support businesses*	*Preference to stay on welfare and drugs than work*	Mixed perceptions on migrant labour Stigma of employing migrant workers

	Businesses that have been able to thrive through the mining boom			
General lack of available skilled people in the region	*Tomorrow's workforce lacks today's education and training*	Labour hire companies exploit skill shortage	Drug and alcohol contributing to people not engaging in workforce	*Government and policy*
	Local secondary educational institutions provide limited support for students' careers	Limited interaction with labour unions		Perceived lack of support from DIAC
Issues with Gen Y				
Difficulties engaging youth in the workforce			Limited number of employers experienced no drug and alcohol issues	Issue with the relevancy of IELTS levels
Youth lack foresight in their career	Training for apprentices not available in the Mid West region		Government support to eradicate drug use	Better measures by DIAC to stop exploitation
Gen Y lack skills				
Sense of entitlement with Gen Y	Employers unhappy with quality of education from Tafe			Difficulties in sponsoring migrant workers
Gen Y spoilt with opportunities	*Labour and economic factors contributing to the skill shortage*			Some industries have issues with transferability of skills
Similar attitudes present in minority youth	Competitive market			Employer recommendations for the labour migration program
The value of money	Foreign business flooding the market			
Gen Y attitude towards money earned in mining industry	High costs of labour			*Migrant workers in the workplace*
	Subcontracting to manage shortage of labour			Positive employer experiences with migrant workers

"Social Causes"

Local and Interstate employees leave for higher mining income Attitude found in other industries such as farming Employees prioritise remuneration Attitude also found in some migrant workers Attitude change towards employment and remuneration due to a shift in family dynamics and education system	Lack of job standardisation Ineffective use of available labour Pressures from job lead to a skill shortage ***Employer attempts to manage the skill shortage*** Employers advocating for traineeships to be taught locally Advertising locally and interstate Advertising internationally In house training Incentives Difficulties of relocation FIFO & DIDO		Negative employer experiences with migrant worker Language issues Misuse of the labour migration program ***Migrant community*** Partner/dependents' contribution to community
Worldviews → ***Dehumanising of labour*** Apprentices not held in high regard in the workplace	Mining is indebted to local businesses Tokenism and Aboriginal employment	Negative sense of community Racism and exclusion in Geraldton	Migrants socially constructed to be viewed as stealing jobs The importance of a multicultural work team

Dehumanisation of labour the reason for the lack of work ethics in local employees

Employers contribute to the dehumanisation of labour

The positive influences of family
Family-owned businesses are more successful with staff

Observing parents solidifies positive work ethics in younger generations

Farming has a turnaround in youth engagement

Greater employment opportunities, greater empowerment
Shift in power dynamics between employer and employee; employees more empowered with greater job opportunities

Relocation issues

Education failings
Lack of educational support for the Mid West region

Limited work and education opportunities in regional cities

Education system contributing to Gen Y attitude

Positive business involvement in the community

Geraldton is maturing

| Myths/metaphors | *The hassle of leaving a legacy*

Local employees prioritising high income | *Prostitution used to describe local labour hire companies 'selling out' children* | *Geraldton is punishment* | *"Teething problems"*

Lack of Government support for employers: Playing field

Some employers need migrant labour: down the drain

Other employers feel they need to rely on migrant labour: bad taste |

Appendix B

Thematic and CLA Codes of Themes and Subthemes for Migrant Workers

	Theme 1 **Australian workplace culture and community**	**Theme 2** Difficulties encountered with government and policy
Litany	Working abroad fairs: not informative	
Social Causes	*Mixed employment experiences - Negative employment experiences* Migrant workers exploited Disempowerment and racism *Positive employment experiences* Development of skills Good remuneration *Mixed experiences with Australian colleagues* Unmotivated but driven by money The laidback attitude Stubbornness and unorganised *Multicultural working experiences* Communication difficulties Exposure to varied work ethics *Geraldton community* Lack of sense of community Friendships, jobs and the environment are reasons to stay in Geraldton *Reasons for migration* *Push reasons*: economy	Misuse of visa *Mixed experiences with DIAC and the visa process* Helpful, easy and straightforward: Positive experiences with DIAC Rude, threats, difficult: Negative experiences with DIAC Difficulties with the labour migration program constantly evolving Difficulties with skill and qualification recognition in Australia *Mixed experiences with migration agents* International Relations

	Pull reasons: Personal growth Sponsorship Career and financial security Improve English skills and study Sports	
Worldviews	*Australians are rich and ungrateful* Questioning the morality of big earnings Money talks Migrant workers accused of stealing jobs from locals Questioning the quality of education for apprentices and work ethics Costs of liability and insurance	Labour migration program not being utilised properly
Myth/ metaphors	*The Australian Dream* *Union dilemma: cutting the tree that supports*	

Appendix C

Thematic and CLA Coded of Themes and Subthemes for Stakeholders

	Theme 1 **Exploitation of migrant workers**	Theme 2 Limited investment in alleviating labour shortages; preference for labour migrants	Theme 3 Australian attitudes towards employment	Theme 4 **Social barriers to economic participation**	Theme 5 Balancing a sense of community
Litany	Mixed responses to exploitation of migrant workers	Mixed notions on government approach to training Mixed notions on the existence of a skill/labour shortage	Gen Y are too picky Employers are too fussy	Reliance on government welfare	
Social Causes	*Exploitation* Debt bondage and employers breaking visa conditions	*Employers lack management of labour shortages* Blacklisting	Everyone wants to work on the mines Employers use attitude to gauge migrant workers	*Reliance on Government support* Client aggression when trying to engage them in the local workforce	*Positive community engagement* Raising community awareness on sex trafficking

Exploitation is sensationalised	Migrant/interstate workers chosen over local employees	Relinquishing reliance on government support	A job is the only reason to stay in Geraldton
DIAC Issues with the monitoring and compliance by DIAC	Increase use of backpackers	Employment agencies addressing social barriers to employment	
DIAC is strengthening the integrity of the program...	Employers need labour migrants	Aboriginal engagement and cultural sensitivity	
....at the expense of deserving clients	*Issues with education and training* Businesses falling short with training	Drug and alcohol issues	
Monitoring by the local Development Commission to ensure compliance	Economic factors influencing training	Cost of living	
Retribution for exploitation of migrant workers is limiting	Difficulties with skilling up locals	Family issues and teen pregnancy	
'The Door' *Issues arise with migration agents* Saving the reputation of migration agents	Disconnect between perception and education offered	Lack of a driver's licence Debt bondage	
DIAC governs MARA; questioning integrity	Quality of education is lacking	Unintended racism and discrimination in the workplace	
Migrant workers fear approaching MARA	Careers are not promoted in schools		
	Mining Employment on mines		

	Difficulties with exercising policy outside of Australian jurisdiction	Mining influences over the local economy			
Worldviews	Government won't act until it is humiliated Culture hinders retribution Co-ethnic exploitation	Lack of incentives to train The future is bleak for Australian workers	*The importance of family*	On engaging people into the workforce Breaking the drug and alcohol cycle Centrelink is a safety blanket	Lack of employment opportunities; mindset to leave Geraldton
Myth/metaphors				*Drinking as a social norm: myth of the miner*	