MONASH University

A critical analysis of contemporary Australian social inclusion discourse and its effects on international students: A case study of an Australian metropolitan local government council

Toby Rupert Paltridge

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Department of Management

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Abstract

Setting

This study examines how the term 'social inclusion' is discursively constructed in Australia and the impact of this discourse on how international students' needs, experiences and welfare are understood. International students enrolled in Australian tertiary institutions are very important to Australia. They are major contributors to both the Australian economy and cultural diversity. It is also argued that the presence of international students helps Australia forge links with its Asian neighbours. However, in recent years the serious issues experienced by some international students, predominantly occurring off campus, have received significant attention. This attention created discourses from media, government and education institutions about better 'including' international students into Australian society in order to improve their welfare. These inclusion discourses reflected the, now former, Federal Labor Government's official social policy discourse of 'social inclusion'. The Federal Government's use of this discourse encouraged many lower tier governments, including some local governments, as well as other institutions, to also adopt it. However, 'social inclusion' is a contested concept with significant concerns about the implications of such discourses for those who are to be 'included'.

Research Questions

This study therefore posed the following research questions:

- What is the impact of 'social inclusion' discourses on understandings of international students' needs, experiences and welfare?
    - How do key people/groups/institutions understand the terms 'social inclusion' and 'social exclusion'?
    - What are the implications of these understandings for policy and social discourses on international students?

Methodology

To answer these questions a qualitative case study was conducted in a metropolitan local government Council in Melbourne that used social inclusion as a policy framework to inform its community development activities towards international students living within its municipality. Data were obtained from Council policy documents, as well as interviews with 15 key informants, including Council employees and elected members, as well as international student group representatives. The data were analysed using Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

CDA is a useful research approach for unpacking the effects of social inclusion discourses. It has the ability to critically examine discourses and identify the structural power relationships they enact and the 'work' they do. This is because CDA understands that reality is socially constructed by and through discourse and therefore discourse is both socially constitutive and socially shaped. That is, discourse and social reality are dialectically related. As a consequence, discourse both reflects existing social structures and has the capacity to either reproduce and/or transform them. Discourse is therefore a form of social action. This understanding enables the identification of relations of power and domination within the structure of society, and how these structures are discursively reinforced, challenged and transformed. The identification of such relations of power and the challenging of those considered unjust being the ultimate aim of CDA.

Findings

The Council policy framework was developed with the intention of facilitating international students' social inclusion, a concept that had significant discursive appeal and was generally very popular with both Council employees and international student leaders. However, the social inclusion discourses drawn on and produced by the Council in order to do so actually reinforced existing unequal power relationships that are a major cause of international students' marginalisation. The discourses achieved this by limiting international students' agency, encouraging their conformity to mainstream norms and legitimising the existing social system by attempting to include international students into it. These findings are consistent with the critiques of the concept of social inclusion in the literature, that it is

attractive but legitimises existing social structures and systems which actually cause marginalisation, denies diversity and draws attention away from inequalities amongst the included.

It is contended that, based on this analysis, a primary reason that social inclusion discourses are so appealing for the mainstream is because they give the impression that serious action is being taken while not challenging the mainstream's dominant position of power. Superficial changes can be made to benefit the marginalised, but the structures of society which create the dominance of the mainstream and the marginalisation of groups such as international students are not affected.

Contribution

This study contributes to existing knowledge by using CDA to analyse the impact of social inclusion discourses on how the needs, experiences and welfare of international students are understood. In adopting a critical discourse approach, the study problematises the concept of social inclusion as both a heuristic and antidote for the issues faced by international students living and studying in Australia. It identifies how a social inclusion policy discourse reflects and reinforces existing social structures and power relationships and is therefore unlikely to result in meaningful change. Thereby further confirming critiques from the literature. It thus provides a critical and deeper understanding of the discursive effects of social inclusion discourses on policy prescriptions designed to improve international students' welfare in Australia and the consequences this has for their lived experience.

The study also makes a practical contribution by critically analysing the well intentioned social policy of a progressive local government and identifying the hidden effects which counteract the policy's intended outcomes. The study's findings should enable not only the specific Council which was the site of this research, but any organisation considering utilising a social inclusion discourse, to construct its social policy discourse in such a way that it does not inadvertently undermine the desired objectives.

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

Except with the Monash Institute of Graduate Research's approval, this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution. It is affirmed, to the best of my knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Toby Paltridge

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Although officially a solo piece of work, a thesis is really the result of the combined efforts of many people in supporting the candidate to submit. It is a harrowing journey, with many ups and downs, that requires an extreme amount of perseverance, both on behalf of the candidate and those who support him. This particular thesis would not have been possible without the constant support of my dedicated supervisors, Dr. Susan Mayson and Dr. Jan Schapper. It is with a tinge of sadness that I write this, as Jan sadly was diagnosed with terminal cancer during my candidature and passed away 6 months before I submitted. However, she showed amazing courage and dedication during her illness, refusing to let it get in the way of her living and continuing to help me (and her other students) up until the last few months of her life. Today is her birthday, which seems to be a most appropriate day to submit.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

This study examines how the term 'social inclusion' is discursively constructed in Australia and what the impact of this discourse is on how international students' needs, experiences and welfare are understood by policy makers and the broader community. In particular, it seeks to analyse whether or not social inclusion discourses as expressed through a local government's policy and employee interviews addresses the marginalisation of international students. In broad terms, this thesis aims to contribute insights into the use of social inclusion discourses as a basis for social policy targeted at marginalised social groups, such as international students, and offers a critique of social exclusion and social inclusion as social justice concepts by taking a critical discourse analytic approach. This chapter introduces the 'problem' of international students in Australia, in particular the issues they experience which were highlighted by recent events in Australia, as well as the use of social inclusion in Australian political discourse and how it came to be applied to international students to address their issues. The analytical approach of critical discourse analysis, specifically Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational method, is used to investigate this situation is also introduced.

The 'problem' of international students in Australia

International students are a significant presence in Australian society. They contributed approximately $16.3b in export earnings to the Australian economy in FY2010/11 (Australian Education International, 2011a), they provide on average 15% of Australian universities' budgets (sometimes much more) (Senate Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009), and they comprise approximately 25% of all students in Australian post-secondary education (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009a). In fact, international education is Australia's fourth (briefly third) largest export (Marginson, 2011) and largest service export (Australian Education International, 2011a). As such, the export of educational services to international students represents an important contribution to Australia's (and its universities') economic

prosperity. As the Council of Australian Governments (2010, p. 2) explicitly states in its *International Student Strategy*,

> The international education sector is also very important economically. It is Australia's third largest source of export income. International students supplement and diversify our labour force in the longer term if they meet Australia's skills needs and choose to stay in or return to Australia.

While the economic benefits of international students are heavily promoted in the popular media, in debates about the value of international students their non-economic contributions are less acknowledged. In an effort to redress this imbalanced focus on the ways in which Australian society has been enriched by the presence of international students, Adams, Banks and Olsen (2011, p. 10) provide a comprehensive list of non-economic benefits, including: enhancement of public diplomacy and trade, especially through alumni of Australian institutions; a culturally rich learning environment for local students; greater international understanding and awareness among all students; and development of multinational professional and personal networks by students. While such benefits are difficult to quantify, it is argued that international students enhance the culture and knowledge of Australian society and extend Australia's political influence, in addition to more tangible economic contributions (Adams *et al.*, 2011).

In recent times, however, a number of incidents of violence in Australian capital cities such as Melbourne and Sydney, along with revelations of exploitation and visa fraud, together with the redefinition of international students as migrants by the ABS, has brought the 'problem' of international students into sharper focus, particularly for the Federal government (Babacan, *et al.*, 2010; Commonwealth of Australia, 2010a; Council of Australian Governments, 2010; Jakubowicz & Monani, 2010). While international students and their welfare have for some time been of interest to academics (see Marginson, Nyland, Sawir & Forbes-Mewett, 2010), recent events have raised the profile of international students and the issues they face as members of Australian society.

These revelations and the media attention they drew have significantly hurt Australia's reputation as a study destination (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009a). This, combined with a strong Australian dollar, increased competition from universities in the US, the UK and Canada, as well as the Federal Government's toughening of student visa and permanent residency requirements (one of its responses to the 'problem' of international students), is believed responsible for a drastic drop in the number of international students applying to study in Australia, according to media reports (Lane, 2011; Ross, 2011). Consequently, the international education industry in Australia experienced a severe downturn between 2010 and 2013 which it is only just beginning to recover from.

According to Australian Education International (2010), industry-wide year-to-November 2010 commencements were down 9.3% overall, with the 'English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students' (ELICOS) sector down 21.3% and the Vocational Educational and Training (VET) sector down 8.2%, while higher education is up 2.4%. These figures came after a previous industry-wide 'average YTD November growth rate for commencements since 2002 of 9.5% per year' (Australian Education International, 2010, p. 1). At the time, the media also reported that the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (now the Department of Immigration and Border Protection) predicted that arrivals of long-term students (those staying in Australia at least 12 months out of a 16-month period) would halve by 2014 (Ross, 2011; Trounson, 2011). While such dire predictions did not eventuate, with international student numbers returning to positive growth in 2013 (Australian Education International, 2014), such an outcome would have had severe negative consequences for Australia's economy and its education institutions. It was in the context of this crisis and such calamitous predictions that this study took place.

Given the importance of education exports to the Australian economy and education providers, efforts to address the crisis in the industry came from all levels of government, as well as industry players. Initiatives were launched in relation to all of the issues listed previously, i.e., violence, exploitation, visa fraud, contributors to long-term migration, the strong Australian dollar, increased competition internationally, and the tightening of student visa and permanent residency conditions. However, in this study I focus on those targeting the welfare and security of international students as they are most relevant to my study. This

is because social inclusion as a concept and discourse was employed by the local government which formed my case study site to address such social issues. While visa fraud or a strong currency may relate to social problems, they are not circumstances that can be readily dealt with by social inclusion or which fall within the area of responsibility of a local government.

For instance, the Federal Government established a taskforce headed by the Prime Minister's National Security Advisor to 'investigate and address issues concerning violence against international students' (Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development, 2008, p. 25). At the same time it launched a review of the *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009a) in an effort to improve the quality, regulation and sustainability of the international education industry. Universities Australia (UA) released a position paper in June 2009 on international student security, entitled *Enhancing the student experience & student safety*, which detailed expectations of measures UA expected its members to adopt (Universities Australia, 2009). Additionally, COAG released its *International Student Strategy for Australia* (Council of Australian Governments, 2010).

At a more practical level, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (2009b) published a list of successful programs run by various education providers in Australia, and which was designed to help international students adjust to life in Australia, entitled *Examples of good practice in assisting international students to integrate with Australian students and the wider community*. The Victorian government established a 24-hour care line for international students, as well as increasing police patrols around trouble spots and transport centres. Significantly, the then Premier of Victoria, John Brumby, visited India in 2009 to allay Indian government fears for their students' wellbeing (Wade, 2009) and seminars are now held for prospective students in India on street safety, public transport safety and fire safety in Australia (Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development, 2008).

Much of the focus of this activity assumes that 'inclusion' or, more particularly, social inclusion is the answer to the problems faced by international students. A number of the

initiatives launched look to better 'include' international students in the community. The argument was that international students are 'outsiders' and as such are more vulnerable to violent crime, exploitation, privation and mental health issues (Marginson, *et al.*, 2010). The solution, therefore, is to develop policy to better include them into society so they are more integrated socially and hence not such an obvious target for crime and other forms of social disadvantage (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009b; Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement), 2010).

Some governments and institutions have been quite explicit in their focus on inclusion, drawing on the existing social policy arena of 'social inclusion' to address international student issues. Included amongst those institutions are Darebin City Council [Darebin] and Monash University. Darebin has made the social inclusion of marginalised groups within its municipality, such as people with a disability and international students, a priority and has implemented policies to achieve this (Darebin City Council, 2008). Monash University, the largest and most internationalised university in Australia at the time of the crisis (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009a), held a 'Community-Campus Summit on International Students' in 2010 (Monash University, 2010a). The purpose of this latter step was to develop ideas to improve the social inclusion of international students (Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement), 2010). These organisations were drawing on a broader Australian policy discourse of social inclusion promulgated by the Federal Labor Government in order to address what they saw as the problems faced by international students studying, living and working in contemporary Australian society.

Australian policy discourse of social inclusion

Social inclusion (see the Literature Review, below, for an explanation of the concept) was adopted by the Australian Labor Party in the run-up to the 2007 Federal election as its new social justice discourse and the focus of its social policy. After Labor won the election, it began to roll out social inclusion-based social policies (Long, 2010). The Australian Federal Government also tied significant grant funding to the promotion of social inclusion. With the imprimatur of Federal Government and funding support, the policy discourse influenced

lower tiers of government and private organisations who begin drawing on social inclusion discourses in their policy frameworks.

For example, in the state of Victoria, the Brumby Labor Government adopted social inclusion as the basis of its social policies (McClelland, 2009) and several universities such as Swinburne (Swinburne University of Technology, 2010) and Monash (Monash University, 2010b) also created social inclusion plans or strategies, while Macquarie University established a Centre for Research on Social Inclusion (Macquarie University, 2010). The Brotherhood of St Laurence also began advocating social inclusion as one of its 'hot issues' (Brotherhood of St Laurence, 2010).

Considering the rise of social inclusion discourse in Australian social policy, and revelations about the many difficulties experienced by some international students studying here, it was perhaps inevitable that the concept of social inclusion would be applied in an attempt to address international students' issues. However, 'social inclusion' is a contested concept, with significant concerns about the implications of such discourses for those who are to be 'included'. For example, it is sometimes argued that it denies difference (Edwards, Armstrong & Miller, 2001) and reinforces the status quo by working through established systems of dominance (Preece, 2001). With these concerns in mind, this study critically analyses the application of social inclusion-based social policy discourses to address the problems faced by international students and explores the effects on these discourses on their welfare. To do so, Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach to Critical Discourse Analysis is employed.

Critical Discourse Analysis

In this study, I employ a critical discourse approach and use Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Wodak & Meyer, 2009), specifically Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach, as a framework to guide the study. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a research approach that involves taking a critical standpoint and adopting a strongly constructivist epistemological view in which reality is seen to be socially

constructed by, and through, discourse (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). That is, discourse and social reality are dialectically related (Fairclough, 2009). Discourse, therefore, both reflects existing social structures and has the capacity to either reproduce or transform them. This epistemological view enables CDA to critically examine discourses by identifying the structural power relationships they enact and the 'work' they do. The identification of such relations of power and the challenging of those discourses considered unjust in their outcomes are the ultimate aim of CDA. It is proposed that such an approach will provide a deeper and more critical understanding of social inclusion as a concept, and as a policy prescription for addressing international students' needs, experiences and welfare.

Fairclough (2009) contends that CDA is useful for examining problems which have a semiotic point of entry. By this he means problems which have a significant discursive element, for example, social issues such as social inclusion, are primarily discursive in nature, although they can be operationalised via,

> '*enactment in new ways of (inter)acting, including genres, their inculcation in new ways of being or identities, including styles, their materialization as objects and properties of the physical world.*' (Fairclough, 2005a, p. 932)

For example, to pre-empt a discussion that will occur in Chapter 6, the Australian Federal Government operationalised its social inclusion policy discourse partially through enacting new practices of grant funding that favoured proposals which drew on and were legitimised through social inclusion discourse.

In addition, public policy can be viewed as a form of discourse (Ball, 1993). That is, policy is something that 'produces' truth and knowledge, creating a 'regime of truth' 'through which people govern themselves and others.' (Ball, 1993, p. 14) Rather than being a simple representation of reality. Public policy is a potent discursive resource for the powerful because it has the ability to name a problem and shape solutions to it, as well as perceived credibility and wide distribution (van Dijk, 1997b). This enables those who control it to 'set the agenda, to define the situation and even the details of the ways groups, actions and policies are represented.' (van Dijk, 1997b, p. 22) The focus of this study is on social policies intended to promote the social inclusion of international students and the effect of these

policies on international students' welfare. As such, the problem under examination is primarily discursive in nature and can therefore be usefully analysed using CDA.

Case study site

The social policies being examined are those produced by a particular metropolitan local government Council in Melbourne, Victoria. I have given this Council the pseudonym 'Greenwood Council'. Greenwood Council used social inclusion as a policy framework to inform its community development activities in relation to international students living within its municipality.

Greenwood Council was chosen as the site for two reasons. Primarily and most importantly, it represented a local example of the confluence of social inclusion-based social policies and international student issues, and the application of the former to address the latter. The Council was one of the few local government areas to have a large number of international students living in its communities (the City of Melbourne is another), it used social inclusion as the basis for its social policy more generally, and it developed a policy response specifically to address international students' issues. Second, the majority and most serious issues experienced by international students occur off-campus, where available support networks are weakest (Marginson, 2011), yet this area of international students' lives is under-researched (Paltridge, Mayson & Schapper, 2012). This study sought to partially address this gap by examining the efforts of a local government to provide support to international students in their off-campus lives.

To answer the study's research questions, a qualitative case study was conducted with Greenwood Council as the site. Data were obtained mainly from two Council policy documents, as well as interviews with 15 key informants, including Council employees and elected members, as well as international student group representatives. A case study research design was used due to the importance of analysing discourse within its context (Locke, 2004).

Research questions and contribution

This project aims to critically examine a specific example of contemporary Australian discourse of social inclusion in the context of policies developed by government and the higher education sector to address the 'problem(s)' of international students living and studying in a particular Australian community. Using a single case this study develops a critical understanding of the effects of social inclusion discourses on policy prescriptions designed to improve international students' welfare in Australia and the consequences this has for their lived experience.

To achieve this overall research aim, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

- What is the impact of 'social inclusion' discourses on understandings of international students' needs, experiences and welfare?
    - How do key people/groups/institutions understand the terms 'social inclusion' and 'social exclusion'?
    - What are the implications of these understandings for policy and social discourses on international students?

Answering these research questions enables this study to contribute to existing knowledge by using CDA to analyse the impact of social inclusion discourses on how the needs, experiences and welfare of international students are understood and acted on through public policy. In adopting a critical discourse approach, the study problematises the concept of social inclusion as both a heuristic and antidote for the issues faced by international students living and studying in Australia. It identifies how a social inclusion policy discourse reflects and reinforces existing social structures and power relationships and is therefore unlikely to result in meaningful social change. This further confirms critiques found in the literature. It thus provides a critical and deeper understanding of the discursive effects of social inclusion discourses on policy prescriptions designed to improve international students' welfare in Australia and the consequences this has for their lived experience.

The study also makes a practical contribution by critically analysing the well-intentioned social policy of a progressive local government and by identifying the hidden effects which counteract the policy's intended outcomes. The study's findings should enable not only the specific Council which was the site of this research, but any organisation considering utilising a social inclusion discourse, to construct its social policy discourse in such a way that it does not inadvertently undermine the desired objectives.

Overview of thesis structure

The remainder of this thesis is divided into nine chapters as follows.

Chapter 2 discusses the concepts relevant to the analysis in this study, including social inclusion/exclusion, marginalisation and fields.. The chapter begins by examining the relationship between social exclusion and social inclusion, and contending that they relate to the same concept but describe opposite ends of a continuum. The ambiguous nature of social exclusion/inclusion is then considered before the most common discourses which construct this concept are analysed. Next the common debates about the political and ideological usage of the concept are discussed. The chapter then moves on to discussing the concept of marginalisation, defining it as conceptually distinct from social exclusion. This section explains the use of marginalisation as a means of analysing the effects of social exclusion/inclusion discourse. Last, Bourdieu's concept of fields and how it is used to explain social structures and power relationships is discussed.

Chapter 3 summarises the broad setting, or background, of the study. This begins with a discussion of the historical evolution of the concept of social exclusion in France and the United Kingdom, and its eventual transfer to the European Union and Australia. The history of international students and the international education industry in Australia is then charted, from the early days of international education as aid under the Colombo Plan to the change to full fee paying foreign students and the drastic increase in numbers. The role of local government in Australia, its responsibilities and where it sits in relation to other levels of government in Australia is also discussed.

Chapter 4 presents the theoretical framework underlying the study, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and specifically Fairclough's (2009) approach, as well as the methods employed to conduct it. First, the chapter provides a detailed overview of CDA, its social constructionist epistemology and critical ontology. The discussion then moves to why Faircough's (2009) specific approach to CDA was adopted – for its structural, deductive focus that makes it ideal for use in critical policy analysis such as this study is doing. The case study research design, document and interview methods of data collection, case site of a local government council, and exact data sources used in the study are then described.

Chapter 5 discusses in detail the analytical framework of the study, which is based on Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach. The chapter walks the reader through the four stages of Fairclough's (2009) approach in detail – focus upon a social wrong (in its semiotic aspect), identify obstacles to addressing the social wrong, consider whether the social order 'needs' the social wrong, identify possible ways past the obstacle – breaking down the steps in each stage. The idea of 'policy-as-discourse' and the combination of this idea with CDA to conduct critical policy analysis is also discussed.

Chapter 6 is the first of the analytical chapters and examines the specific context, or conjuncture, of the texts analysed. Following Fairclough (2009) in drawing on Bourdieu's concept of fields to understand the social world, this chapter analyses the main fields relevant to this study. First, the surrounding fields, those that don't contain the texts but which significantly impact on the field that does, international education in Australia, international students and the Australian Federal Labor government of 2007-13 are discussed. Then the primary field, that which contains the texts analysed – Greenwood City Council – is analysed in detail, including its adoption of social inclusion and the events surrounding the production of the texts.

Chapter 7 discusses the findings resulting from analysis of the two Council documents – the International Student Support Program (ISSP) and the Social Inclusion Policy (SIP). The

chapter briefly discusses the power of public policy documents such as these. The analysis found that the Council documents primarily drew on a discourse of social inclusion-as-participation, and therefore the findings are presented using Millar's (2007) framework for such discourses – multi-dimensionality, relational, resources and agency – with the additional aspect of diversity.

Chapter 8 discusses the findings resulting from analysis of the interviews conducted with key informants. It was found that they produced several different, sometimes conflicting, understandings of social inclusion. Participants understood social inclusion variously as 'robust engagement', 'formation of connections', 'being valued and appreciated by the community', 'accessibility/mainstreaming', and 'human rights'. Each of these is discussed in turn.

Chapter 9 provides a conclusion to the thesis. The chapter first summarises the key findings of the study and how they were used to answer the study's research questions. Apart from identifying the various discourses, or understandings, of social inclusion drawn on by the Council policy documents and key informants; the key finding of the study is that the social inclusion discourse of the Council serves to reinforce existing social structures of dominance that cause international students' marginalisation. Next, the chapter discusses the contributions of the study's findings to how international students' needs and welfare are understood. Finally, limitations of the study are discussed and areas for future research proposed.

Chapter 2: Literature Review – Conceptual

The purpose of this chapter is to lay out the theoretical concepts relevant to the study. Doing so will situate the study within the broader body of knowledge in relation to social inclusion/exclusion, marginalisation and discourse, and provide the conceptual context for the detailed empirical analysis undertaken in later chapters. Specifically, this chapter will discuss the key concepts of social exclusion and social inclusion, marginalisation, and fields. The first section discusses the relationship between social exclusion and inclusion, then the various discourses that provide meaning to these terms, before summarising the numerous debates about their political and ideological usage. The second section defines the concept of marginalisation, discusses its relationship to social exclusion, and some of the means by which it is enacted, such as structural violence and normalising regimes. The third and final section will discuss Bourdieu's concept of fields and how it is drawn on by Fairclough's approach to Critical Discourse Analysis to explain the structure of societies.

Based on the discussion that follows, it is concluded that social exclusion is a highly ambiguous and politically contested concept, and hence there is a need to pay particular attention to the specific ways in which the term enters into, and is represented in, public and private discourse. It is also concluded that different discourses of social exclusion have important consequences for how problems in society are addressed. This has relevance for the purpose of this study which is to identify the impact of social inclusion discourses on how international students' needs, experiences and welfare is understood by government and the community.

Social exclusion & social inclusion

Relationship between social exclusion and social inclusion

Discursively, social exclusion cannot be understood without consideration of social inclusion, hence before discussing the meaning of 'social exclusion' and 'social inclusion' it is important to explore the relationship between the two terms. As Silver (1994, p. 541) indicates, 'the notion of exclusion calls for an account of social inclusion'. However, as will be seen, this discussion is in fact largely irrelevant, because, following O'Reilly (2005) I

contend that the two terms refer to the same concept. Indeed, this reflects the terms of the discourse in Australia (Buckmaster & Thomas, 2009), which 'switches between social exclusion and inclusion as two ends of a single dimension' (Hayes, Gray & Edwards, 2008, p. 1). Although, I acknowledge that this view is not universal and that there exists much debate about the relationship between social inclusion and social exclusion (O'Reilly, 2005).

In choosing to adopt O'Reilly's (2005) conceptualisation I follow those that argue in a similar vein. It is generally accepted that the two terms are nearly always located side by side to infer a close relationship between the two (Buckmaster & Thomas, 2009). Some authors contend that the concepts are binary opposites (one is either included or excluded: O'Reilly, 2005), while others argue that being not socially excluded does not mean one is socially included and vice versa (Edwards *et al.*, 2001). Still others, to anticipate the discussion in the following section, construct the opposite of social exclusion using words such as '"insertion", "integration", "citizenship", or "solidarity"' (Silver, 1994, p. 541), or "participation" (Millar, 2007). Such constructions would, perhaps, seem to contradict the idea that "social inclusion" is the opposite of "social exclusion", however, following O'Reilly (2005) I contend that they are simply different ways of constructing social inclusion and result from the way that social exclusion is discursively constructed through social, political and economic discourse. That is, social exclusion discourses construct what problems come under the label of 'social exclusion' and what the cause(s) of exclusion are.

Within the literature on social inclusion, social inclusion and social exclusion are discursively bound together creating either oppositions or continuities. For example, social inclusion and social exclusion are frequently conceived of as "two ends of a single dimension." (Hayes, *et al.*, 2008, p. 1) or, as O'Reilly (2005) suggests, opposite ends of a continuum. For mainstream authors, social inclusion as a continuum allows for varying degrees of inclusion/exclusion, allowing for the two terms to be used interchangeably. Béland (2007) points to the political effects of social inclusion discourses on social policy in terms of constructing a particular understanding of social problems and following this, recommendations for appropriate policy responses. He goes on to argue that the concept of social exclusion, or inclusion, 'can become the centrepiece of reform blueprints' (Béland, 2007, p. 125) by justifying specific reforms and promoting specific policy settings. Hence,

discursively, the ways in which social inclusion or social exclusion is used has political effects by shaping the way in which problem(s) and proposed solutions are constructed as well as shaping the government policies designed to address the problems. In the distinction between social inclusion and exclusion, politically, social exclusion has more negative connotations and is generally mobilised through discourses that refer to combating/fighting/addressing the problem(s). Social inclusion, on the other hand has positive connotations and is generally used to propose solutions to a problem, for example, providing jobs as a means of improving social inclusion.

Many discourses and multiple meanings

'By all accounts, defining [social] exclusion is not an easy task' (Silver, 1994, p. 535). This dry understatement by Silver is unfortunately, according to Millar (2007), as true now as it was in 1994. The problem, argue both Atkinson (2000) and Millar (2007), is not that there are no definitions of social exclusion, but that there are many, most of them vague, with seemingly every scholar, politician and bureaucrat who writes on the subject constructing a new understanding, all of them contested and with productive effects on how society defines and responds to social exclusion. The same can also be said of social inclusion. The latter, contend Caidi and Allard (2005), having been given multiple meanings, is each designed to justify a particular policy initiative.

According to Gallie (1956, as cited in Silver, 1994) the word 'exclusion' itself has many connotations and synonyms that are frequently contradictory, making the term one that is essentially contested and its usage endlessly disputed. Silver (1994, p. 533) argues that the main reason behind the diversity of definitions of social exclusion, and the debates about them, is symbolic politics: for 'the power to name a social problem has vast implications for the policies considered suitable to address it'. Social exclusion is therefore an ambiguous term, with a different meaning, depending upon to whom one talks, and one that is 'loaded with numerous economic, social, political, and cultural connotations and dimensions' (Silver, 1994, p. 536). Silver (1994) also posits that various aspects of the term are emphasised by different users therefore picking a particular definition requires that one accept the 'theoretical and ideological "baggage" associated with it' (Silver, 1994, p. 544).

Levitas (2005) largely agrees with Silver (1994) that social exclusion is a politically contested term that results in an ambiguous yet powerful concept that is popular in political and public discourse. Levitas (2005, p. 178) argues that,

> *At an individual level, it mobilises personal fears of being excluded or left out, which reach back into childhood as well as having immediate reference. At a political level, it has broad appeal, both to those who value increased participation and those who seek greater social control*

It likely for this reason that the majority of definitions of social exclusion are deliberately kept vague. The term is discursively appealing, yet its ambiguity enables those producing a particular discourse to justify a wide range of policy initiatives under the banner of social exclusion. Discourse producers are relatively free to define what problem(s) are placed under the label of social exclusion, how they are understood and therefore how to address them (Béland, 2007). Indeed, the concept can potentially be employed by any group, regardless of their position in society. As the above quote from Levitas (2005) indicates, social exclusion can be utilised by the marginalised to push for greater participation in mainstream life or by those in power to exert greater control over those deemed not to belong to 'normal', that is, mainstream, society. This will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

The following section will discuss the most common discourses of social exclusion. As just pointed out, there are no widely accepted understandings of social exclusion or social inclusion, and there are too many to analyse individually. However, the majority of understandings draw on one of the several broad discourses discussed next.

Discourses of social exclusion

There are several broad discourses of social exclusion that yield the wide range of definitions found in the literature. These discourses have been comprehensively analysed by two prominent social exclusion scholars, Hilary Silver (1994) and Ruth Levitas (1996, 2004, 2005, 2006), who each propose three broad discourses of social exclusion tied to a specific theoretical perspectives and political philosophies used by various scholars to theorise about

social exclusion. In order to categorise the various approaches in the literature Silver (1994) uses the term 'paradigms', and labels them Solidarity, Specialisation, and Monopoly, while Levitas (2005) uses the term discourse and labels hers redistributionist discourse (RED), moral underclass discourse (MUD), and social integrationist discourse (SID).

Silver's (1994) analysis of relates to political and economic discourses in Europe and the United States, while Levitas (1996, 2005) focused exclusively on the United Kingdom. However, as O'Reilly (2005) argues, the scholars' work is complementary, with Levitas' work providing the moral framework while Silver's provides the analytical framework. Hence, in his 'philosophical anthropology' of social exclusion, O'Reilly (2005) equates Specialisation with MUD, Monopoly with RED, and Solidarity with SID, in addition to identifying two other broad discourses of social exclusion not discussed by Silver (1994) or Levitas (1996, 2005) – 'multi-dimensional' and 'post-modern'. I follow O'Reilly (2005) in this regard, and will therefore discuss the philosophical underpinnings and political outcomes of Specialisation/MUD, Monopoly/RED and Solidarity/SID. I will also briefly discuss the less commonly used discourses of 'multi-dimensional', 'post-modern', and 'naturalistic organic'. Finally, I will discuss the discourse of social inclusion as participation, which has become popular in recent years, as it is seen to address some of the problems identified in other discourses of social exclusion.

However, before I go on to this discussion, it is timely to again note Béland's (2007) argument about the effects of social inclusions discourses on social policy. First, social inclusion discourses construct a particular understanding of social problems and therefore what is considered to be appropriate policy responses. This leads to the second point, where discourses of social inclusion can shape official social reform agendas, that is they 'can become the centrepiece of reform blueprints.' (Béland, 2007, p. 125) Third, the discourses can be used to justify reform and promote specific policies. Each of these effects will be discussed in relation to the discourses of social exclusion analysed below. I begin with the most commonly used discourses and then progress to those used less commonly.

Specialisation/Moral Underclass Discourse

The Specialisation (Silver, 1994), or MUD (Levitas, 2005), discourse is based on classic Anglo-American liberalism and is historically popular with conservative, or Right-wing, political parties in the UK and the US. Liberalism constructs the social order as 'networks of voluntary exchanges between autonomous individuals with their own interests and motivations' (Silver, 1994, p. 542). The individual therefore has primacy over the group or State, and citizenship is about maintaining specialisation, that is, individual difference, and the ability of individuals to exchange rights and obligations via contracts. According to this discourse, social exclusion occurs when inappropriate rules are applied (usually through state intervention) to particular social spheres. This impacts on individuals' rights and freedoms because it results in insufficient separation of social spheres, or the creation of obstacles to mobility and exchange between social spheres. The implication is that, individuals are restricted from making free choices and engaging in freedom of exchange. Thus, through this discourse the socially excluded are seen to have their fundamental rights and freedoms as individuals violated.

The only circumstance in which the State should intervene is when discrimination occurs, as this limits individuals' freedom to pursue his or her own interests (O'Reilly, 2005). From this perspective, discrimination is caused by State intervention and society is improved by the State not interfering in competition between groups and within markets, and thereby protecting the rights of the individual to pursue their own interests (Silver, 1994). This is the only form of social protection necessary. Therefore, those who are unemployed, poor or might otherwise be considered disadvantaged are considered to be socially excluded if they lack the freedom to make decisions and participate in social exchanges. Otherwise, they are considered to have chosen their circumstances. This is the 'moral underclass discourse' (MUD) identified by Levitas (2005), where the disadvantaged are seen to be morally lacking because they have 'chosen' to be unproductive members of society. For these people, the State should incentivise and work with them to change their behaviour to become employed, so that they cease to be a burden upon society, for example, by removing welfare benefits and providing training programs.

Social exclusion constructed from within Specialisation/MUD discourse produces a narrow understanding of social exclusion that blames the disadvantaged for their circumstances and

not the system. The discourse places State intervention to address disadvantage out of consideration because it is not seen as a legitimate actor to shape social relations. By contrast, the Monopoly/RED discourse takes an opposing view, placing the major share of responsibility for disadvantage on the State and the system it represents.

Monopoly/Redistributionist Discourse

The Monopoly (Silver, 1994), or redistributionist (RED; Levitas, 2005), discourse constructs capitalist societies as inherently unequal and coercive, with resources unfairly distributed as a consequence of hierarchical power relations. Society is made up of multiple social groups with conflicting interests who compete for, and attempt to monopolise, resources. This discourse draws heavily on the work of Weber and, to a lesser extent, Marx, and is highly influential amongst Left-wing parties in continental Europe and the UK.

According to this discourse, the included have a monopoly over scarce resources and work together to keep the excluded out, thereby maintaining their privileged position in society. This is achieved via social practices, such as institutions and cultural distinctions, which create boundaries that exclude certain social groups against their will. The 'included' are generally comprised of an alliance of competing social groups held together by their shared desire to keep the excluded out. In this way, 'The monopoly creates a bond of common interest between otherwise unequal insiders' (Silver, 1994, p. 543), such that the 'excluded are therefore simultaneously outsiders and dominated' (Silver, 1994, p. 543). From this perspective, the structure of society is rigid, in that people are born into inclusion or exclusion, and it is very difficult to change groups. The excluded are therefore those people who, as a result of their gender, class, ethnicity, religion, etc., that is, the boundaries imposed by the elite, have access to fewer resources and less power than the included. These include the working poor, the unemployed, the disabled, cultural minorities, those with limited education, the homeless, substance abusers, etc.

The solution to the systemic inequality in society caused by this exclusion from access to resources is 'social democratic citizenship', as conceived by Marshall (1950, as cited in Silver, 1994). This involves the extension of full civil, political and social rights to all members of society, as well as the provision of resources necessary for full participation in

that society: in other words, the redistribution of resources and power away from the included to the excluded, with the ultimate aim of restructuring society such that everyone is equal (Levitas, 2005). It is important to note that here participation in society is not about forming a social consensus. Rather, society is seen as an arena of constant struggle between groups, where participation is about challenging powerful interests in pursuit of inclusion and redistribution of resources (Silver, 1994).

Solidarity/Social Integrationist Discourse

Although they share a common philosophical basis, Silver's (1994) Solidarity discourse and Levitas' (2005) 'social integrationist' discourse (SID) are not as complementary as those of Specialisation/MUD and Monopoly/RED. Rather, RED is a narrower version of the Solidarity discourse (O'Reilly, 2005). Both discourses are based on the work of French philosophers, particularly Emile Dukheim, and reflect a concern for social cohesion and solidarity. That is, the bond between individuals and society, where the social order is thought of as 'external, moral, and normative, rather than grounded in individual, group or class interests' (Silver, 1994, p. 541). However, they differ in regard to the breadth of their proposed solutions.

The Solidarity discourse, which was originally developed in France, is built upon a particular interpretation of French Republican thought and revolutionary history (Silver, 1994). Silver (1994, p. 570) contends that, 'By presenting itself as a "third way" between liberalism and socialism, Republican thought weds economic to social concerns through the notion of solidarity'. The discourse constructs social exclusion as 'the breakdown of a social bond between the individual and society that is cultural and moral, rather than economically interested' (Silver, 1994, p. 570). That is, social exclusion is about no longer being a part of the national social order and its cultural and moral standards, not simply being left behind economically. This occurs if the State is not able to provide its citizens with at least a subsistence level of income or a job and thus the ability to participate in society, or if citizens refuse to work and participate in public life.

From this understanding, social exclusion threatens the national consensus, which threatens the existing social order, as the national consensus supports the social order by suppressing conflict. Any elements which do not conform with or support the social order are constructed as divisive and must be 'integrated' or 'inserted' back into the social order, to avoid social conflict or upheaval. The Solidarity discourse produces assimilatory outcomes that ask people to trade their individuality for the national consensus and a cohesive society in return for the means to participate in that society. Integration is achieved by the State providing work (either directly, or indirectly through skill provision and facilitating economic growth) and/or social security, with the obligation that those helped participate in public life.

Thus, the primary concern of the Solidarity discourse is maintaining the existing cultural and moral fabric of society by having all citizens participate in it. Employment is not the focus, but only one means of facilitating participation. In comparison, SID constructs social exclusion and its solution, 'integration', exclusively in terms of the labour market (Levitas, 1996).

Although concerned with maintaining social cohesion and the existing social order just like the Solidarity discourse, SID focuses exclusively on achieving this via employment (Levitas, 1996, 2005), that is, the form of participation that is most important is participation in the labour market. Thus SID largely abandons the French Republican concerns with cultural conformity and the provision of social support contained within the Solidarity discourse (Atkinson & Davoudi, 2000). Levitas (1996, p. 12) argues that, with SID, 'The possibility of integration into society through any institution other than the labour market has disappeared'. Paid work is constructed as a means of social integration because 'work itself is a form of social labour, and because money is a necessary passport to almost all forms of social interaction' (Levitas, 1996, p. 18). Therefore, the unemployed are, by definition, socially excluded, while those who have a job – regardless of its quality, conditions or pay, or a person's circumstances outside of work – are not and therefore do not require government assistance. Thus, despite an ostensible interest in the cultural and social aspects of cohesion, the primary interest of SID is economic (Atkinson & Davoudi, 2000).

SID was utilised by the governments of both the UK and EU in their social policy discourse (Levitas, 1996, 2005), originating with the EU in the early 1990s (Atkinson & Davoudi, 2000) and then transferring to the UK via the British New Labour government in 1999 as a consequence of the influence of the EU Both Atkinson and Davoudi (2000) and Levitas (1996, 2005) contend that SID evolved from the more traditional Solidarity discourse within the EU as a consequence of increasing pressure on European economies to become more competitive in the face of increasing globalisation, so that addressing social exclusion became justified mainly on 'the grounds that it threatens economic growth and competitiveness and undermines core elements of the European social model by placing unsustainable financial strains on social protection systems' (Atkinson & Davoudi, 2000, p. 431). This is discussed in more detail in the subsequent Setting chapter (Chapter 3).

Levitas (1996) contends that, by constructing social exclusion in terms of labour market involvement, the primary purpose of countering social exclusion becomes simply to increase the economic output of a population, not to improve its welfare. In addition, other issues and forms of social inequality receive less attention, in particular, for the purposes of this study, the working poor (Atkinson, 2000; Levitas, 1996), a social group which often includes local and domestic students (Marginson, *et al.*, 2010). Assuming that paid work eliminates social exclusion underestimates, according to Levitas (2004), issues such as low wages, poor conditions, job insecurity, in work poverty, and underemployment. Not to mention that SID retains the Solidarity discourse's focus on establishing a national consensus as a means of suppressing conflict and thereby maintaining the current social order, where the national consensus here is that all adults should participate in the labour market. Indeed, an emphasis on participation in key aspects of life, such as the labour market, has come to characterise many recent discourses of social exclusion.

Social exclusion as participation

A more recent discourse of social exclusion is one based on participation. According to such discourses, a person or group is socially excluded if they lack the opportunity to participate economically, socially or politically in the society in which they live (Burchardt, LeGrand & Piachaud, 2002, as cited in Millar, 2007; Hale & FitzGerald, 2007; Rees, 1998). After

conducting a comprehensive examination of recent research on discourses of social exclusion, Millar (2007, pp. 3-4) concludes that most construct social exclusion in terms of opportunity to participate in society. She posits that such discourses generally construct social inclusion as participation with the following elements:

- Multi-dimensional – Life has multiple dimensions in which social exclusion can occur. These dimensions are generally recognised as social, cultural, economic and political.

- Relational – Where an individual or group is placed in terms of other individuals and groups, and society as a whole.

- Resources – Those available to people, e.g., income, goods and services, facilities, political capital, social activities, etc.

- Dynamic – Current and potential future circumstances of people and groups.

- Agency – Social exclusion occurs as a result of the actions, or inaction, of others, but individuals also actively respond to the situation, or risk, of social exclusion.

It should be noted that within this framework each dimension of life is equally important and inter-related, so that insufficient participation in a single dimension is enough to cause social exclusion (Alden & Thomas, 1998; Burchardt *et al.*, 2002). Discourses of social exclusion as insufficient participation have become popular with policy-makers, because they are multi-dimensional, and ostensibly do not exclude non-citizens from consideration or require those who are excluded to conform to mainstream (or dominant) societal norms.

Participation is a key aspect of many well-established discourses of social exclusion, although there may be differences with regard to what should be participated in and how it should occur (Buckmaster & Thomas, 2009). For example, the previously discussed Solidarity discourse constructs the participation of citizens in public life as essential to maintaining social cohesion (Silver, 1994). However, discourses of social exclusion constructed exclusively in terms of participation differ from earlier discourses that identify participation only as an aspect of social exclusion, in that the effect of the discourse plays down the underlying ideology, for example, building a social consensus, as it attempts to establish a broader consensus and base of support.

That is, this discourse attempts to play down some of the issues, such as a focus on social conformity or passivity, raised by opponents of earlier discourses of social exclusion by attempting to be apolitical. By constructing social exclusion in terms of participation, the opposite of social exclusion is participation, not inclusion or integration (Millar, 2007; Steinert, 2003). This is useful in allaying the fear expressed by some authors that use of the term 'social exclusion' denies diversity and implies that, to counter it, those who are excluded must conform to the norms of 'mainstream' society (see Barata, 2000; Edwards, *et al.*, 2001; Hale & FitzGerald, 2007), for example, the Solidarity/SID discourse emphasises conformity to an external norm and a national consensus. Instead, social inclusion as participation is supposed to enable diversity. Although, Buckmaster and Thomas (2009, p. 29) point out that the question needs to be asked − 'participation on whose terms and on what basis?' This question forms a key aspect of my analysis of the data collected for this study.

In addition, it is suggested that participation entails a more 'active logic', in comparison to the perceived 'passive logic' of inclusion, which is more likely to successfully address social exclusion compared to earlier discourses (Buckmaster & Thomas, 2009). That is, an active role is constructed for both the excluded and the included, particularly by the State, in addressing social exclusion, or rather, in terms of this discourse, insufficient participation. This discourse thereby eliminates the idea, present in the Specialisation/MUD discourse, that the disadvantaged 'choose' their situation and that the included, especially the State, do not have responsibility for assisting them. These concerns are discussed in more detail in the next section on criticisms of social exclusion/inclusion.

Multi-dimensional discourse

One of the less commonly identified discourse is the 'multi-dimensional' discourse of social exclusion (Geddes & Benington, 2001, as cited in O'Reilly, 2005) which is a broadening out of the traditional concept of material poverty to cover '...various conditions such as health and educational deprivations, geographical disadvantage and particular disadvantages such as ethnic discrimination and physical or mental disabilities.' (O'Reilly, 2005, p. 81). It is more concerned with particular groups lack of material resources rather than them being excluded

due to a lack of political or social participation, or cultural recognition. In this discourse, any person or group experiencing significant material deprivation or disadvantage in some area of their life is considered to be socially excluded. Such a definition of those who are socially excluded essentially turns the concept into a general, catch-all term to describe anyone experiencing a social problem related to unequal access to material resources. Consequently, O'Reilly (2005, p. 81) contends that this discourse is

> *...naively heuristic and tautological in that it identifies social problems and then labels them as aspects of exclusion. It is not guided by any particular social science paradigm or theorisation of what either exclusion or inclusion is.*

A consequence of this lack of an underlying theory or paradigm of social exclusion means that this discourse is incapable of suggesting solutions that address the underlying causes of social exclusion because it is unable to identify them. The only means this discourse offers to address the issue of social exclusion is to treat its symptoms, such as poverty, substance abuse or poor educational achievement.

Post-modernist discourse

The second discourse of social exclusion identified by O'Reilly (2005) is that of scholars who adopt a post-modernist philosophy. Generally, this discourse constructs social exclusion as a result of the '...growth of segmented identities and social divisions on ethnic, sexual or local lines' (Geddes & Benington, 2001, p. 23, as cited in O'Reilly, 2005), while avoiding making a moral judgement about the causes of social exclusion. Accounts of social exclusion emerging from this discourse view society as becoming ever more fragmented and divided along lines of superficial difference, with social groups being exclusionary towards those who do not have the same differentiating characteristic(s). With such a fragmented society almost everyone could be considered socially excluded in some way, making the problem of social exclusion a marker of modern societies. The post-modern discourse does not offer a solution to this fragmentation of society but suggests that efforts to improve the cohesiveness of society, as well as understanding and acceptance of difference, might help to reverse the segmentation of society that the post-modern discourse believes is responsible for social exclusion.

Debates about the political and ideological usage of social inclusion

Social exclusion discourse was originally conceived as a means of identifying and addressing new social issues that have emerged in Western nations as a result of changes in their economic practices (Silver, 1994). As Byrne (2005, p. 2) contends, 'when we talk and write about "social exclusion" we are talking about changes in the whole of society that have consequences for some of the people in that society'. As a consequence, the primary justification given by authors for using a discourse of social exclusion is that it enables the recognition of forms of disadvantage that are not considered by other social justice discourses. As Hill (2002) argues, social exclusion discourse broadens attention to aspects of deprivation beyond the previously narrow focus on a static state of poverty to a multi-dimensional understanding that incorporates dynamic processes. Oppenheim (1998b) contends that a discourse of social exclusion enables recognition of deprivation as: a process instead of a static state; having a large number of causes; being comprised of many intangible elements, including loss of status, self-esteem, etc.; and, relational, placing people in terms of their family, community and society. Such an understanding then requires a change to policy responses for combating disadvantage. It is this ability to encompass a wider variety of causes and forms of disadvantage unique to modernity that proponents contend is the main strength of social exclusion discourse and why it is so popular in most Western nations (Byrne, 2005).

However, despite its popularity in Europe, the UK and Australia (see Chapter 3), social exclusion as a concept and discourse is highly contested and criticised in the literature. Indeed, it is contended by many scholars (see, for example, Levitas, 2005) that there are two main reasons for the popularity of social exclusion discourse in social policy circles, neither of which has to do with its ability to advance social justice. First, that it is broad but ambiguous, thereby making it open to manipulation and interpretation to suit the political agenda of the producer. Second, that it is discursively appealing, with the idea of 'exclusion' conjuring up innate fears of being left out, while 'inclusion' promotes a positive sense of belonging and togetherness, at least for those who identify with the dominant social order and for those outside the mainstream, something to aspire to (Edwards, *et al.*, 2001; Levitas, 2005; Silver, 1994).

These aspects mean that social exclusion can be constructed to achieve essentially any ideological objective the producer desires, while its discursive appeal will facilitate gaining support for the discourse. Critical scholars contend it is for this reason, as opposed to any greater capacity to recognise disadvantage, that social inclusion discourse is popular (Levitas, 2005). However, the ideological and political nature of these discourses is not typically acknowledged openly by its proponents. Therefore, I will now discuss the common criticism and concerns related to social exclusion/inclusion discourses.

Criticisms of social inclusion

Social exclusion/inclusion discourse is likely to remain a feature of policy discourse for some time, although its popularity will wax and wane with political tides, due to its ambiguity and discursive appeal enabling it to 'serve a variety of political purposes' (Silver, 1994, p. 572). However, Atkinson (2000) argues strongly that there are serious problems with how such discourses are employed and the way in which they construct social exclusion. Therefore, critique is required to illuminate the ideological work of such discourses (Edwards *et al.*, 2001). To that end, I will now discuss the two major themes of criticism of social exclusion/inclusion within the literature: it enforces conformity and denies diversity, and it may act as a means of control and enforcing the status quo.

The most common criticism of social inclusion discourse within the literature is that it implies conformity to mainstream society norms (Steinert & Pilgram, 2003, as cited in Millar, 2007) and denies difference (Edwards *et al.*, 2001). Edwards *et al.* (2001) contend that the concept of inclusion constructs a mean towards which all members of a society must move or risk being (further) excluded. Atkinson (2000, p. 1042), citing arguments made by Potter (1996), points out that 'such a notion presumes a social consensus into which individuals/groups can be inserted, but this is to disregard the very different, and potentially conflictual, interests and lifestyles of those concerned'. As a consequence, a discourse of social exclusion constructs the excluded as deficient and/or deviants who pollute society, justifying government intervention to reform them or protect mainstream society from them (Edwards *et al.*, 2001; Sibley, 1998).

Edwards *et al.* (2001, p. 418) argue strongly that 'inclusion is not inherently worthwhile or, at least, that it is problematic'. This does not mean that they advocate exclusion, but rather that they question the idea that inclusion in terms of conformity to mainstream values and norms is inherently good. They ask: what effect do the notions of social cohesion and integration have on diversity? This is particularly important if, as Preece (2001) suggests, the values of the dominant social group tend to marginalise the value and experiences of other social groups. Indeed, it is argued by Li (2003, as cited in Caidi & Allard, 2005) that discourses of social inclusion may claim to value multiculturalism and diversity but often push conformity by constructing some immigrants as deserving and others undeserving. This point will be illustrated further by the discussion of the findings from this study in Chapters 7 and 8.

A valid point is made by Sibley (1998, p. 94), who enquires:

> [W]*e might ask how we can make appropriate responses to people living on the margins of society, apparently excluded, if our only models of social justice are based on the idea of social integration, making us captive to an inclusionary view of society.*

It needs to be understood, argue Edwards *et al.* (2001), that being 'not excluded' is not the same as being 'included'. Some people do not want to be a part of mainstream society, or only want to be partially a part of it (Sibley, 1998). That is, some people live on the fringes of society because they want to, not because they are forced there (Sibley, 1998). Those who do not wish to be included should not have their freedom to live as they choose taken away (Edwards *et al.*, 2001).

That said, while, as Burchardt *et al.* (2002) argue, any discourse of social exclusion should include the possibility of self-exclusion, Barry (2002, p. 14) urges that 'we should always look at apparently voluntary self-exclusion with some scepticism'. He posits that choosing to self-exclude oneself, as the best option available, means very little when one's ability to exercise one's agency are limited by the discrimination or hostility of others. This argument is illustrated by the case of Roma people in Europe, who are used by Sibley (1998) as an example of people who do not want to be included because to do so they would have to give up their traditional lifestyle. The Roma are generally viewed with hostility by other Europeans, who do not want them living in their communities, and consequently constructed

as the deviant 'other' by mainstream discourse. Hence, while the Roma may discursively construct their limited interaction with mainstream European society as a deliberate choice, given the mainstream European practice of hostility towards them the Roma do not really have the structural freedom to choose to interact more frequently.

Barry (2002, p. 16) sums up this argument with the following statement:

> *If you would be refused membership in a club on the basis of your religion, race, ethnicity, or sex, common sense suggests that you are excluded, in the sense that you are subject to an exclusionary policy. Even if you claim... that you would not want to belong to any club that would not let you in, that does not alter the fact of exclusion.*

This construction of the dynamics of exclusion with regard to the structural limitations of agency could also apply to people/groups who are excluded based on other characteristics, such as disability, sexual orientation, family status, and so on. Barry (2002) constructs the wish to participate as irrelevant to exclusion, such that the most important issue is if someone has the opportunity to participate, whether they want to or not. Levitas (2006) concurs, indicating she is doubtful a significant distinction exists between supposedly voluntary and involuntary non-participation, given the way modern society is structured. Based on these arguments, personal desire to be included is not constructed as a factor which is relevant to defining a person or group as socially excluded.

The second major criticism of social exclusion discourse is that it can serve as a means of controlling those labelled socially excluded, and therefore disruptive to society, thereby helping to reinforce existing social structures and power relationships (Alden & Thomas, 1998; Hale & FitzGerald, 2007). Indeed, Alden and Thomas (1998) contend that this is often the intended purpose of those utilising a social exclusion discourse, with many European countries having a history of moral panics over the potentially disruptive effects of groups that exist outside mainstream society. In a similar vein, Levitas (2005) argues that social inclusion discourse can be used to reinforce the status quo by repressing conflict in order to create the image of a 'good' society. That is, attention is focused on the border between the included and excluded, with the excluded presumed to be disadvantaged while the included

experience no significant problems. In this way, inequalities within the included are silenced by the discourse only focusing on the problems, or threat, of the excluded 'Other'.

In addition, Preece (2001) argues that by attempting to 'normalise' the socially excluded social inclusion policy discourses legitimise existing social structures and systems which may actually be causing, in whole or in part, the very problems the policy purports to address. Barata (2000) and Levitas (2005) also caution against this possibility of reinforcing existing structures by working through them in an attempt to address social exclusion. Silver (1994) further suggests social exclusion discourse may reinforce the status quo by simply constructing a new label for existing marginalised groups which highlights particular forms of social disadvantage, shifting the focus of public discourse to those forms and thereby hiding other social problems that affect the entire society.

Conclusion

Social exclusion is a popular discourse in the social policy circles of many countries (see Chapter 3). Several of the main social exclusion discourses were discussed in this chapter – Specialisation/Moral Underclass, Monopoly/Redistributionist, Solidarity/Social Integrationist, Participation, multi-dimensional, and post-modernist. However, what these various discourses demonstrate is that social inclusion as a concept is contested, with different discourses constructing exclusion and inclusion in various, often conflicting, ways. This ambiguity of meaning enables social exclusion discourses to serve a plethora of ideological purposes. However, such purposes are often hidden within the discursive appeal of the terms "exclusion" and "inclusion". This has led to significant critique of social exclusion/inclusion discourses, primarily that they enforce conformity with mainstream norms and values, thereby denying diversity, and reinforce existing structures and power relations of dominance. Critically analysing such discourses using CDA provides an additional avenue of critique, as it enables the illumination of the power relationships within, and 'work' done by, those discourses. Aspects of discourse which are typically hidden and not readily revealed by other methods of analysis. As will be seen in the later findings and discussion chapters, these criticisms are borne out in the discourses of social inclusion examined by this study.

Marginalisation

In mainstream accounts of social exclusion, marginalisation and social exclusion are often constructed as the same thing and the terms are used interchangeably (see, for example, Sibley, 1998 or Vasas, 2005), or marginalisation is constructed as the outcome of social exclusion (see for example, Edwards, *et al.*, 2001 or Millar, 2007). However, in this study the two concepts are kept distinct. The idea of marginalisation is drawn on here in order to explore the structural aspects of social exclusion discourse and the power relations, often hidden, that constitute the conditions of social exclusion through the effects of marginalisation.

Definition

Marginalisation is a concept which, as the name implies, focuses on 'the characteristics, functions, and meanings of margins – that is, borders or edges' (Hall, Stevens & Meleis, 1994, p. 24). To speak of marginalisation is to discuss the Centre and the Periphery, where those that lay at the periphery are located close to the border or outside of it (Vasas, 2005). It is generally defined as 'the process through which persons are peripheralized on the basis of their identities, associations, experiences, and environments' (Hall, *et al.*, 1994, p. 25). In other words, marginalisation is the process of being kept to or forced towards the margins. The eventual outcome of marginalisation is to be marginalised, that is, located on the margins or Periphery, socially and sometimes geographically (Vasas, 2005). As Vasas (2005, p. 196) explains:

> *Marginalization can occur only in relation to a margin. Margins provide the physical (concrete) and psychological (perceived) constructs around which marginalized people reside. They are the boundary determining aspects of persons, social networks, communities, and environments. Frequently, margins are defined or described in contrast to a central point. In this way, the central point (Center) defines the margins, and everyone who does not fit that description falls outside of the margin or becomes 'marginalized.*

By adopting the idea of marginalisation, the exploration of social inclusion/exclusion allows us to construct the effects of inclusion/exclusion that take account of power relations between

the centre and the margins that define and defend the legitimacy of the centre to maintain existing social arrangements (Cullen & Pretes, 2000).

Relationship between social exclusion and marginalisation

The relationship between social exclusion and marginalisation is generally constructed as either one of equivalence or cause and effect. Many scholars use the two terms interchangeably as referring to identical processes, although sometimes social exclusion refers to specific aspects of marginalisation, such as lack of social connections (see, for example, Sibley, 1998, and Vasas, 2005). However, marginalisation is more commonly constructed as being the outcome of social exclusion, in that being socially excluded causes or is one of the causes of marginalisation (see, for example, Edwards, *et al.*, 2001, and Millar, 2007). Edwards and colleagues (2001, p. 418) thus contend that social exclusion 'offends against human dignity, denies people their fundamental human rights and leads, in conjunction with social and economic instability, to marginalization'.

Understanding marginalisation as conceptually distinct from social exclusion, something that occurs as a result of social exclusion but is not reducible to it, is useful for this study. This is because it enables a discussion of the effects of social inclusion discourses with reference to underlying power relations that structure society. Social inclusion, as the counter to social exclusion, attempts to reduce or eliminate social exclusion. However, this is not necessarily the same as reducing or eliminating marginalisation, at least as I understand it.

As discussed above, marginalisation is viewed in this study as a consequence of social structures which establish and maintain unequal power relationships between social groups (Cullen & Pretes, 2000). In comparison, social inclusion discourses construct particular social practices as problematic and propose particular ways of addressing those problematic practices (Béland, 2007). However, the practices identified may or may not relate to unequal power relationships which cause marginalisation. Therefore, the effects of social inclusion discourses can be discussed in terms of their impact on marginalisation.

Construction of marginalisation

As indicated above, marginalisation is constructed in relative terms, those that are included in the figurative centre of society and those who inhabit the margins. Vasas (2005) argues that the Centre is constructed by the majority (although they may not necessarily be in it) and is constituted by a socially, economically, politically and culturally powerful 'mainstream'. The degree to which those within the mainstream maintain their position at the centre relies on often hidden and unequal power relationships between the mainstream/Centre and the 'other' who sit at the Periphery (Cullen & Pretes, 2000). Importantly, these unequal power relationships imply social structures that bestow privilege (economic, social, political and cultural) and are maintained and reinforced, at least partly, through discourse. However, while they are often described and experienced as permanent structures, they are social constructs and can be challenged and changed through social action, of which discourse is a form (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). This is, of course, the purpose of Critical Discourse Analysis (Wodak & Meyer, 2009) and other critical discourse explorations of social exclusion and marginalisation (see, for example, Fairclough, 2005b and Koller & Davidson, 2008).

Discursively, labelling particular social groups as marginalised gives the mainstream power over them. Doing so justifies and legitimises mainstream intervention in the lives of those so labelled in order to 'help' them and/or prevent them from harming the mainstream (Cullen & Pretes, 2000). Such groups may be viewed as a threat to the mainstream in numerous ways, such as physically in the case of perpetrating violent crime, or culturally in terms of propagating ideas that challenge established social norms which support mainstream dominance (Cullen & Pretes, 2000). However, as Ferguson (1990, p. 10) contends, 'the power of the center depends on a relatively unchallenged authority' in that powerful and dominant discourses construct and legitimise the mainstream/Centre as the 'natural' norm and anything different from this is deviant. Exposing and challenging this norm reduces the power of the mainstream, and therefore the marginalisation of the 'other', by reducing its position as the legitimate Centre relative to which marginalisation is defined (Ferguson, 1990).

Such a goal fits with the purpose of CDA, which is to reveal and challenge unequal power relationships contained within discourse (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). The greater the explicit, conscious knowledge agents possess about how the structure of society and its power relationships are reproduced, the greater their ability to influence that process. While this enables the already powerful to further entrench their dominant social position, it also allows for the less powerful (including the marginalised) to challenge and change those structures (Dear & Moos, 1994).

An example of how marginalisation caused by social structures and unequal power relationships could be explained is by Galtung's concept of structural violence (1969) and structural theory of imperialism (1971). Galtung's (1969) concept of structural violence provides a means of describing the negative outcomes of social structures that inherently disadvantage one (or more) social group(s) for the benefit of another. Galtung's (1971, p. 81) structural theory of imperialism seeks to explain "the tremendous inequality, within and between nations, in almost all aspects of human living conditions, including the power to decide over those living conditions…" By extension, the theory also provides an explanation for unequal power relations and marginalisation within a society. The concept of 'structural violence' and the 'structural theory of imperialism' are related in that the theory explains why structural violence occurs as a result of an economically determined world system.

While at first glance the use of Centre/Periphery duality by the 'structural theory of imperialism' presents a useful metaphor for how societies are divided. Galtung's work is part of a broader literature on world-systems analysis which provides an explanatory framework for understanding the existence of broad-based social inequalities that arise from the uneven flow of capital from developed (the 'centre') to undeveloped economies (the periphery) (Westwood, Jack, Khan & Frenkel, 2014). Galtung (1971) uses the centre/periphery framework to explain the power of dominant economic and ideological forces. For while there is conflict between the centre and periphery in both the Centre and the Periphery, the Centre, through structural power relations maintains its cohesion in order to exclude those in the Periphery. This explanation fits with the language of the social inclusion and marginalisation literatures, as with much marginalisation literature referring to the centre and

those on the margins (a synonym for periphery), see, for example, Vasas (2005) or Cullen and Pretes (2000).

However, Galtung (1969, 1971) and others who write from this perspective (see Wallerstein, 1974, 1979) provide a 'grand' theory of economics that is both mechanistic and deterministic about the power relations that shape society. Therefore, while the idea of the Centre/Periphery is relevant for my study, Galtung's explanation has limits because it focuses on economic structures as determinants of social outcomes and is silent on practices and discourses at the local level. Consistent with Fairclough's CDA approach, and in order to capture and better explain social inclusion/exclusion in terms of the Core/Periphery, I used Bourdieu's theory of fields to further develop this idea and explain the unequal distribution of power, and therefore inequality, in society (see Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Bourdieu's fields offers a theory that accounts for the actions of agents at the local level in challenging and reinforcing relations of domination through discursive means that have material outcomes. I discuss Bourdieu's concept of fields in a subsequent section of the thesis (see the later section on Fields in this chapter), before that I wish to highlight a particularly powerful discursive tool used by the mainstream/centre to maintain their dominant social position – normalising regimes.

Normalising regime

A powerful means by which the mainstream/centre discursively maintain their dominance is via 'normalising regimes' (Lewis, 2005). According to Lewis (2005), in UK government discourse there is a constant tension between demonstrating tolerance of diversity and imposing a hegemonic discourse of "Englishness/Britishness" which Lewis labels a 'normalising regime'. That is, there is a debate about the extent to which diversity can be tolerated versus the need for assimilation into dominant mainstream norms and values. The existence of such tensions within policy discourse of other developed countries, such as Australia, is highly probable given the multi-ethnic nature of modern societies.

According to Lewis (2005, p. 540), a normalising regime is a discourse which sets boundaries on the extent to which diversity is tolerated and thereby 'subordinates and disciplines minorities'. The boundaries are determined by the mainstream and based on 'the normative constructions of what national culture, understood as way of life, is' (Lewis, 2005, p. 546). As society becomes more diverse, government has to contend with a greater number of identities in order to impose its normalising regime. Only those who fit within these boundaries are accepted into the mainstream, with those who are successfully assimilated then used as a symbol of the tolerant and diverse nature of mainstream society (Lewis, 2005). However, those who cannot or refuse to conform are 'justifiably' marginalised (Ferguson, 1990). That is, such people are constructed as deserving their marginalisation because they have either refused the help of the government to reform their behaviour or are considered a threat, materially or culturally, to the mainstream.

Conclusion

In this section I have discussed the concept of marginalisation – how it is understood, its relationship to social exclusion, and the discursive means through which marginalisation is perpetrated. Although often constructed as the same concept or as an outcome of each other, social exclusion and marginalisation are kept theoretically distinct in this study. The purpose of doing so is to enable the critical analysis of the effects of social inclusion discourses on how those social groups it targets are understood. In the case of this study, the particular social group of interest is international students.

Social inclusion discourses construct the problem of social exclusion, who is socially excluded and why, and acceptable solutions to it in specific ways (Béland, 2007). Such constructions have implications for how those viewed as excluded are understood and mainstream society's responsibility towards them. This study seeks to determine what the impact of social inclusion discourses produced in the case site have on government and society's understanding of international students' needs, experiences and welfare. In particular, whether the understanding constructed reduces or reinforces the unequal power relationships between international students and the mainstream Greenwood community.

The outcome of unequal power relationships between a particular social group and mainstream society is marginalisation (Cullen & Pretes, 2000). Such unequal power relationships are produced and maintained partially through discourse (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). The concept of marginalisation is therefore used in this study to examine the effect of social inclusion discourse on how international students' are positioned in the City of Greenwood. The concept of 'normalising regimes' will also be utilised to help explain how the boundaries of the mainstream/centre are discursively maintained (Lewis, 2005).

In the context of this study, the Centre/mainstream is those residents who belong to the mainstream Greenwood community, while the centre of the Centre is the Council itself. In the Periphery are all those residents of the City who are considered marginalised. In this study I focus mainly on the Centre/mainstream, its actions towards those in the Periphery and the movement (or lack thereof) of people from the margins to the Centre/mainstream implied by social inclusion discourses.

Fields

This section will provide a brief discussion of Bourdieu's concept of fields. Fields are discussed here because the particular approach to Critical Discourse Analysis used in this study, Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach, draws on the concept of fields to construct the social world. It is therefore necessary to have some understanding of fields in order to make sense of the analysis in Chapters 6, 7, and 8. The concept of fields is used to explain the unequal power relations and social structures which exist in society and cause marginalisation.

Bourdieu views reality as being divided into numerous 'fields' based on relations of power, with these fields having generally coherent internal structures and relatively stable boundaries. However, these structures and boundaries are subject to constant challenge from agents within the field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Fields can vary greatly in size, from two people to millions, and smaller fields can be subsumed within larger fields. Fairclough (2000) equates networks of social practices to fields, in that networks of social practices

represent relations of power that exist in society. This is discussed in more detail in the Context chapter.

Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p. 114) define a field as 'a space of objective relations between positions defined by their rank in the distribution of competing powers or species of capital'. It is a 'space of play' that exists only to the extent that the agents who participate in it desire and pursue the rewards it offers. Indeed, the nature of the field determines the identities of agents who participate in it, in that particular identities exist only because there is a field which gives those identities meaning. As Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, pp. 106-7) go on to explain: 'This or that particular intellectual, this or that artist, exists *as such* only because there is an intellectual or an artistic field'. Thus, the field has primacy of interest over the agents which participate in it.

A field is also a site of struggle between agents, who fill the various positions within the field, over accepted types of capital in order to have the power to either reinforce or challenge the boundaries and/or structure of the field. The amount of relevant (types of) capital(s) possessed by an agent and his or her perceived (by others in the field) social trajectory determines the position in the field he or she holds and therefore his or her ability to affect the field. This also means that to enter a field in the first place an agent must possess a certain minimum amount of relevant capital, determined by the field. This 'admission fee' controls the border of the field, precluding participation by some agents, while allowing others (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

The result is that, in any given field, there will be agents who occupy dominant positions and those who occupy dominated positions. This is based on the amount of relevant capital they possess and their perceived social trajectory. Both groups of agents will naturally seek to protect or improve their position, and influence the field such that what they produce is worth the greatest amount of relevant capital by establishing a hierarchy that is most favourable to them. Those agents who occupy the most dominant positions are most able to make the field function to their advantage and thereby maintain their dominant position. Primarily by determining what is considered relevant capital, who has access to it, and the minimum required for entry into the field. However, those that are dominant must continually contend with and defend against the resistance of the dominated. Whether an agent seeks to preserve

the current distribution of capital or change it is likely to depend on their position within the field. Those with more capital and hence a more powerful position generally seek to preserve the existing structure while those with less capital and a consequently less powerful position generally seek to challenge it, although this is not always the case (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

The most powerful agent within each particular field will struggle with others similarly positioned within their own fields via the field of power. The field of power is different to all other fields in that it 'is not situated on the same level as other fields…since it encompasses them in part' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 18). Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) suggest that it should be thought of as a 'meta-field'. They (1992, p. 76) define the field of power as,

> *a field of forces defined by the structure of the existing balance of forces between forms of power, or between different species of capital. It is also simultaneously a field of struggles for power among the holders of different forms of power.*

Just as with normal fields, those agents who participate in the field of power struggle against each other to maintain or alter the existing balance of forces in order to preserve or improve the relevance of their own field and therefore their own power (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The influence of the field of power is such that it affects every specific field and therefore the agents participating in those fields (Hilgers & Mangez, 2014).

However, the way in which fields interact and influence agents is not direct. Rather, external forces affect agents within a particular field indirectly via 'the specific mediation of the specific forms and forces of the field' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 105-6). The more autonomous a field, the greater its ability to impose its own 'logic' on the way in which external influences are interpreted by the agents participating in it. In this way, agents will always interpret influences from outside their field through the 'lens' imposed by their field and react to it according to the forces which hold sway there, where the structure of a particular field is the product of its total history to that point (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

The nature of fields is similar to the discussion in the previous Marginalisation section and demonstrates how the concept of fields can be used to explain marginalisation. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) construct fields as sites of struggle over capital (i.e. resources in the broadest sense) by various agents to obtain and maintain power and dominant positions

within the hierarchy of the field. There is also an 'admission fee' required for entry which is used to prevent particular agents from participating.

To illustrate, a particular society or community can be seen as a field which is vertically structured according to the amount of resources (what Bourdieu calls 'capital') possessed by members of that group or community. Those in the mainstream/Centre possess the most resources (economic, social and political) and these are used to reinforce their dominant positions. Those on the margins possess barely enough resources (e.g. they lack economic resources, political voice, are less valued socially) to belong to the field and are dominated (Hilgers & Mangez, 2014). What amount and mix of relevant capital is considered to distinguish those in the 'mainstream' from those on the periphery is unique to each field, likely contested, and therefore difficult to define exactly. However, as discussed in the previous section on Normalising Regimes, defining this boundary is an important of exercise of discursive power.

Theoretically agents can move from the margins and into the mainstream if they obtain enough relevant capital, while the reverse can also occur. Agents can be ejected from the field entirely if they are sufficiently deprived of resources or the value of the resources they do possess is weakened or reduced (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). There is constant struggle within the field between those in the mainstream who wish to maintain their dominance and those on the periphery who seek to become dominant.

This is not to suggest that struggle within the field of a particular community is confined to conflict between two apparently (they are not) cohesive groups – the mainstream and the marginalised. There is struggle between all members of a field, including those considered to be part of the mainstream, to maintain and/or increase their power. That is, there exists an unequal hierarchy within what is defined as the 'mainstream', as well as within the broader field of the community (which includes both those in the mainstream and those on the margins; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). However, as the focus of this study is on social inclusion and marginalisation, emphasis is placed on the struggle between those agents

positioned on the periphery of the field, the marginalised, and those with sufficient relevant capital to be considered part of the mainstream (Fairclough, 2005b).

Thus, in Bourdieu's terms, marginalisation is the result of unequal power relations and social structures created and maintained by the unequal possession of relevant capital. For marginalisation to be addressed requires a redistribution of relevant capital, including discursive resources, and/or a redefining of what is considered relevant capital, such that what is possessed by those currently marginalised is considered more valuable. In this way the relative position of members (agents) of a community (field) would be rebalanced to become more equitable. However, such a rebalancing would necessarily mean a change in existing social structures and power relationships.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the key concepts which were used in this study – social exclusion/inclusion, marginalisation, and fields. The impact of social inclusion discourses is the focus of this study, which makes discussing the contested nature of the concept, its various discourses, how it relates to social exclusion, and criticisms of its effect on those labelled as 'excluded' necessary in order to frame and give meaning to the findings discussed in Chapters 7 and 8. The discourse of social inclusion as participation and the critiques of the concept as enforcing conformity and reinforcing existing social structures will be particularly relevant. The concept of marginalisation was discussed in order to provide a means of exploring the effects of social inclusion discourses that takes account of power relations between the centre and the margins. This is necessary to be able to effectively answer the study's research questions. Lastly, Bourdieu's concept of fields was discussed because Fairclough (2009), whose dialectical-relational approach to Critical Discourse Analysis forms this study's analytical framework, draws on this concept to construct the social world. Understanding the world in terms of fields enables this study to focus on the effects of power relations in facilitating or limiting the actions of social agents. In the following chapter, the broad historical background and setting of the case are detailed in order to set the scene for the study. At the end of that chapter I will discuss how my critical review of the literature led to the development of the research questions for this study.

Chapter 3: Literature Review – Setting

This chapter will lay out the broad setting, or background, to the study. The purpose of doing so is to situate it within its broader historical context and thereby provide some perspective on the sequence of events which have created the conditions for this study – an examination of the application of social inclusion discourse by a local government Council to address the issues of international students. Those events are the development of social exclusion/inclusion discourse from Europe and the UK to Australia, the rise of the Australian international education industry, and the changing focus of local government in Australia. First, the evolution of social exclusion will be traced from its inceptions in France and the United Kingdom, to its adoption by the European Union and eventual transfer to Australia. Second, the historical development of Australia's international education industry and the origins of the crisis which occurred at the time of my study are described. Third, the well documented problems experienced by international students, their prevalence and underlying causes are briefly summarised. Fourth, and finally, the changing role of local government in Australia is discussed. The later Context chapter (Chapter 6) will provide a detailed analysis of the specific context, or conjuncture of social practices, which surround my case and influenced the Council to use social inclusion-based social policies to understand international students' needs, experiences and welfare.

Social exclusion/inclusion

This subsection will describe the historical development of the concept of social exclusion in France and the United Kingdom (UK), and its spread to the European Union (EU) and Australia. A number of detailed, and heavily cited, histories of the development of social exclusion in France, the UK and the EU have been published. For example, a very comprehensive account of the development of social exclusion in France is provided by Silver (1994), while Levitas (1996, 2005) has done the same for the Anglo-Saxon (British) tradition's evolution. Similarly, extensive research has been published by Atkinson (2000) and Atkinson and Davoudi (2000) on the adoption of the concept by the European Union. It is therefore primarily on these sources that the following discussion is based.

It is argued by Silver (1994) that the discourse of social exclusion came about as a result of significant changes in the economic structure of Western nations, beginning in the 1970s. This change is variously described in philosophical terms as a shift from the modern period to late modernity (Young, 1999), from the industrial to post-industrial, or from Fordism to post-Fordism (Atkinson, 2000; Byrne, 2005). These economic changes caused corresponding social changes that created new forms of social disadvantage. Several scholars (see, for example, Burchardt, Le Grand & Piachaud, 2002; Levitas, 2005; Silver, 1994) contend that these new forms of social disadvantage have come to be conceived of as 'social exclusion' in most developed nations, with the exception of the US (Byrne, 2005).

According to Barata (2000), the structural economic changes being experienced by Western nations were primarily related to the use of labour. In the West, a significant shift occurred away from mass industrial manufacturing and the widespread use of essentially unskilled labour towards newer forms of production that required skilled workers with the educational qualifications to prove those skills. Wages and traditional career hierarchies were also undermined as work became organised around flexible, 'just in time' production systems. These changes excluded large numbers of people from 'good employment' – that is, employment which is permanent, full-time, seen as 'respectable', and has decent pay and conditions – or promotion, introducing significant instability into 'the traditional male life-cycle' (Barata, 2000, p. 2). As a consequence, many policies aimed at combating social exclusion initially focused on getting the excluded into the workforce (Barata, 2000). Indeed, it was this violation of the assumption of full-time, ongoing employment which created the initial class of people excluded from the French social security system and led to the creation of the concept of 'social exclusion'.

France

It is generally understood that the concept of 'social exclusion' originated in France in the 1970s (Silver, 1994). According to Silver (1994), the term was officially used for the first time by Rene Lenoir in 1974, who was Secretary of State for Social Action at the time, in the document 'Les exclus' (Lenoir, 1974, as cited in Levitas, 2006).

It is contended by both Burchardt *et al.* (2002) and Levitas (2006) that originally the term was used to refer to those people in need of social protection who were excluded from France's 'Bismarckian' welfare system, because they did not fit the administrative definition of being in need, for example, single parents or the disabled. Silver (1994) argues that such exclusion was because the post-World War 2 welfare system of France was built on the notion of the traditional family – the man as primary breadwinner and the woman as homemaker – and assumption of full employment, where cases of unemployment would be temporary and short-term. The implication of this was that at the time of the publication of 'Les exclus', anyone who fell outside this archetype was unable to access welfare. In a similar vein, Barata (2000, p. 1) argues that social exclusion was invented as a means to improve 'the living conditions of those left behind by economic growth in order to reinforce the principles on which the French economic system was based…'. The principles referred to were social integration and solidarity. It was felt that those excluded from access to the French welfare system would feel much less a part of broader French society, uncoupled as they were from its fate.

However, according to Silver (1994), use of the term 'social exclusion' did not become widely used in French social policy discourse until the 1980s when, as a result of multiple social and political crises, it began to be applied more broadly to social issues. This also required that the term be continually redefined to include new social groups and problems. Those classified as 'socially excluded' came to include disaffected youth, persons who were socially isolated, the long-term unemployed (Burchardt *et al.*, 2002) and persons living in unstable households (Silver, 1994). Silver (1994, p. 533) states that in France social exclusion came to refer '…not only to the rise in long-term and recurrent unemployment, but also to the growing instability of social bonds: family instability, single-member households, social isolation, and the decline of class solidarity based on unions, the labour market, and the working-class neighbourhood and social networks. There were not only material but also spiritual and symbolic aspects to this phenomenon'. Atkinson (2000, p. 1040) concurs, arguing that the French concern with social exclusion was mainly its effect on the '...social and moral unity of the Nation (the Republic)'.

Burchardt *et al.* (2002) contend that unemployment came to be seen as the underlying cause of much social exclusion, and therefore insertion into the labour market the primary means of combating exclusion. A concern with unemployment and social exclusion quickly spread from France to the rest of Europe during the late 1980s, facilitated by the European Commission's adoption of a social exclusion discourse (Burchardt *et al.*, 2002; Silver, 1994).

European Union

Social exclusion expanded from France into EU policy via the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs, which in the late 1980s had its social policy sections controlled by French administrators. The notion received strong support from then President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors (a Frenchman), and several member states who wanted to create an independent EU social policy in order to foster increased social cohesion and social integration in the EU (Atkinson, 2000).

Atkinson and Davoudi (2000) suggest that the concept of social exclusion, and a concern with addressing it, was taken up so strongly by the European Commission for two reasons. First, it served to increase the legitimacy of the Commission in the eyes of EU citizens by being seen to address social issues important to them. Second, the importance of addressing such issues provided the justification needed by the Commission to expand its influence in social policy, which previously had been the exclusive domain of each member-state.

According to Barata (2000) and Atkinson (2000), the term 'social exclusion' was first officially used in EU policy discourse by the European Commission in 1989, when it launched its Poverty 3 initiative. Atkinson (2000) further posits that this programme, along with the creation of the Observatory on National Policies to Combat Social Exclusion in the same year, embedded the concept of social exclusion in EU social policy discourse.

It was also during the Delors' Presidency of the European Commission that 'many of the assumptions underlying the social development of the EU began to be questioned, notably that, in advanced industrial societies with well-developed welfare states, poverty had been greatly diminished, if not actually abolished' (Atkinson & Davoudi, 2000, p. 428). According to the European Commission (1992, as cited in Atkinson, 2000), many members of the EU believed, in the 1970s, that poverty had almost been completely eradicated and would disappear entirely with further economic growth. Atkinson (2000) suggests that at the time it began to be felt by some that those still experiencing poverty were in such circumstances as a result of their own behaviour. This is a view, according to Byrne (2005), that was, and still is, particularly popular with the Right side of politics: what Levitas (2005) labels the 'moral underclass discourse' of social inclusion.

Atkinson (2000) posits that, as a consequence of the belief that poverty had become 'residual', and in the face of new social problems, such as long-term unemployment and a proliferation in low-income earners, new concepts had to be found in the 1980s to make sense of these problems. Initially the term 'new poverty' was used, but this quickly gave way to 'social exclusion' (Atkinson, 2000), as it was felt to be a more encompassing concept concerned with more than 'the worries about absolute and relative levels of income and wealth associated with discussions of poverty' (Alden & Thomas, 1998, p. 8). Social exclusion was seen as a new concept able to deal with the new problems created by the fundamental shift in economic, and consequently social, structures of the EU's member-states.

However, it is argued by Atkinson and Davoudi (2000) that, not long after social exclusion began to be adopted by the EU, the European social model came under severe pressure to become more competitive in an increasingly globalised world. As a consequence of this pressure,

> *post-1993, the need for action by the EU to combat social exclusion has mainly been justified on the grounds that it threatens economic growth and competitiveness and undermines core elements of the European social model by placing unsustainable financial strains on social protection systems.* (Atkinson & Davoudi, 2000, p. 431)

At about the same time as these competitive pressures were being felt by the EU, the concept of social exclusion, as used at the EU level, changed. According to Atkinson and Davoudi (2000) and Levitas (2005), this new concept of social exclusion sought to combine and reconcile the differing focuses of the French and Anglo-Saxon traditions – the former was primarily concerned with social cohesion, while the latter focused on income inequality – by framing the concept in terms of citizenship rights. Discourses of social exclusion based on citizenship rights were discussed in detail in the earlier 'Definitions' section.

It is argued by Duffy (1998) and Levitas (1996, 2005) that this new concept of social exclusion, combined with the pressure to become more economically competitive, led the EU to focus on combating social exclusion by integrating the excluded into the labour market. Levitas (1996, p. 11) posits that at the EU level it is assumed that inclusion in mainstream society comes from being in paid employment and that 'indeed, the absence of appropriate [job] skills is held responsible for social exclusion…'. In a later work she (2005) goes on to argue that this focus on inclusion through work was reinforced by the funding structures through which the European Commission pushed its social exclusion agenda. That is, the European Commission provided funding to projects designed to combat social exclusion from its Structural Funds, and the rules dictating what sort of projects these funds could be given to favoured those focused on labour market participation. Atkinson and Davoudi (2000) suggest that there exists a tension, both at the EU level and within member states, between improving economic performance and addressing social exclusion, where the latter is subjugated to the former. Hence, the EU sought to address social exclusion in a way that would increase economic efficiency.

However, both Levitas (2005) and Atkinson and Davoudi (2000) point out that to assume there exists a pan-European definition of social exclusion is incorrect. Each member state interprets the general concept of social exclusion and applies it differently based on their specific political context and agenda. Levitas (2005, p. 2) suggests that this has led to '…competing discourses of exclusion within individual countries, as well as within Europe'.

Regardless of definitional differences, the concept of social exclusion, and the cause of addressing it, has become enshrined in the social policy agenda of the EU with the adoption of the Lisbon and Nice accords in 2000 (Caidi & Allard, 2005; Levitas, 2005). According to Levitas (2005, p. 124),

> *Member States are now required to produce biennial National Action Plans for Social Inclusion, addressing four key objectives specified at the Nice summit in December 2000, although allowing considerable scope for member states to interpret these in different ways through the 'open method of coordination'. This method means that common objectives are set at European level, while member states design nationally appropriate policies and report on these and on their outcomes, thus both monitoring progress and sharing best practice. The Nice objectives are:*
>
> - *Facilitating participation in employment and access by all to resources, rights, goods and services;*
>
> - *Preventing the risks of exclusion;*
>
> - *Helping the most vulnerable; and*
>
> - *Mobilising all relevant bodies in overcoming exclusion.*

This commitment by the EU to utilising a discourse of social inclusion has both influenced and been influenced by its use in the UK. The UK had its own 'home-grown' discourse of social inclusion (discussed in the following section) which, as stated earlier, the EU attempted to combine with the French discourse into one based on the realisation of citizenship rights. Yet this 'home-grown' discourse was not popular with the conservative UK government of the 1980s and 1990s and so did not appear in political discourse of the time. However, the growing influence of the EU eventually won out and convinced the UK government under New Labour to adopt the discourse and become perhaps its most well-known proponent (Levitas, 2005).

United Kingdom[1]

Barata (2000) and Caidi and Allard (2005) contend that the concept of social exclusion only appeared in the UK in the 1990s, with Barata (2000) specifically attributing its introduction to the New Labour government, who supposedly imported the concept from France. While this may be true in relation to social exclusion featuring in UK political discourse, Levitas (1996) argues that the concept had existed in UK social policy discourse much earlier. She further posits that the concept was invented in the UK independent of the French version. Certainly, as discussed earlier, there existed two broad traditions of social exclusion, French and Anglo-Saxon, that were ultimately combined into one by the EU (see Atkinson & Davoudi, 2000).

Levitas attributes the creation of the UK concept of social exclusion to Townsend's (1979, as cited in Levitas, 1996) book, 'Poverty in the United Kingdom'. In this book, Townsend argued that there was a level of income below which people were excluded from participation in the society in which they lived. Although he did not explicitly use the term 'social exclusion', the general idea of the concept can be seen.

According to Levitas (1996, 2005, 2006), those critical of UK social policy in the 1980s under the Conservative government adopted the term 'social exclusion', drawing on the work of Townsend, but in a period where Conservative politicians refused to admit that poverty existed. The term was also apparently thought to be a better descriptor of social problems than poverty, being multi-dimensional and dynamic, given poverty's traditional focus on a fixed state of material deprivation. Use of the term became steadily more prevalent in social policy discourse throughout the 1980s and up to 1997, as those opposed to free market neo-liberalism drew on EU social exclusion discourse (discussed above) to reframe their

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[1] The majority of the following discussion of the development of social exclusion in the UK is based on the work of Levitas (1996, 2004, 2005, 2006), who has written extensively on the subject, particularly as it relates to the British Labour political party, in the form of 'New Labour'. Such reliance was unavoidable, as Levitas is arguably the foremost expert on social exclusion in the UK.

arguments in terms of exclusion and citizenship, positing that the poor were excluded from citizenship rights. In addition, in the late 1980s the concept of 'underclass' began to become popular in both academic and public discourse that related to social problems in the UK. This caused those ideologically opposed to such a concept to adopt 'social exclusion' as an alternative. However, according to Byrne (2005), by the mid-1990s social exclusion had replaced the concept of 'underclass' in UK social policy discourse.

Yet, despite its growing use in critical social policy discourse, both Hills (2002) and Levitas (2004) point out that the term was little used in political discourse at the time. Indeed, this would not occur until New Labour began to draw on the discourse in 1999. Levitas (2004, 2005) contends that the major force behind the increasing use of social exclusion in social policy discourse in the UK, and why the term was eventually adopted by New Labour and thus introduced into British political discourse, was the growing importance of the EU. Burchardt and colleagues (2002, p. 3) posit that, during the 1980s and 1990s, 'the adoption of social exclusion terminology allowed debates about social policy to continue at a European level without offending [the] sensibilities [of Conservative UK politicians]', who, as stated earlier, refused to admit the existence of poverty. It is suggested by both Levitas (2004) and Percival (2007) that the dominance of social exclusion in EU social policy and the allocation of EU funding to programs designed to combat it, particularly after the Lisbon conference, led to the New Labour government's focus on social exclusion.

Indeed, New Labour, the political party probably most well-known to use the concept of social exclusion, did not actually begin to draw on that discourse until 1999, two years after it won government (Levitas, 2004, 2005). However, once the New Labour government did take up the concept, they began to apply it to almost every social problem in the UK. Raffo and Gunter (2008) argue that this was exemplified by the creation of the Social Exclusion Unit, which was charged with making social inclusion central to all aspects of governance in the UK (Byrne, 2005). While the Social Exclusion Unit was later disbanded, according to Levitas (2005, p. ix) this was not because the concept was abandoned, but rather because social exclusion had 'become commonplace in [UK] public discourse, and pervade[d] [UK] government policy'.

It is argued by Levitas (2004, 2005) that, despite the existence of the concept of social exclusion in UK social policy discourse for some time, its adoption by New Labour, and the prevalence of the concept at the EU level, the exact meaning of the term is still not clear. This is mostly as a result of constant changes in order to meet political objectives. Levitas (2005) proposes three 'ways of thinking' about exclusion: a redistributive discourse, a social integrationist discourse, and a moral underclass discourse. All three of these discourses of social exclusion are Durkheimian in nature, emphasising social integration, solidarity and cohesion (see Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion). Levitas (2004,2005) further contends that New Labour, despite not explicitly adopting the term social exclusion till 1999, shifted its understanding of inclusion from a redistributive discourse (one of the mainstays of 'Old Labour') to a combination of the social integrationist and moral underclass discourses over the pre-election period (1994-97). The use of a social integrationist discourse by the New Labour government is supported by Atkinson and Davoudi (2000) and Raffo and Gunter (2008), who argue that its policies for combating social exclusion all emphasised involvement in the labour market, with inclusion coming through paid employment. Both sets of authors also point out that this emphasis on economic inclusion ignores the social and cultural aspects of exclusion. This is a point which is discussed in more detail in the section on the criticism of social exclusion.

According to Byrne (2005), discourses of social exclusion have become dominant in the social policies of governments in Europe and most other Western nations. This includes Australia, where the federal Australian Labor Party was influenced to draw on the discourse by the apparent success of its use in the UK and EU.

Australia

The concept of social inclusion first appeared in Australia in 2002, when the then Premier of the state of South Australia, Mike Rann, established a 'Social Inclusion Initiative'. Rann was also the head of the South Australian branch of the Australian Labor Party. This initiative was modelled closely on the approach taken by the Blair New Labor government, which was in power in the United Kingdom at the time. Although, the South Australian government

employed the term 'social inclusion' rather than 'social exclusion' (Buckmaster & Thomas, 2009), as discussed previously, the two terms essentially refer to opposite ends of the same continuum, or positive versus negative ways of wording the same concept. However, the discourse's use in South Australia was essentially a trial run. Social inclusion did not really gain prominence in Australia until the victory of the Australian Labor Party in the 2007 Federal election.

The federal Australian Labor Party (ALP) adopted social inclusion as a key social policy concept in the lead up to the 2007 Australian federal election (Long, 2010; Saunders, 2013). The adoption of this concept and related discourse was influenced by its perceived successful use by the EU and, in particular, the UK New Labour government (Buckmaster & Thomas, 2009; Saunders, 2013). While in opposition, the ALP had been researching and 'building on' the social inclusion discourses in use by New Labor and the EU (Saunders, 2013), to the extent that the ALP directly modelled their social inclusion policies and the structures which supported it (for example, the Social Inclusion Board) on those of New Labor (Buckmaster & Thomas, 2009).

According to the ALP (2007, as quoted in Long, 2010, p. 174), the ultimate goal of its Social Inclusion Agenda was to provide all Australians with

the opportunity to:

- o *secure a job;*
- o *access services;*
- o *connect with others in life through family, friends, work, personal interest and local community;*
- o *deal with personal crisis such as ill health, bereavement or the loss of a job; and*
- o *have their voices heard.*

After taking power, the new Federal Labor government began rolling out this Social Inclusion Agenda. According to Buckmaster and Thomas (2009, p. 7),

> *This involved the establishment of structural arrangements similar to those introduced in South Australia—that is, a Social Inclusion Board and a Social Inclusion Unit in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet—as well as a Minister and a Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion. The Government also identified a number of early priorities for social inclusion in the areas of employment participation, mental health, homelessness, child poverty, support for local communities and overcoming Indigenous disadvantage.*

Social inclusion, with its policy links to the highest levels of government, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, represented an important policy initiative and social inclusion remained the key discourse underlying all of the Federal Government's social policy until the ALP lost power in the 2013 Federal election. At that point, the new Liberal and National party coalition government effectively abolished social inclusion from government discourse and dismantled the structures which the previous government had erected to implement it (Karvelas, 2013).

It should also be noted that, despite their importance to Australia and obvious social exclusion, international students do not feature in the list of social inclusion priorities. Indeed, even in the face of the crisis that would overtake the international education industry and subsequent effort by the Federal Government to address the issues with international students' welfare that were partly the cause, international students would never become a focus of Federal Government social inclusion policy. Application of social inclusion discourse to international students would instead come from education institutions and local government.

International education in Australia

There exists a high demand amongst people in developing nations for tertiary qualifications from Western institutions, particularly those in English speaking countries. This is the result of such qualifications being highly valued by employers in the home country, an insufficient

supply of tertiary education in the home country, or that such a qualification provides access to the labour market of the host country or other developed nation (Marginson, *et al.*, 2010; Marginson, 2011, 2012).

This demand has been capitalised on by many nations, including Australia, creating a massive movement of mobile tertiary students around the globe, although the flow is mostly from developing nations to more developed nations. According to Marginson (2012, p. 497), 'Between 2000 and 2008 the foreign student population expanded at an annual rate of 11%. In 2008 3.3 million students were enrolled in tertiary education outside their country of citizenship for 1 year or more'. Prior to 2010, Australia was one of the most popular destinations for international students due to its status as a Western, English-speaking nation, relatively low cost of living, perceived safety, and attractive lifestyle. It boasted the largest number of international students as a proportion of population of any country in the world (Marginson, *et al.*, 2010). Indeed, in the peak year of 2009, there were 491,290 international students living in Australia (Australian Education International, 2011b).

Although there have been international students in Australia since before World War 2 (Megarrity, 2007), their numbers did not become significant until the creation of the Colombo Plan in 1951 (Meiras, 2004). However, real growth in Australia's international education industry did not occur until the purpose of Australia's provision of international education changed from 'aid to trade'. That is, in 1986, the higher education sector was required by the Federal Government to contribute to Australian exports by attracting full-fee paying international students to study on Australian campuses (Australian Government, 2008). This imperative was further strengthened by a steady decline in Federal funding for higher education institutions, beginning in the early 1990s (Marginson, 2011; Marginson, *et al.*, 2010; Thakur & Hourigan, 2007).

However, the true boom in Australian international education did not come until 2001. In that year, the (federal) Howard Government, in an effort to address long-term skill shortages, changed migration laws to allow international students studying a wide range of courses (including numerous vocational and technical qualifications, as well as university level degrees) to easily obtain permanent residency status (PR) upon completion of their course

(Senate Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009). This change led to a drastic increase in the number of international students coming to Australia, particularly from South Asia (Australian Education International, 2011b).

The change in migration laws also effectively enabled vocational and technical colleges to gain entry into the lucrative international education industry, as they now offered courses which many potential international students wanted for their PR implications. Previously, such colleges had been relatively minor players in the industry, due to the low quality of their qualifications and high cost of studying in a foreign country, making them unattractive to the majority of potential international students (Commonwealth of Australia, 2010a; Senate Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009).

This large increase in demand for Australian tertiary qualifications, or, perhaps more accurately, the Australian permanent residency status they enabled, created a consequent expansion in the Australian international education industry, joined now for essentially the first time by the vocational and technical education sectors (Australian Education International, 2013a), with almost all tertiary education providers drastically increasing their numbers of enrolled international students and, in the lightly regulated vocational education sector, numerous new private colleges established, to cater for the swell in numbers (Commonwealth of Australia, 2010a; Council of Australian Governments, 2010).

The drastic expansion in the number of international students and education providers catering to them made the international education industry one of Australia's most lucrative. Indeed, at its peak in 2009 it generated revenue of AUD\$17.6 billion. From the mid- to late-2000s, education was consistently Australia's largest service export (Australian Education International, 2011a) and fourth (briefly third) largest overall export, behind only coal, iron ore and gold (Marginson, 2011). This export income was underpinned by the presence in Australia of nearly half a million international students in 2009 (491,290, according to Australian Education International, 2011b), making them a significant presence in Australian society.

However, in 2010 the industry experienced a crisis and went into something of a tailspin. In that year, the numbers of new international students enrolling at onshore Australian education institutions fell for the first time since the boom began and continued to decline every year since, with the rate of decline growing each year (Australian Education International, 2011a, 2013a). The first causes of the crisis – several highly publicised violent assaults upon international students – actually occurred in 2009, but it took until 2010 for these to negatively impact on international students numbers, because of the existing 'pipeline' of international students already enrolled in the system. However, after these initial negative incidents, the blows to the international education industry continued.

As already discussed in Chapter 1, the crisis was caused by a number of interrelated factors. The first was a spate of violent attacks upon international students which received widespread media attention in mid-2009, damaging one of Australia's key sources of competitive advantage – its reputation for safety (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011). These attacks resulted in investigations into the international education industry, which revealed significant exploitation of international students and fraud by some education institutions, especially vocational colleges (see, for example, Gilmore & O'Malley, 2009; Pollok, 2009; Trounson, 2009), employers (see, for example, Schneiders, 2009a, 2009b), landlords (see, for example, Dobbin & Craig, 2009; Woodward, 2010) and education agents (see, for example, Johnston, 2009; Senate Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009). Such revelations further damaged the international reputation of the Australian international education industry. They also caused the Federal government to change migration laws to essentially eliminate the study to PR link, removing the primary cause of the previous extraordinary growth in international student numbers (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011).

The attractiveness of studying in Australia was further reduced by rhetoric from both sides of politics during the 2010 Federal election about the cutting of immigration, particularly student visas, in order to reduce Australia's population growth (Marginson, 2011), as well as a strong Australian dollar making studying in Australia more expensive (Australian Bureau of

Statistics, 2011). Finally, these woes were exacerbated by increased competition from other nations, particularly the US and UK, for international students (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011).

The events which have occurred over the past several years, and been discussed above, demonstrate the underlying tensions, flaws and weaknesses in Australia's international education sector (Marginson, 2011; Nyland, *et al.*, 2010). Characteristics that make it and the international students it services vulnerable to negative shocks. Given the importance of the sector to Australia action should be taken to ensure its long-term sustainability. A significant focus of such actions should be to address the myriad issues experienced by international students in Australia (Marginson, *et al.*, 2010). These issues are discussed in the next section.

International students in Australia

The first point that should be made when discussing international students and the issues they face in Australia is that, despite the many negative stories in the media, the majority of students who have participated in government surveys indicate that they are satisfied with their experience of living in Australia. For instance, according to the International Student Survey 2010 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2010b), conducted by the Federal Government over 2009 and 2010, approximately 86% of surveyed international students across all education categories were satisfied or very satisfied with their experience of living in Australia. However, this does not mean that those 86% did not experience problems. In addition, many, if not most, of those 14% who were not satisfied with their experience in Australia would likely have faced serious issues, some potentially life-threatening. Sadly, a number of international students have died or been killed in Australia under terrible circumstances (Marginson, Nyland, Sawir & Forbes-Mewett, 2010). Unfortunately, many international students who do run into trouble in Australia suffer severe negative consequences, such as physical injury, failing their studies or homelessness, because they lack the support network possessed by locals (Deumert, Marginson, Nyland, Ramia & Sawir, 2005; Forbes- Mewett & Nyland, 2008).

Following their extensive research Marginson and colleagues (2010) published a comprehensive study of the issues experienced by international students in Australia. While the list of problematic areas for students was very large, demands for brevity require that I mention just a few of the major issues identified in the study (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1

Areas of Concern	Examples of difficulties
Financial	• Having sufficient money to pay for study fees, food, accommodation, books
Employment	• Difficulty obtaining a decent part-time job • Exploitation by employers
Accommodation	• Tight housing market in major capital cities • Affordable housing being located in unsafe neighbourhoods • Exploitation by landlords
Personal health	• Maintaining health insurance • Lack of access to Medicare • Stress related mental health issues
Personal safety	• Being the victim of violent crime • Understanding of water safety
Language difficulties	• Studying in their non-native language • Understanding local colloquial language and accent
Dealing with education providers and DIAC	• Long processing times • Advocacy for issues
Social networks	• Making new friends • Interacting with locals
Cultural loneliness	• Missing the familiarity of one's own culture
Synchronisation with local requirements	• Learning and understanding host country social etiquette • Participating in common host country social activities

(Adapted from Marginson *et al.*, 2010)

Many of the findings by Marginson *et al.* (2010) are not revelations. Most of the issues identified in their study have previously been documented by other researchers (for example,

Mori, 2000; Perrucci & Hu, 1995; Yeh & Inose, 2003). Nonetheless, despite being well-known, these problems have persisted.

As discussed in the Introduction chapter, recently in Australia efforts based on promoting social inclusion are being looked at as a means of addressing some of the issues faced by international students (see, for example, Darebin City Council, 2008; [Monash University] Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement), 2010). Institutions adopting this approach include education providers and local governments. It is one of the latter which forms the site of my case study. However, the role of local government varies between countries, and even between States in Australia. Therefore, I feel it is necessary to explain exactly how this third and lowest tier of government functions in Australia generally, and the state of Victoria, specifically, in that it impacts on the analysis.

The Role of Local Government in Australia

> *Out of all spheres of government in Australia, local governments possess the closest relationship with communities and therefore have a unique opportunity to gain an understanding of, and to meet particular local and community needs.* (Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, 2010, p. 2)

Local government in Australia is the third and lowest tier of government, after Federal and then State/Territory governments (Purdie, 1976; Thornton, 1995). It is considered to be the level of government closest to the people (Dunstan, 1998). Known as 'Councils' in Australia, they are, according to the Municipal Association of Victoria (2007, p. 1), 'area-based, representative governments with a legislative and electoral mandate to manage local issues and plan for the community's needs'.

Councils are very diverse in nature for several reasons. First and foremost, the regulatory and legal framework for the establishment and operation of local government in a particular state or territory is a function of legislation by the State/Territory government. That is, local government in Australia has no constitutional basis at a federal level, but rather exists purely

at the pleasure of State and Territory governments. Second, the geographic size and location (metropolitan, regional or rural), as well as the population size and makeup, of particular local government areas varies greatly. This, in turn, has a significant effect on the financial resources available to a particular Council (Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, 2010). Generally speaking, however, it can be said that 'the roles of local government involve governance, service delivery, advocacy, asset management, planning, community development and regulation.' (Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, 2010, p. 2)

Kiss (1999, p. 110) argues that, due to its proximity to its constituency, local government in Australia has a significant role in shaping communities that are 'civil, equitable, culturally sensitive, environmentally sustainable and democratic'. This is reflected in the ongoing trend of local governments in Australia increasing the provision of human services that assists them in addressing problems specific to their community. I include in this understanding of 'local community' international students who reside in a particular local government area, albeit temporarily, and the community-specific issues that arise for them.

Traditionally considered as being only responsible for the '3 R's' of 'roads, rates and rubbish', in the last two decades local government has steadily moved towards the provision of human services to the local community (Dollery, Wallis & Allan 2006). This shift means that local governments have become more responsive to the broader social and cultural demands of their communities. Dollery *et al.* (2006, p. 555) state that 'In essence, Australian councils are moving away from their traditional narrow emphasis on "services to property" towards a broader "services to people" approach'. Such services include, but are not limited to, health, welfare, community development and recreation (Haratsis, 1992; Morris, 1986; Thornton, 1995). However, a major constraint for most local governments in providing services to the community is limited financial resources (Dollery *et al.* 2006). Councils therefore often seek external funding to support the provision of projects deemed particularly urgent. As will be discussed later, this was the case with the Council that forms the site for this study.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have laid out the broad setting to this study. The historical evolution of social exclusion was traced, from its beginnings in France and the United Kingdom, through to its movement to the European Union and eventually Australia. Then the rapid rise of the Australian international education industry to become the country's fourth biggest exporter, as well as the crisis which subsequently engulfed it, was discussed. This was followed by a brief discussion of the common problems experienced by international students in Australia and how they are exacerbated by a lack of support networks. Finally, local government in Australia was examined, including its trend towards providing more human services and role in addressing local community problems. These three, perhaps seemingly unrelated, topics come together in the form of this study's case site.

During the time frame of this study, social inclusion became a popular social policy discourse in Australia, largely as a consequence of its use by the Australian Federal government. At the same time, the numerous issues experienced by international students became a part of mainstream public discourse due to media reporting of a spate of violent assaults and subsequent investigations. This brought international students to the attention of the public and incentivised government and education providers to (at least appear to) take action to address their issues in order to preserve the international education industry. Given the popularity of social inclusion discourse at the time of the crisis it was perhaps inevitable that some institutions would come to apply it to international student as a means of addressing their issues. However, the concerns about the effects of social inclusion discourses on those social groups it targets discussed in the previous chapter have led me to pose the following research question:

- What is the impact of 'social inclusion' discourses on understandings of international students' needs, experiences and welfare?

In addition, the contested and ambiguous nature of social inclusion discourse, with seemingly every user constructing it in their own way, prompted me to identify the following sub-research questions to help answer the primary research question:

- How do key people/groups/institutions understand the terms 'social inclusion' and 'social exclusion'?

- What are the implications of these understandings for policy and social discourses on international students?

I chose to answer these research questions by conducting a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of the social inclusion discourse of a metropolitan local government 'Council' in Victoria. This Council had a large international student population within its borders at the time of the study and drew on a discourse of social inclusion to address their issues. The reasons for utilising CDA as the theoretical framework and this Council as a case site are discussed in detail in the following chapter, Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Theoretical Framework and Method – Critical Discourse Analysis

Theoretical Framework

Introduction

In this study I will be employing a critical discourse approach and using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Wodak & Meyer, 2009), specifically Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach, as my theoretical framework. This approach involves taking a critical standpoint and adopting a strongly constructivist epistemological view, in which reality is seen to be socially constructed by, and through, discourse (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). It is proposed that such an approach will provide a deeper and more critical understanding of social inclusion as a concept, and as a policy prescription for addressing international students' needs, experiences and welfare. This chapter will therefore discuss CDA as a research approach and present the method used to conduct the study.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Utilising a critical discourse approach entails not only a particular methodological and analytical approach, but also a particular 'set of metatheoretical and theoretical assumptions and a body of research claims and studies' (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. x, as cited in Phillips & Hardy, 2002). That is, (critical) discourse analysis is not just a method; it is a complete epistemological approach to research.

CDA is characterised by Wodak and Meyer (2009, p. 10) as

> *being fundamentally interested in analysing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language. In other words, CDA aims to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, constituted, legitimised, and so on, by language use (or in discourse).*

According to van Dijk (1997a, p. 23), 'discourse is an inherent part of society and partakes in all society's injustices, as well as in the struggle against them'. CDA not only observes the links between discourse and the structure of society, as in other forms of discourse analysis, but also actively seeks to influence those links and thereby achieve positive political or social change (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997).

CDA rests on the concept of discourse as social action. Fairclough and Wodak (1997) argue that conceiving discourse as a form of social action implies that discourse is both socially constitutive and socially shaped. That is, a particular discursive event is affected by the situations, institutions and social structures in which it occurs, but the reverse is also true. Every discursive event serves to either reproduce or transform social reality. This ability of discourse to both reflect a particular (often dominant) social reality and influence it, makes discourse potentially very powerful, and hence something worth examining. However, the actual 'work' being done by a particular discourse and the ideology which underlie it are often not clear. It is the purpose of CDA to reveal this. The interaction between discourse and social reality is worthy of further explanation.

According to Locke (2004, p. 7), 'Discourse(s) make the world meaningful'. Any type of discourse analytic approach is fundamentally premised on the assumption that reality is socially constructed (see Berger & Luckmann, 1966) and, further, that social construction is achieved by and through discourses (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Everything in the social world, even our identities, is the result of discourse. This assumption is based on a key insight of Foucault (1992a, pp. 41-2, as quoted in Locke, 2004, pp. 6-7) that 'discourse is in an active relation to reality, that language signifies reality in the sense of constructing meanings for it, rather than that discourse is in a passive relation to reality, with language merely referring to objects which are taken to be given in reality'.

Further, Locke (2004) suggests that, once one recognises that meaning is socially constructed, we can no longer consider our knowledge of anything to be eternal; rather it is situated, and only relevant, within our own cultural and historical context. Hence, the

importance in CDA of analysing the context in which a particular discourse takes place, since the meaning of terms, styles, appropriate vocabulary, and so on, may vary.

A vital outcome of this assumption, that reality is socially constructed by and through discourse (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997), is that discourse is not just abstract talk and/or text but has consequences for people's lived experience. People act based on the social reality that they perceive themselves to exist in, which includes interacting with others. Hence, discourse impacts on people's lived experience. Therefore, unjust discourse that serves to (re)produce the social domination of a particular social group will result in negative life experiences for people within that group to the extent that the discourse is accepted by (i.e., comes to define the reality of) broader society.

To illustrate this point, I will use the example of Hardy and Phillips' (1999) work on discursive struggle within the Canadian refugee system. Their study examined how broader societal discourses about refugees, represented by political cartoons published in the mainstream Canadian press "enable and constrain discursive activity within the institutional field." (p. 1) Hardy and Phillips' (1999) found that societal discourses primarily constructed refugees as frauds and the existing immigration system as providing inadequate protection to the public, thereby justifying government involvement. By constructing refugees as a threat to the community that the government must deal with, this discourse reinforces the dominant social position of the Canadian government and the dominated position of refugees. The implication of this discourse for the lived experience of refugees in Canada is that they will be regarded with suspicion, incarcerated while their claims are processed, and potentially ostracised even if released into the community.

However, the other side of the dialectic relationship between discourse and social reality is that an intervention can occur either discursively or materially (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). That is, one can change the discourse or physically act differently. For example, in the case examined by Hardy and Phillips (1999, p. 18), NGO groups attempt discursive intervention by publishing cartoons which construct refugees as "genuine, but also needy and helpless. Such actions reinforce their access to resources, and their right to represent refugees and to

provide them with services." A material intervention could also be achieved by refugees demonstrating through their actions that they are not a threat to the community, such as by becoming significant members of the community.

These examples, as most social actions, are a combination of discursive and material elements which cannot be separated, although one element is often more significant. In this way, changes to social structures of domination can be achieved by changing discourses and/or changing physical actions, with the two feeding back into each other. It is the intention of CDA to affect such an intervention by identifying such structures of domination within discourse (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997).

CDA is appropriate for my study for several reasons. First, social inclusion as a concept is expressed and understood primarily through discourse. In addition, numerous discourses of social inclusion exist, each with its own philosophical basis and varying political implications. Second, there are numerous concerns expressed in the literature about the effects of social inclusion discourses on those targeted for 'inclusion', which indicates the need for such discourses to be critically examined. Third, international students in Australia are a socially marginalised group and subject to social, cultural, political and economic domination (Marginson, *et al.*, 2010). The ability of a critical approach using CDA to examine discourses about international students and identify the power relationships they contain is ideal for determining the effects of social policy discourses, whether drawing on social inclusion or not, on the welfare of international students in Australia.

However, there are actually numerous specific approaches to 'doing' CDA. In this study I have chosen to utilise Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach. The following section explains the reasons for choosing to utilise this particular approach.

Why Fairclough's approach to CDA?

Wodak and Meyer (2009) identify six distinct 'approaches' to CDA. These approaches and their founding scholars are: dispositive analysis (Siegfried Jager & Florentine Maier), socio-

cognitive (Teun van Dijk), discourse-historical (Martin Reisigl & Ruth Wodak), corpus linguistics (Gerlinde Mautner), social actors (Theo van Leeuwen), and dialectical-relational (Norman Fairclough). Although all of these approaches have in common a belief in discourse as a form of social action, a critical focus, an interest in power and ideology and related social issues, and recognition of the importance of context to analysis, they do vary in their focus on certain aspects of analysis (Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

According to Wodak & Meyer (2009), the differences between the various approaches can be broken down along three continuums – overall research strategy (deductive vs. inductive), level of aggregation (agency vs. structure), and linguistic depth (broad vs. detailed). They have created two excellent figures to illustrate where on these continuums the six different approaches fall, which I have reproduced below to aid my discussion.

The overall research strategy continuum runs between the two poles of a deductive and inductive perspective on conducting research. Those approaches which are more deductive tend to have a closed theoretical framework and focus on using examples to illustrate unequal relationships of power which they have already theoretically determined to exist. In contrast, those approaches which are more inductive generally have an open theoretical framework and attempt to develop new insights through deep analysis of large amounts of data drawn from detailed case studies. In addition, the two poles are also associated with a particular focus on, or concern with, different levels of analysis. With approaches of a more deductive bent focusing on the macro level (i.e., social structures), while inductive approaches focus more on the meso level (i.e., social practices). In line with this, deductive approaches generally deal with research topics of a broad, societal nature, such as globalisation or racism, while inductive approaches prefer more specific social problems, such as the discourse of a particular political party or unemployment in a particular nation. That said, all approaches to CDA are abductive, that is, the analysis constantly moves between theory and the data retroductively.
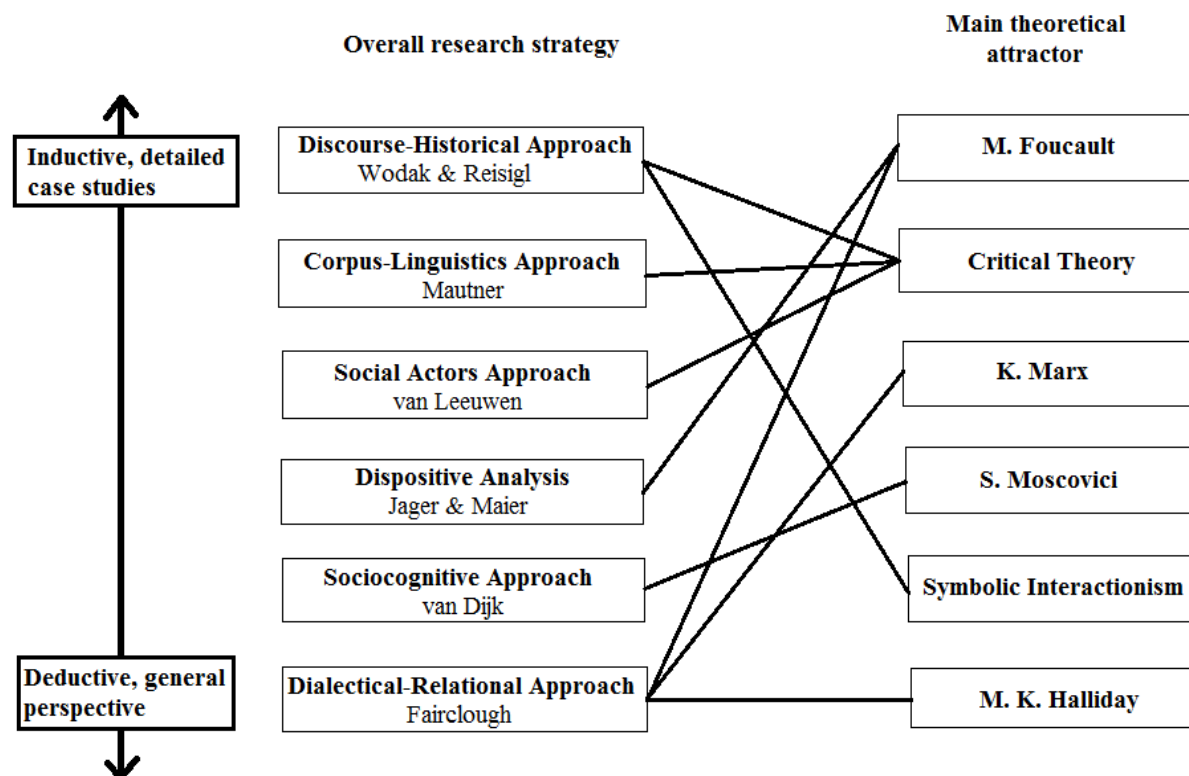
Figure 4.1 – Overall research strategies and theoretical background of approaches to CDA

Source: Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 20

For this study, a case study of a local government council's social inclusion policies towards international students, I have chosen to use Fairclough's (2009) 'dialectical-relational' approach to CDA as my theoretical and analytical framework. As can be seen from the above diagram, Wodak and Meyer (2009) characterise this approach as the most deductive of the six major approaches to CDA. Hence, my choice of a case study method may appear inconsistent with the selected approach to CDA. However, I contend that, although I am utilising a case study research design, a more deductive approach to CDA is still appropriate for my study, for two reasons.

First, the focus of my study is on a social phenomenon – discourses of social inclusion – which are quite broad and, as Chapter 3 demonstrated, are identified in the UK, EU and Australia, although I am examining a specific instance of it. Second, as I have already discussed in the preceding literature review, there have been numerous concerns raised about

the impact of social inclusion discourses on marginalised groups in society. Specifically, social inclusion discourses reinforce existing social structures, deny difference, and distract attention from existing inequalities amongst those already considered 'included'. Hence, I have legitimate reason to assume that social inclusion policies actually reaffirm current unequal power relationships between social groups rather than balancing them as its proponents claim. Hence in this study, I use an example of social inclusion policy to deductively analyse the effects of social inclusion discourse on international students' needs and welfare in order to determine if these assumptions are true. The suitability of the 'dialectical-relational' approach (Fairclough, 2009) for my study becomes even clearer when the level of aggregation and linguistic depth preferred by each approach are examined.

Wodak and Meyer (2009, p. 21) contend that, 'though CDA concentrates on notions like ideology or power, scholars focus on different units of analysis – the way in which individuals mentally perceive, or the way social structures determine discourse…'. Hence, the main approaches to CDA vary in their emphasis on the analysis of the agency of individual social actors versus the deterministic effects of social structures on discourse. The approaches also vary on the extent to which they incorporate linguistic analysis. Although, clearly, all approaches analyse language to a certain extent, it is critical *discourse* analysis and discourse are comprised of language. However, some approaches have a more detailed focus than others. Wodak and Meyer (2009, p. 22) graphically represent this differentiation in the diagram below.
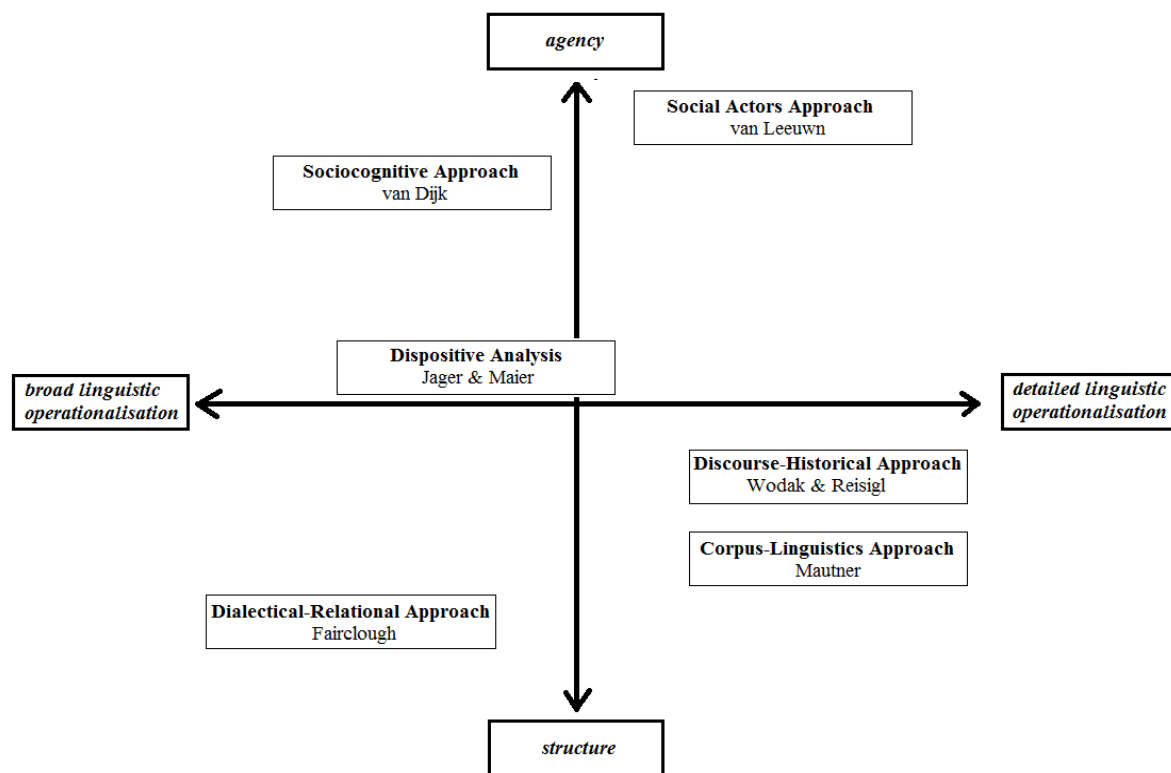
Figure 4.2 – Linguistic depth of field and level of aggregation

As can be seen from the diagram, the dialectical-relational approach (Fairclough, 2009) has a focus on the influence of social structures on discourse, as well as taking a fairly broad approach to the analysis of linguistics. This latter feature reflects the dialectical-relational approach's (Fairclough, 2009) emphasis on the intertextual, rather than purely textual, features of a text. However, it is really the former characteristic of the dialectical-relational approach (Fairclough, 2009) that makes it the most appropriate approach for my study. For, as can be seen from the diagram, it is the approach which is most heavily focused on analysing the effect of the structure of society on discourse.

The primary aim of my study is to critically analyse how discourses of social inclusion directed at international students (via policy and informants) construct international students, their needs, issues and experiences, and the effect of this on their marginalisation. That is, I am interested in what the discourse is doing to international students and how this either challenges or reinforces existing unequal power relationships, rather than international students' perception and understanding of that discourse. The discourse itself (and the relationships of power it reveals) is the subject of my analysis, not international students,

even though they are the subject of that discourse. This aim is commensurate with an analytical focus on the effect of social structures on discourse (while still acknowledging the capacity for human agency in the production of discourse), rather than how individuals mentally perceive it. This, in turn, suggests Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach as the most suitable for achieving this research aim.

Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach to CDA is the most appropriate approach for achieving my research aim. This is primarily because it is the approach most heavily focused on how existing social structures are reflected in discourse and how discourse either reinforces or challenges those structures, which fits my study's aim. In addition, the dialectical-relational approach (Fairclough, 2009) is deductive in its research strategy, preferring to test the assumed existence of unequal power relationships through analysis of relevant examples. This also fits with my study, as I assume, based on existing literature about social inclusion, that it likely reinforces existing unfair power relationships between international students and the rest of society, which is not beneficial to international students, and I seek to test this assumption using the example of Greenwood Council. Finally, CDA approaches which are deductive, like the dialectical-relational approach (Fairclough, 2009), generally also focus on macro-level social issues. My study concerns the concept of social inclusion, albeit its manifestation in a specific context, which has become prominent in the political discourses of many countries (see Chapter 3) and which relates to a societal level issue. Hence I argue that the topic of my study is suitable for analysis using the dialectical-relational approach (Fairclough, 2009). Although the research design of my study is a case study, which would suggest a more inductive approach to CDA (Wodak & Meyer, 2009), this factor is outweighed by the aforementioned discussion of characteristics which make Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach more appropriate.

However, Fairclough (2009) does not specify any particular research design or data collection methods that must be used. Instead, he leaves this decision up to individual scholars and the nature of a particular study. The following section will therefore detail the case study research design, and document and interview methods of data collection employed for this study and discuss why they were chosen. The nature of the case site, documents and interview participants will also be described.

Method

This section describes the methods employed in this study, including the research design, data collection methods and entry into the case site. The nature of the data collected and my position as the researcher are also summarised. This study employed a single case study research design, primarily because it enables analysis of a phenomenon within its context and context is vital to Critical Discourse Analysis. The site chosen for the case was a metropolitan local government, or 'Council'. Data were collected in the form of official Council policy documents, as well as by conducting semi-structured interviews with four different groups of key informants. These data were analysed using the framework laid out by Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach, which is discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Research design – Single Case Study

A single case study research design is utilised for this study primarily because case studies are ideal for studying a phenomenon in its context and context is vital to CDA (Locke, 2004; van Dijk, 2006). According to Tharenou *et al.* (2007, p. 74), 'case studies are used especially to understand social processes in their organisational and environmental context, which could be contemporary and/or historical' Eisenhardt (1989, p. 534) concurs, arguing that a case study is 'a research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings'. A case study research design is therefore appropriate for CDA because it enables a deep understanding of the context in which the discourse being analysed is produced (Locke, 2004).

Yin (2003) considers case studies to be the best design choice when the researcher has limited control over the events being investigated, as in when the project deals with a contemporary phenomenon located in a real-life context. There is also a preference among CDA scholars for naturally occurring data (i.e., data created without the involvement of the researcher), as this reduces the impact of the researcher (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Using such data means that the researcher has little control over the situation from which data are being drawn. A case study research design is therefore most suitable for obtaining such data.

According to Siggelkow (2007), there are three main purposes for case study research: motivation, inspiration, and illustration. My purpose in employing case study research is illustration. Siggelkow (2007, p. 21) contends that 'At first this may sound like a mundane use, but it really is not.' This is because using a case as a real-life example of the phenomenon one is studying is very powerful (Siggelkow, 2007). In this study, I am intending to use the case that forms the basis of my project (detailed below) as an example of how a discourse of social inclusion developed through formal policy and drawn on by council staff and student representatives affects our understanding of international students' needs, experiences and welfare.

I have chosen to utilise a single case in this project. While multi-case studies are generally better for theory building (Yin, 1994, as cited in Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007), a single case can still be a very powerful example (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Siggelkow, 2007). First, this project is not primarily concerned with theory building, but rather with exploring a phenomenon using an existing theoretical and methodological framework. Second, a single case is generally used when there is an opportunity to 'explore a significant phenomenon under rare or extreme circumstances' (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007, p. 27). Hence, the particular case is chosen deliberately because it is 'unusually revelatory, extreme exemplars, or opportunities for unusual research access (Yin, 1994)' (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007, p. 27). In the specific case of my research project, I have chosen a site which is an instance of a rare phenomenon: a local government that has a specific social inclusion policy directed at international students. I explain in the section below on my case site why it is a rare situation. Consequently, this site provides a rare example of the phenomenon which I am studying (i.e., social inclusion discourse about international students), making it ideally suited to a single case study research design.

The theoretical framework, CDA, I have used to investigate the phenomenon which is the focus of my project, namely, the effect of social inclusion discourses on international students, requires a research design that can support it. A research design that is capable of examining a rare example of a real life phenomenon in its natural context and that largely

occurs beyond the control of the researcher. Given these conditions, and the research design options available, I chose a single case study design because I believed it to be the most appropriate, based on the arguments listed above, for achieving the goals of my research project, that is, to understand the impact of social inclusion discourses on understandings of international students' needs, experiences and welfare.

Research site

The site chosen for my case study is a metropolitan city council in Melbourne's north that has a large international student population and has adopted a policy based on social inclusion in order to address issues experienced by this group, in addition to other marginalised groups. This site was chosen because it is a rare example of a social setting where social inclusion policy was developed to address the perceived problems faced by international students. At the time this study was commenced, the City of Melbourne, also host to large numbers of international students was beginning work to develop social policy in relation to the needs of international students. However, Melbourne's policy was only in the early stages of development, while my case site already had its program fully operational. Further, most previous studies of international students have focused on their on-campus experience. However, a majority of international students' time is spent off-campus and this is where their most serious issues occur (Marginson, 2011; Paltridge, *et al.*, 2012), yet this area of their lives appears to be little researched. This study sought to partially address this gap by examining the efforts of an organisation to provide support to international students in their off-campus lives.

I have given the case study site the pseudonym 'Greenwood City Council'. It is the local government responsible for the City of Greenwood. The Council comprises the elected representatives who form the City's legislature, known as 'Councillors', and the bureaucracy that supports them. This bureaucracy includes a number of different departments, including: culture, leisure and works; assets and business services; corporate and planning services; and community development. Each of these departments, in turn, has numerous sub-departments.

The City of Greenwood is an urban local government area located in metropolitan Melbourne, the capital city of the State of Victoria. Its borders were determined by an act of the Victorian State Parliament. The City has a very diverse and multicultural population, with almost 40% of residents speaking a language other than English at home and approximately a quarter of those not being able to speak English well or at all. It contains neighbourhoods ranging from very low (bottom 10%) to fairly high (top 20-30%) socio-economic status. However, the majority of neighbourhoods fall in the bottom 50% and overall the City is ranked as one of the most socio-economically disadvantaged in Melbourne.

Included in this diverse population during the time frame of my study were approximately 5,000 international students. The City contains a number of large education providers and several more are located close to its borders. This, combined with the existence of established home-country cultural communities and the range of affordable housing options available, is most likely the reason the City has a large international student population. While certainly not the largest minority group in the City – Greenwood is home to many migrants, refugees and indigenous people – international students were a significant presence there.

Research methods – Interviews & document analysis

CDA focuses on the analysis of 'texts' as the discursive building blocks and physical manifestation of discourse (Chalaby, 1996, as cited in Phillips & Hardy, 2002). A 'text' can be comprised of talk, text, or a mixture of both. However, for convenience, 'text' is typically used to refer to both spoken and written discursive events. This also acknowledges that the majority of talk is studied in a transcribed, and therefore textual, format (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Suitable texts for analysis can include virtually any semiotic aspect of an event, such as a conversation, news report or policy document (Fairclough, 1992).

Therefore, which texts are chosen comes down to the researcher's judgement as to what will provide fruitful data given the specific project and its research questions (Fairclough, 1992, 2009). Analysing the context of the specific instance of the social wrong under examination can assist in making this decision as it informs the researcher what the important relevant

social events are, remembering that texts are the semiotic aspect of events (Fairclough, 2009). The research procedure used to select specific texts for analysis is discussed in Chapter 5.

For now it is enough to note that for this research project I obtained texts for analysis by conducting semi-structured interviews with key informants and by collecting policy documents from Council archives. I will discuss each of these data collection methods in turn.

It is important to note that due to the constructivist epistemology (Delanty, 2005) of this study, there is no search for 'truth' or 'facts'. Instead, I am interested in what people/organisations say and how they say it. All texts constitute a form of social action and contribute to the discourse which I am investigating; hence they have an impact on social reality (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Thus, all texts are equally valid and provide useful data for analysis, regardless whether the author is 'lying' or not (Fairclough, 1992). Critical discourse analysts contend that ideology will show through in all texts, such that while the content may change the ideology will remain the same (van Dijk, 1998).

Documents

Documents formed part of my data corpus for two main reasons – they represent naturally occurring data and contain public policy. Collecting public and private documents for analysis is an unobtrusive and non-reactive form of data collection. Such data is 'naturally occurring' as it does not involve the intervention of the researcher to create (Tharenou *et al.*, 2007). This makes it highly appropriate for CDA, which prefers this kind of data.

In general, CDA has a preference for naturally occurring data primarily because it is non-reactive, that is, it is not influenced by the presence of the researcher (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Such an attribute is considered important because it limits the extent to which critical discourse analysts can be accused of influencing the data they collect. In addition, the lack of intervention of the researcher makes it is easier to accurately discern the 'work' being done

by a text. Naturally occurring data are also often preferred because such texts are generally most influential on the social world (e.g., political speeches, advertisements, conversation between co-workers), compared to texts produced exclusively for the researcher (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). It is for this reason that policy documents form a significant focus of my analysis.

Public policy is a potent discursive resource for the powerful because it has the ability to name a problem and shape solutions to it, as well as perceived credibility and wide distribution (van Dijk, 1997b). Such discourse is manifested in texts, such as speeches, parliamentary debates and, in particular, policy documents. This makes policy documents powerful texts and therefore worthy of analysis (see Chapter 7 for a more detailed discussion). That said, data generated at the behest of the researcher are still useful and valid for CDA, particularly if relevant naturally occurring data are limited for whatever reason.

Interviews

Interviews conducted by the researcher are useful enhancements to naturally occurring data (Fairclough, 1992; Marston, 2002). Fairclough (1992, pp. 227-8) contends that

> *One can interview those involved as participants in corpus samples, not only to elicit their interpretations of those samples, but also as an opportunity for the research to probe into issues which go beyond the sample as such, to try to discover, for example, whether a person is more conscious of the ideological investment of a particular discursive convention in some situations than in others…*

He also adds that all supplementary data benefit the corpus of selected texts just by simply adding to it (Fairclough, 1992). Further, Marston (2002, p. 86) argues that semi-structured interviews are useful in critical policy analysis, as they enable the researcher to 'go beyond policy documents and programmatic texts' in the investigation of the policy process. It is based on these insights that I conducted semi-structured interviews with many people involved in the production and consumption of Greenwood Council's social inclusion policy documents.

Interviewing enabled me to ask participants' about past experiences (Seidman, 1998) and allow them to talk about their thoughts and feelings on particular topics (King, 1994). By

having research participants talk about international students and social inclusion, they created texts which contained discourses about these topics and thereby contributed to the overall discourse which is the focus of my study. I was then able to analyse these texts using CDA to determine the work they performed and the impact of this on how international students' needs, experiences and welfare are understood.

I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews because they provided me with the flexibility to adjust my line of inquiry 'on the fly', based on participants' responses (Tharenou *et al.*, 2007). This can lead to new and interesting data that would have been missed by more rigid methods. In order for me to collect quality data, participants needed to be able to speak at length on topics relevant to this study, such as the experience and needs of international students and issues relating to international students' social inclusion. Short 'yes/no responses would not provide quality data for my analytical framework (unless making such short responses was the choice of the participant). Semi-structured interviews provided me with both the flexibility and structure to explore specific lines on inquiry as well as broader topics deemed important by interviewees in relation to international students and social inclusion.

While I did not conduct interviews in order to ascertain 'facts' or 'truth' and therefore do not need to be concerned with 'false' answers, there is still a need for good interview technique in order to collect the most useful data. To this end, I employed a number of suggestions by Foddy (1993) on the proper conduct of interviews, including: being very clear about the topic I wanted to discuss; piloting my questions and interview technique on colleagues prior to data collection; audio-recording the interviews; choosing participants that I knew were involved with the Council's social inclusion policy and/or had an interest in social policy towards international students. I believe that by applying these techniques I was able to maximise the quality of my interview data.

However, there still exists concern with the use of interviews. Crabtree and Miller (1999, p. 84) point out that, 'An interviewer's questions, as well as subsequent interpretations, are driven by his or her own cultural assumptions or traditions. The questions dictate the answer'. Indeed, it is partly in an effort to avoid this charge that critical discourse analysts tend to

favour naturally occurring data (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Yet, while there is some validity to this concern, I do not believe that this invalidates the data obtained from interviews. I can work to counter this inherent bias by being reflexive − acknowledging my position as the researcher (see later in this chapter), reflecting on the cultural and social presuppositions I hold while performing analysis, and foregrounding the voice of participants (Alvesson, Hardy & Harley, 2008). However, I acknowledge that it is impossible to completely, or perhaps even significantly, reduce the impact of my personal biases on the analysis. Therefore, I also acknowledge that the findings of this study are inherently subjective and contestable (Fairclough, 2009).

Data Sources

The data which I have collected consist of two different kinds of texts: documents and interviews. I collected a number of official documents (both external and internal) which were provided to me by the Council relating to its social inclusion policy generally and its international student policy specifically. I also interviewed several different groups of participants who were either associated with the Council and/or represented international student interests.

Selected documents

Two key policy documents came to be my primary data sources, which I have labelled the International Student Support Program document (ISSP) and the Social Inclusion Policy document (SIP). The ISSP is an 11 page policy document that details the Council's International Student Support Program and was presented by representatives of the Council at a Local Government Managers Australia National Congress to serve as an example to other Councils. The SIP is a formal policy document, containing 44 pages, disseminated publicly and intended for external audiences in that it details the Council's official social inclusion policy. These two documents constitute two of the texts which I analysed, the findings from which are presented and discussed in Chapters 7 and 8.

I collected a number of documents from Greenwood City Council. While it is possible to analyse such a large corpus of texts, such an undertaking is extremely labour-intensive and time-consuming and thus is likely to preclude detailed analysis of any one text, given finite resources. Instead, Fairclough (1992, p. 230) recommends conducting detailed analysis of a few texts, ones that 'yield as much insight as possible into the contribution of discourse to the social practice under scrutiny. I chose to follow this advice and selected for detailed analysis the two documents described above.

I selected these two documents because they are both formal public policy documents that present the Council's official discourse on international students and social inclusion. That they are public policy documents from the Council makes them powerful, as they will be widely distributed to those in Greenwood City with power, and are seen as legitimate because they are official and produced by an established mainstream institution – a local government (van Dijk, 1997b). The other documents I obtained from the Council were either only circulated internally and therefore not as influential, or annual reports and other such regularly output communications which did not specifically relate to international students and social inclusion.

Interview Participants

The participant groups I conducted interviews with included: Elected members of the City Council; Employees (current and former) of the City Council working in its social policy unit; Presidents of several international student organisations; and members of the Council's volunteer overseas student advisory committee. The elected members and employees of the Council were selected because they were involved with the development of either the International Student Support Program or the Council's social inclusion policy. I chose to interview members of the Council's overseas student advisory committee because they both contributed to the development of the International Student Support Program and, as international students, were able to provide their understanding of social inclusion. Similarly, I spoke with several Presidents of international student organisations who, despite not being associated with the Council, were representatives of international students in Australia and were therefore able to contribute insight into the general conception of social inclusion held by international students. Interviews with all participants ranged from approximately 45 to 90

minutes and were audio-recorded using a digital recorder. The audio recordings were then transcribed into texts.

A list of my research participants can be seen in the following table:

Table 4.1 – Details of Research Participants

Position	No. of Participants
Presidents of international student organisations	4
Employees of the local government	6
Elected members of the local government	2
Members of the overseas student advisory committee	3

I had also intended to interview the Federal Minister for Social Inclusion and the Victorian government employee responsible for the Victoria government's social inclusion policy, or their representatives. Unfortunately, I was unable to gain access to these individuals. There were also several other people belonging to the above groups whom I wished to speak to – namely, a (now former) employee of the local government who was apparently key in conceiving its social inclusion program and several other members of the overseas student advisory committee – but I was unfortunately unable to obtain their participation.

Ethics approval and access to case site

As stated in the previous section, my research site was a local government: Greenwood Council. I was fortunate to be granted free access to the organisation and for it to facilitate my recruitment of research participants from amongst its employees and elected members. However, prior to contacting the Council I applied to the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee for ethics approval for my research project. This approval was granted, conditional upon my obtaining written permission from the Council to use it as my case site.

I initiated contact with the Council by calling the contact number of their social inclusion officer provided on their website. After explaining who I was and the nature of my research project I was referred to the manager of the Council's social planning unit, to whom I again explained my identity and the nature of my research, and provided an explanatory statement. After some discussion over several days with this person and their consulting with their superiors, I was granted permission to use that local government as my research site, to recruit participants from its employees and elected members, and to have access to its internal documentation related to its social inclusion and international student policies, subject to certain conditions.

Upon receiving this permission I began searching for relevant documents within the Council's intranet archives with the assistance of an employee from the social policy unit, and contacting potential research participants via email and phone. Research participants were primarily contacted directly via email by me, although follow-up phone calls were made if no response was received to my email query after a week. Contact information for employees and elected members of the local government, as well as members of its overseas student advisory committee, were provided by the organisation itself, with the understanding that it was the person's own choice to participate or not and the organisation would in no way compel them to do so. The contact information for all other potential research participants – namely, the presidents of international student organisations, the Federal Minister for Social Inclusion, and the Victorian government employee responsible for the Victorian government's social inclusion policy – was obtained from publicly available websites of their particular organisations.

Interviews with all participants ranged from approximately 45 to 90 minutes and were audio-recorded using a digital recorder. Participants were informed prior to consenting to an interview that the process should take approximately 60 minutes. However, I ended interviews early if participants needed to leave or ran out things to say. Equally, I allowed interviews to go for longer than 60 minutes if the participant demonstrated a desire to

continue past the allotted time. These interviews were subsequently transcribed by a professional transcriptionist.

Position as the researcher

Before moving on to the next chapter, where I discuss Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach to CDA and the analytical framework it entails, it is at this time that I feel I should state my position as the researcher. As a scholar who adopts a social constructionist epistemological perspective I locate myself in the study, rather than pretending that I lie outside it (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). Hence, in the interest of reflexivity, as the person interpreting the data I must explain my background and position in order to illuminate any potential biases in my analysis.

I am an Anglo-Saxon male, born in Australia to parents who were also born here. I grew up and have completed essentially all of my education in the Australian state of Victoria. In particular, I have lived in metropolitan Melbourne (the capital of Victoria) since beginning my tertiary studies. While this means that I have a strong knowledge of the context in which my study took place, in particular the language used in the texts and the mechanisms of government in Australia, it also means that I am a member of the dominant 'in-group', the 'mainstream' in Australia.

This last point is an issue, as in this study it means that I am critically commenting on the construction of a marginalised out-group by the mainstream in-group as a member of that very in-group. This potentially biases my findings, as my perspective as an in-group member may cause me to disregard features of a text which an international student would consider important or misinterpret particular features. While I cannot entirely prevent such inherent biases from affecting by analysis, I can do my best to mitigate against them through being reflexive. Part of that is, as I have just done, by explaining my position as the researcher and acknowledging the potential biases that entails. Another part is to reflect on my analysis in an effort to detect my own biases and consider alternative interpretations, which I have done to the best of my ability (Alvesson, *et al.*, 2008; Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). However, it

must ultimately be recognised that any findings, particularly those produced by CDA, are inherently subjective and should be treated as such (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009).

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the theoretical framework and research methods employed by this study. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is used as the overall research approach and theoretical framework. This means that the world is viewed as socially constructed by and through discourse, and discourse is therefore a form of social action. It further means that discourse is critically analysed in order to reveal the power relationships contained within it so that those which are unjust can be challenged. Such as may be contained in government discourse about minority groups like international students.

This research approach suggests a case study research design is most appropriate due to the importance of analysing discourses within their context. The case site chosen was a local government in metropolitan Melbourne which was a rare example of social inclusion discourse being applied to international student in an off campus setting. CDA focuses on analysing 'texts' as the physical manifestations of discourse. The texts collected for analysis in this study included two key Council policy documents and the transcripts from interviews with 15 key informants.

Given the complex nature of the CDA research approach taken by the study, the method comprises a less important aspect of the overall conduct of this project than perhaps it does in more positivist research. Instead, the bulk of attention is given to discussing CDA as a theoretical framework, which occurred at the beginning of this chapter, and the specific analytical approach to CDA utilised by this study, Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach, which is discussed next. In the following chapter I present the analytical framework associated with Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach to critical discourse analysis which I used to analyse the documents and interview transcripts collected from my case study.

Chapter 5: Analytical Framework

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to identify the impact of 'social inclusion' discourses on our understanding of international students' needs, experiences and welfare. To do this, I will critically analyse the policies of 'Greenwood City Council' which relate to international students and their use of social inclusion discourses, using Fairclough's (2009) 'dialectical-relational' approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

I have chosen to use Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach to CDA as part of my analytical framework because it clearly links the semiotic to the social world and analyses and explains the dialectical relationship between them (hence, 'dialectical-relational'). It does this by linking individual texts (also called 'discourse moments'; the semiotic) with social practices (and through that to social structures) via orders of discourse (the semiotic aspect of social practices). This enables a text (e.g., a policy document or interview) to be situated in its broader social context enabling the researcher to gain an understanding of how the text has been both influenced by and influences (indirectly) the structure of society. Such an understanding allows the identification of relations of power and domination within the structure of society, as well as how these structures are semiotically reinforced, challenged and transformed through discourse. The identification of such relations of power and the challenging of those relations considered unjust is the aim of CDA.

These characteristics of Fairclough's (2009) approach also make it ideal for use in critical policy analysis, provided that one takes the view, as I do, following Ball (1993) and Bacchi (2000), that policy is a form of discourse. Aside from being explicitly critical, this viewpoint enables one to understand both how policy documents are products of, and are limited by, existing social structures, and the social action they carry out. The appropriateness of Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach to CDA for use in critical policy analysis is also recognised by other critical policy analysts, having been used frequently in studies in this field (see, for example, Jacobs, 2004, Taylor, 1997 and 2004, Thomas, 2005). I will now explain in detail Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach to CDA and the view of policy-as-discourse (Bacchi, 2000; Ball, 1993) which makes CDA useful for critical policy research.

Fairclough's dialectical-relational approach to CDA

Norman Fairclough has spent more than two decades developing and refining his approach to CDA. He first published his complete framework in 1999 (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999), and then a further developed version in 2009 (Fairclough, 2009). Although it is this latest version of his framework that I have primarily used in my study, I also drew insight from his earlier work (Fairclough, 1992; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999), as those publications contain more in-depth discussion of the theoretical foundations and implementation of his approach.

The framework for Fairclough's (2009) 'dialectical-relational' approach has four 'stages', with each of the first two stages having multiple 'steps'. The four stages are: Stage 1 – Focus upon a social wrong in its semiotic aspect, Stage 2 - Identify obstacles to addressing the social wrong, Stage 3 - Consider whether the social order 'needs' the social wrong, and Stage 4 - Identify possible ways past the obstacles. I will explain each of these stages in detail below.

It should be noted that, while this framework is listed in a seemingly sequential order, Fairclough (2009) explicitly states that it should not be interpreted in such a mechanical way. Rather, analysis conducted according to this framework should be reflexive, with the analyst frequently going back to and reflecting upon earlier stages, based on what has been done in later stages. In addition, some stages and steps blend together in practice, despite being conceptually separate. Thus, analysis will be a lot 'messier' than perhaps the framework implies.

Before moving on to discuss each of the individual stages/steps of the framework, I feel it is necessary to define a number of terms used by Fairclough in his approach to CDA, as they may not be known to the reader and tend to differ from those used in other approaches to CDA. It is necessary that one understands these terms and concepts before being able to make use of Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach, or understand analysis performed using it. These are:

- **Semiosis:** 'meaning-making as an element of the social process' (Fairclough, 2009, p. 162). This includes language, visual images and body language, and is generally what most other approaches to CDA refer to simply as 'discourse' (Fairclough, 2009).

- **Social practices:** 'habitualised ways, tied to particular times and places, in which people apply resources (material or symbolic) to act together in the world. Practices are constituted throughout social life – in the specialised domains of the economy and politics, for instance, but also in the domain of culture, including everyday life (Mouzelis 1990)… A practice can be understood both as a social action, what is done in a particular time and place, and as what has hardened into a relative permanency – a practice in the sense of a habitual way of acting. This ambiguity is helpful in that it points to the intermediate positioning of practices between structures and events, structure and agency – practices have partly the character of both' (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, pp. 21-22). Social practices form an intermediate level between social events (or 'moments' of practice) and social structures (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999).

- **Moment(s):** Diverse elements of life (e.g., activities, materials, locations, people, semiotic resources, etc.) brought together into a specific practice. Specific social events form particular 'moments' of a social practice (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). Essentially, a moment is an instantiation of a specific social practice.

- **Orders of discourse:** 'The semiotic dimension of (networks of) social practices which constitute social fields, institutions, organisations, etc. is *orders of discourse* (Fairclough, 1992a)… An order of discourse is a social structuring of semiotic difference, a particular social ordering of relationships between different ways of meaning-making – different genres, discourses and styles. So, for example, the network of social practices which constitutes the field of education, or a particular educational organisation such as a university, is constituted semiotically as an order of discourse' (Fairclough, 2009, pp. 164-65).

- **Genre:** Semiotic ways of acting and interacting. For example, news reports or job interviews (Fairclough, 2009).

- **Discourse:** '[S]emiotic ways of construing aspects of the world (physical, social or mental) which can generally be identified with different positions or perspectives of different groups of social actors' (Fairclough, 2009, pp. 164). For example, the neo-liberal view of economics.

- **Style:** '[I]dentities, or 'ways of being', in their semiotic aspect' (Fairclough, 2009, pp. 164). For example, we are likely all familiar with the semiotic style associated with 'being' a doctor or a mother.

- **Interdiscursive analysis:** '[A]nalysis of which genres, discourses and styles are drawn upon, and how they are articulated together... [I]nterdiscrusive analysis has the crucial effect of constituting a mediating 'interlevel' which connects both linguistic analysis with relevant forms of social analysis, and the analysis of the text as part of an event with the analysis of social practices – in more general terms, the analysis of event (action, strategy) with the analysis of structure' (Fairclough, 2009, p. 170).

To explain Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach simply, I have represented his understanding of the world and the different levels of analysis involved in his approach in the following diagram.
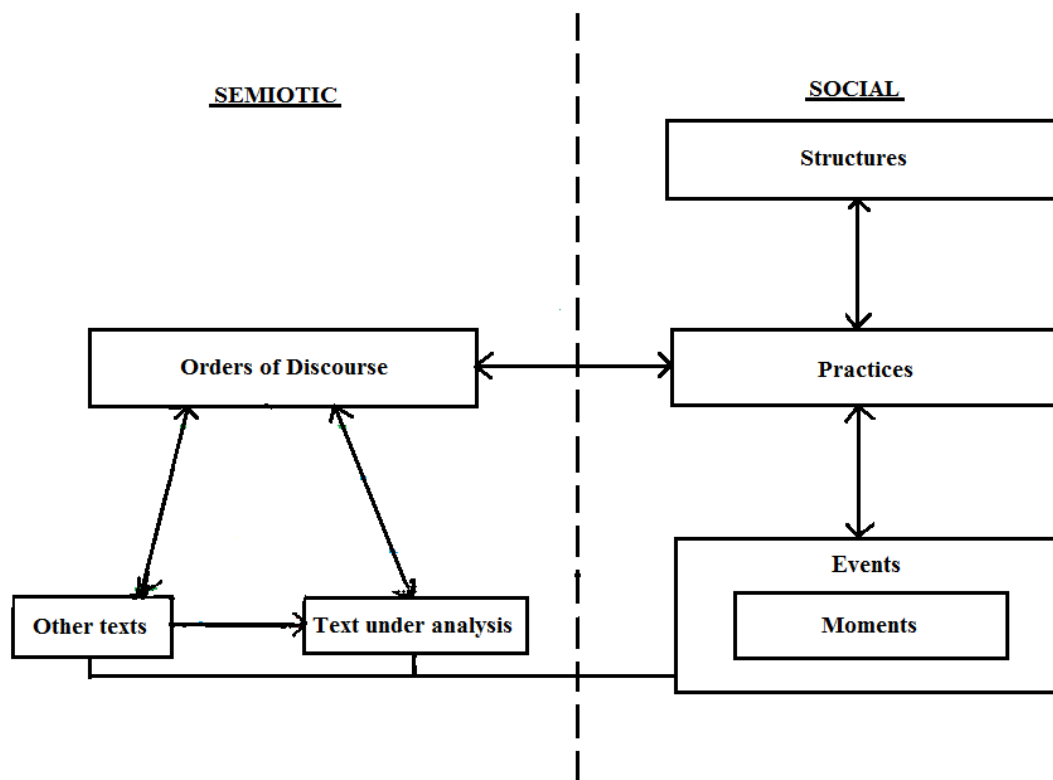
Figure 5.1 Fairclough's (2009) understanding of the world

Fairclough (2009) divides the social world into three levels: social structures (macro), practices (meso), and events (micro). Events are the observable happenings of social life

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(Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 22) and structures are the 'long-term background conditions for social life which are indeed also transformed by it, but slowly'. Social practices form an intermediate level between concrete events and abstract structures, which have partly the properties of both in that practices are partly deterministic but also partly allow for individual agency (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). Social practices are the focus of the dialectical-relational approach (Fairclough, 2009) because they are more observable than structures, but more generalisable than individual events.

The dialectical-relational approach (Fairclough, 2009) links the semiotic to the social world via 'orders of discourse'. While 'texts' are the semiotic element of social events, orders of discourse are the semiotic element of social practices (or networks of social practices) and are to texts what practices are to events. Orders of discourse are made up of different variations of genres, discourses and styles, and it is these resources which the creators of texts draw upon (as well as semiotic resources), just as actors in social events draw upon or represent various social practices. Hence, texts, as forms of social action, are dialectically related to orders of discourse, which form the semiotic dimension of social practices. Thus texts are both influenced by and able to influence social practices, which in turn are both influenced by and able to influence social structures and social events. In this way, texts (or the semiotic dimension of life) are, indirectly, dialectically related to social structures, which are the primary cause of social wrongs. This dialectical relationship enables a critical analysis of texts to identify relations of power and dominance that exist within the structures of society (as texts are an indirect representation of those structures), and for texts to challenge and modify those social structures and hence relations of power and dominance. This is the ultimate aim of CDA.

In the remainder of this section I will explain each of the stages and steps involved in conducting critical discourse analysis according to the dialectical-relational framework (Fairclough, 2009).

Stage 1 – Focus upon a social wrong, in its semiotic aspect

Step 1 – 'Select a research topic which relates to or points up a social wrong and which can productively be approached in a transdisciplinary way with a particular focus on dialectical relations between semiotic and other "moments"'. (Fairclough, 2009, p. 168)

This step is reasonably self-explanatory. The research topic chosen for analysis with Fairclough's (2009) approach to CDA should be to do with a social wrong and have a significant semiotic aspect. What is the purpose of using CDA in analysis of a research topic which does not have a significant semiotic dimension and is not concerned with relationships of power and dominance (the cause of social wrongs)? As I will discuss in a later section, policy can be seen as semiotic (discursive: Ball, 1993) and often deals with social inequality and other wrongs, making it generally suitable for analysis using this framework.

With regard to a topic 'which can productively be approached in a transdisciplinary way' (Fairclough, 2009, p. 168), Fairclough means one which cuts across multiple fields of research and hence can be analysed through combining theories and concepts from different disciplines. Fairclough (2009, p. 163) sees transdisciplinary research as a special form of interdisciplinary research which, 'in bringing disciplines and theories together to address research issues, it sees "dialogue" between them as a source for the theoretical and methodological development of each of them'. The point of this is that Fairclough (2009) believes that CDA cannot provide all the answers, merely one perspective, and that it should therefore be supplemented with other theories in order to provide a more complete analysis of the selected research topic.

In this study, the research topic is the application of social inclusion-based social policy discourses to international students by Greenwood Council. The social wrong that this topic highlights is the application of social inclusion discourses to a subordinated and minority social group, international students. As discussed previously, there are significant concerns expressed within the literature about social inclusion being used to subjugate minorities and reinforce the dominance of the mainstream. This study combines the theories of CDA, social inclusion and marginalisation to provide an analysis of the effects of social inclusion discourses on international students, thereby meeting Fairclough's (2000) desire for transdisciplinary research. However, Fairclough (2009) contends that one cannot simply take the selected research topic at face value and assume it is a coherent 'object of research'; first it must be theorised.

Step 2 – 'Construct objects of research for initially identified research topics by theorising them in a transdiciplinary way'. (Fairclough, 2009, p. 168)

An 'object of research' is a theoretically defined construct that is investigated via scientific means (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). According to Fairclough (2009, p. 169), there are no particular theories which must be drawn on in constructing the object of research; instead he calls upon researchers to rely upon their judgement as to which theories/concepts can 'provide a rich theorisation as a basis for defining coherent objects for critical research which can deepen understanding of the processes at issue, their implications for human well-being and the possibilities for improving well-being'.

It is this object of research that determines the appropriate methodology and methods for data collection, as it is only through 'a set of theoretical presuppositions that any empirical datum can function as a proof' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 225), with the data required obviously determining the methods and methodology used. Therefore, in order to use CDA it is required that the object of research be at least partially theorised in terms of semiosis, that is, discourse.

In this study, the object of research is the discourses of social inclusion drawn on by the Council policy documents and interview participants. As discussed in previous chapters, the concept of social inclusion is theorised in terms of discourse. That is, social inclusion is primarily manifested semiotically through text and talk. As will be discussed later in this chapter, public policy can also be understood as a form of discourse. These social inclusion discourses are analysed in terms of their impact on the marginalisation of international students. Based on this construction of the study's object of research, public policy documents and interview transcripts are appropriate data sources as they constitute 'texts' which draw on discourses of social inclusion.

Stage 2 – Identify obstacles to addressing the social wrong

The purpose here is to analyse the social wrong in a sort of backwards way by focusing on how it is that the way the social world is currently structured *prevents* the social wrong from

being addressed, rather than how it *causes* the social wrong. Hence, Fairclough's (2009) approach to addressing social wrongs differs from the more common focus on the causes of such wrongs, by instead being concerned with why such wrongs have not been eliminated.

This stage also demonstrates an important feature of Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach to CDA: analysis of the text is only one part of the overall analysis, and it must be adequately located within a broader analysis of its context. That is,

> *The analysis of texts can effectively contribute to this only in so far as it is located within a wider analysis of the object of research in terms of dialectical relations between semiotic and other elements which comprehend relations between the level of social practices and the level of events (and between orders of discourse and texts).*
> (Fairclough, 2009, p. 170)

While the analysis of the relationship between texts and the social world, and therefore the importance of context, is something that is common to all modern approaches to CDA, each approach does it differently. In the following sections I will describe Fairclough's (2009) particular way of analysing this relationship.

To help with this discussion I have reproduced below Figure 5.1, but with the addition of an overlay indicating the different levels of analysis used in Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach to CDA. The elements encompassed within the green box form the 'conjuncture' (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999), or context, analysis of which is discussed in Step 1. The blue box encompasses what is referred to as 'discourse practice' by Fairclough (1992), and represents the intermediate, linking, level between the semiotic and the conjuncture. Analysis of this is discussed in Step 3. Lastly, the red box refers to semiotic analysis of the text(s) selected for investigation, also discussed in Step 3.

SEMIOTIC
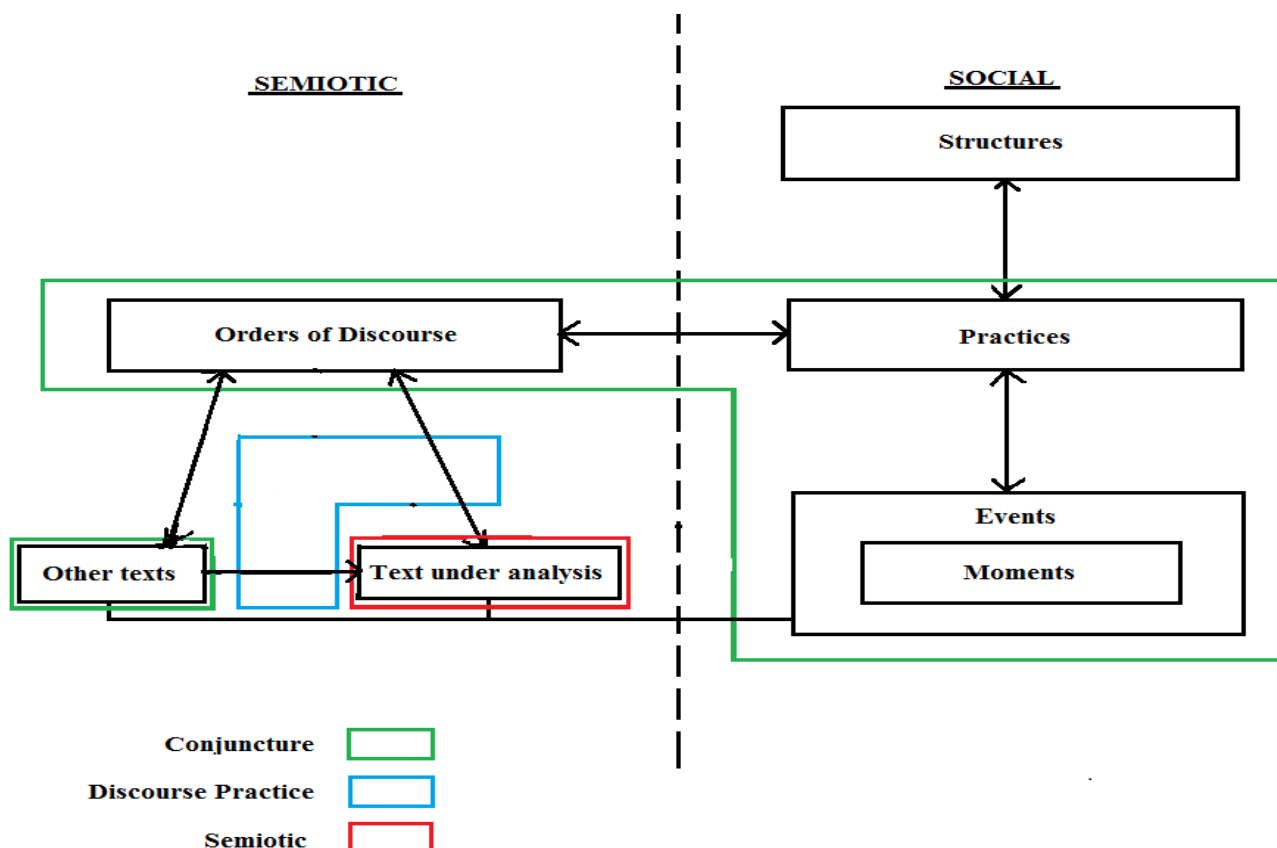
SOCIAL

Figure 5.2 Dialectical-relational approach to CDA levels of analysis

Step 1 – 'Analyse dialectical relations between semiosis and other social elements: between orders of discourse and other elements of social practices, between texts and other elements of events'. (Fairclough, 2009, p. 169)

In this step, the focus is on analysing the context of the specific instance of the social wrong that one has chosen to study and this has two parts.

The first, according to Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999, p. 22), involves analysing the 'conjuncture', which is the 'relatively durable assemblies of people, materials, technologies and therefore practices (in their aspect as relative permanencies) around specific social projects in the widest sense of the term', that is, the broad social context of the situation being studied – what is happening, where, who is involved, what materials and technologies are being used, etc.

The second part is about determining which social practices this instance is a 'moment' of and its relationship to other such moments, as well as the orders of discourse it relates to (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). According to Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999, p. 61),

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'The objective here is to specify relationships between [semiosis] and these other moments – how much of a part and what sort of a part [semiosis] plays in the practice…and what relations of internalisation there are between moments'. The 'relations of internalisation between moments' refers to what impact other moments of the practice have had on this particular moment. For example, protest demonstrations are a form of social practice in most developed nations. How does what has happened at previous protest demonstrations relate to, or affect, what happened at the protest that I might be studying?

The purpose of this analysis is to situate the particular situation under study in its social context and thereby assist the critical discourse analyst in selecting appropriate texts to analyse and interpretthe findings that result from the textual and interdiscursive analysis of those texts. The context for this study is analysed in detail in the next chapter.

Step 2. – 'Selects texts, and focuses and categories for their analysis, in the light of[,] *and appropriate to the constitution of*[,] *the object of research'. (Fairclough, 2009, p. 169)*

The researcher needs to choose texts for analysis in which the object of research is semiotically realised. Once again, which texts are chosen comes down to the researcher's judgement as to what will provide fruitful data (Fairclough, 2009). Fairclough (1992) suggests that the type of data that is most suitable for analysis depends upon the specific project and its research questions. Hence, while semiotic data of any kind could become the focus of analysis, it is down to the researcher, based on his knowledge of the texts related to the object of research, to choose those which will be the most fruitful. The analysis of the context done in the previous step can aid in this decision, as it informs the researcher what the important events related to the object of research are and what social practices and orders of discourse are most relevant. Hence, the researcher should seek texts which are most likely to form parts of those important events.

While it is possible to analyse a large corpus of texts, such an undertaking is extremely labour-intensive and time-consuming and thus is likely to preclude detailed analysis of any one text, given finite resources. Instead, Fairclough (1992, p. 230) recommends conducting detailed analysis of a few texts, ones that 'yield as much insight as possible into the contribution of discourse to the social practice under scrutiny.

Focuses and categories refer to semiotic strategies, aspects and realisations which are used to do 'work' within texts (Fairclough, 2009). Which ones are appropriate for a particular research project is determined by both the particular type(s) of text(s) being analysed and, more importantly, their relevance to the object(s) of research. With regard to the former, the typical semiotic strategies, aspects and realisations used will generally differ between, for instance, a casual conversation, a political speech, a job interview, or a formal policy document. For example, interactional control is very relevant in a casual conversation or interview, but not in a political speech or policy document (which are produced unilaterally), while argumentation may be a rhetorical feature that is more relevant to a political speech than a casual conversation between co-workers. However, it is the object(s) of research that is (are) most important in determining what aspects of the text should be focused on and which categories used for analysis, as only those that are relevant should be used. Fairclough (2009) uses the example of the 'depoliticisation' within modern British political discourse of globalisation and neo-liberal economics. Relevant 'focuses and categories' for this object of research include strategies of argumentation and rhetoric that depoliticise globalisation and neo-liberal economics, as well as 'semiotic aspects and realisations of legitimation, manipulation, ideology, cooperation and identity (Fairclough, 2009, p. 177) that support these strategies.

For this study I have chosen a number of semiotic aspects from amongst those suggested by Fairclough (1992) to use in analysing the policy documents and interview data which I have collected. The ones that I chose not to use are those related to inter-personal interaction within texts and how texts are produced and consumed. The texts which I have collected are policy documents and audio recordings of interviews conducted by myself, combined with my object of research being social inclusion discourses. I did not feel that there was any inter-personal interaction within the texts worth analysing, and nor was how the various texts were produced and consumed particularly relevant to actual data analysis. However, questions of production are relevant with regard to my influence on the responses given by interview participants. The aspects that I have chosen can be separated into two levels: those that apply at the level of text and those that apply at the level of discourse practice.

At the level of text, the aspects which I have chosen to analyse are Cohesion, Word meaning, and Wording. Cohesion deals with how 'clauses and sentences are connected together in the text' (Fairclough, 1992, p. 235) in order to determine the modes of argumentation and rationality used. Analysis of word meaning is concerned with, as the name implies, the meaning given to key words used in a text. This is based on the assumption that words have different 'meaning potentials' and their meanings are open to change. Wording, also known as 'lexicalisation' (van Dijk, 2000), relates to the specific words used in a text in situations where multiple word choices are available, as this choice says something about the ideology of the text producer(s).

For my analysis of discourse practice, the aspects I have chosen to focus on are Manifest Intertextuality (primarily Discourse Representation and Presupposition) and Interdiscursivity. Manifest intertextuality is when parts of other texts are explicitly present on the surface of the text being analysed, for example, quotes. Factors which proved relevant to be analysed as part of manifest intertextuality included discourse representation, that is, what and how pieces from other texts are presented in the text being analysed, and presupposition, that is, what presuppositions are made and how (Fairclough, 1992). Interdiscursivity is the drawing upon of genres, discourses and styles from various orders of discourse and how they are worked together in the text (Fairclough, 2009). The actual application of these semiotic aspects is discussed in the next section.

Step 3 – 'Carry out analyses of texts, both interdiscursive analysis, and linguistic/semiotic analysis'. (Fairclough, 2009, p. 170)

This is the step in which the selected texts are analysed, both linguistically (or, rather, semiotically, as the chosen text can include semiotic forms other than words, such as images) and interdiscursively (Fairclough, 2009). Fairclough (1992) refers to interdiscursive analysis as constituting just one aspect of analysing 'discourse practice' (how texts are produced, distributed and consumed). Although Fairclough (2009) neglects to include analysis of the other elements of discourse practice in his framework, I feel that inclusion of such analysis is beneficial to gaining a better understanding of the work being done by the texts under analysis in this study. Hence, I have included some of the aspects involved in analysis of the

discourse practice other than interdiscursivity given by Fairclough (1992) in this analytical framework.

As previously stated, the areas of semiotic analysis I have chosen are Cohesion, Word Meaning, and Wording. Each of these areas for analysis is discussed in turn below.

An analysis of cohesion is about determining which modes of argumentation and rationality are used in a text. Essentially, how the various clauses in a text are linked together. According to Fairclough (1992, p. 174), text types differ 'in the sorts of cohesion they favour, and such differences may be of cultural or ideological significance. There are two levels to the cohesion of a text, its cohesive functional relations and its cohesive markers. Cohesive functional relations are simply the different ways that clauses can be related together. Cohesive markers in a text determine how explicitly functional relations in a text are marked and because different types of texts tend to prefer different types of cohesive markers. I focus on this second level of cohesive markers in this study.

Halliday (1985, as cited in Fairclough, 1992) lists four primary types of cohesive marking: 'reference', 'ellipsis', 'conjunction', and 'lexical cohesion'. In this study, I found lexical cohesion to be the most relevant cohesive marker type for answering the research questions. Fairclough (1992, p. 176) summarises lexical cohesion as,

> *cohesion through the repetition of words, the linking of words and expressions in meaning relations (see Leech 1981) such as synonymy (sameness of meaning) or hyponymy (where the meaning of one 'includes the meaning of the other), or the linking of words and expressions which 'collocate' (Halliday 1966), that is, belong to the same semantic domain and tend to co-occur (for example, 'pipe', 'smoke', 'tobacco').*

Cohesive markers, such as lexical cohesion, are not unbiased or 'innocent' parts of texts. They are both interpreted by a text's readers/hearers, whose interpretation may be different from what the author(s) intended, and they are deliberately used by authors in an attempt to position readers/hearers in a particular way, thus doing ideological work (Fairclough, 1992). It was found in this study that the specific cohesive marker 'collocation' is used extensively in the Council documents and by interview participants to construct their understandings of social inclusion (see Chapters 7 and 8).

Individual words can have many different meanings depending upon the context in which they are used. Moreover, the intended meaning of a word on the behalf of the producer may be different from the meaning understood by the interpreter. This makes analysing the meaning(s) of words used in texts important, as the meaning given to a word by a producer and interpreters indicates how they construct their reality. Fairclough (1992, p. 185) summarises thus:

> *This means that as producers we are always faced with choices about how to use a word and how to word a meaning, and as interpreters we are always faced with decisions about how to interpret the choices producers have made (what values to place upon them). These choices and decisions are not of a purely individual nature: the meanings of words and the wording of meanings are matters which are socially variable and socially contested, and facets of wider social and cultural processes.*

As the last sentence of this quote indicates, the meaning of words is a point of contestation between agency and social structures. On the one hand, the meanings of various words in particular contexts are predetermined by history but, on the other, individual social actors have the power to give words new meanings (with the potential that such new meanings become widespread). A clear example of this is the development of slang words, such as 'cool' and 'sick', which have historically well-established meanings but at some point were given new meanings by young people that have since entered common usage. As Fairclough (1992) indicates, the meaning of words can become sites of social and cultural conflict.

To take the example of social inclusion/exclusion used in this study, the concept has many different meanings and implications. For instance, in Chapter 2 the three dominant discourses of social exclusion identified by Silver (1994) and Levitas (2005) – Specialisation/ Moral underclass, Monopoly/Redistributionist, and Solidarity/Social integrationist – were discussed. Yet, as will be demonstrated in subsequent chapters, the site of my study, Greenwood City Council, also has its own discourse of social inclusion. These different meanings of the term 'social inclusion/exclusion', created by these different discourses, construct the world in different ways, which suggest different policies, which in turn have different effects on the lived experience of people in society. Consequently, these meanings are also contested by different interest groups. As pointed out by Silver (1994), the ability to define the meaning of a word is very powerful. Similar to analysing the meaning of individual words is analysing the 'wording of meanings', that is, the words a text producer chooses to use to communicate their meaning.

Analysing wording is about analysing the lexical choices that a text producer makes when communicating and what this implies about how they construct the world and the 'work' that the text is attempting to do. Theoretically there are infinite ways for a text producer to word a particular meaning that they are trying to convey, but this is not actually the case, as lexical choice is restricted to some extent by social structures. There is, though, generally sufficient latitude for variation, such that analysing the wording of meanings can give significant insight. Fairclough (1992, p. 191) defines this choice of wording as there being different ways of 'signifying' different domains of experience, 'which entails 'interpreting' in a particular way, from a particular theoretical, cultural or ideological perspective'. Thus different ways of viewing 'domains of experience' lead to different ways of wording them (Fairclough, 1992).

To illustrate with an example, take the domain of experience of refugees in Canada analysed by Hardy and Phillips (1999). Depending upon the way one interprets this experience – based on their cultural, historical and ideological background – refugees could be constructed using words such as 'genuine', 'deserving', 'economic migrants', 'bogus', 'marginalised' and so on. While the same people are being talked about, the wording is different and this affects the connotations of the meaning. Hence, wording has strong implications for the reality constructed by the text.

In the preceding paragraphs I have outlined the semiotic aspects of texts which I am going to analyse in my study, including Cohesion, Word Meaning, and Wording. Analysis of the text(s) is important, as it identifies how social relationships, identities and reality are manifested and constructed within the text(s). This can then feed back into orders of discourse, via discourse practice, and, through that, potentially affect the social world (Fairclough, 1992).

Therefore, the primary emphasis of this step is actually on analysis of the discourse practice, especially interdiscursivity, as it is this which links the individual text to the social world and thus gives it meaning (Fairclough, 1992, 2009). A key aspect of discourse practice is a text's 'intertextuality'. Intertextuality (Fairclough, 1992) refers to both the theory that texts are frequently made up of parts of other texts which the text in question relates to in different ways, and that texts have 'historicity', in that they are produced in the context of other texts,

thus forming a link in already existing 'chains of speech communication' (Bakhtin 1986, p. 94, as cited in Fairclough, 1992, p. 84), rather than being purely 'standalone'. Fairclough (1992) refers to two types of intertextuality – manifest and constitutive (the latter being renamed 'interdiscursivity') – for analysis. As indicated previously, manifest intertextuality refers to when parts of other texts are included on the surface of the text being analysed. The aspects of manifest intertextuality utilised in this study are discourse representation and presupposition.

Discourse representation is the most obvious aspect of manifest intertextuality, when pieces of another text are incorporated into the text and generally clearly marked as such through the use of quotation marks, reporting clauses, and other such devices. It can be either direct or indirect, with the distinction being primarily based on the clarity of the boundary between the 'voice' of the text being represented and the 'voice' of the text it is embedded in. That is, the extent to which the text being represented is represented in its original format (direct) or modified (indirect). Direct representations of discourse are generally in the form of (what is claimed to be) exact quotes, with the tense and deictics remaining the same as the original. While indirect representations of discourse involve inexact paraphrasing of the section of the original text being represented and the tense and deictics change to suit the embedding text. An example of direct and indirect discourse representation familiar to scholars is the use of direct quotations or paraphrasing when citing the work of others, with direction quotations being a form of direct discourse representation and paraphrasing being a form of indirect discourse representation.

What is important to note with regard to indirect discourse representation is that it is ambivalent with regard to which 'voice' is being represented: how much is the 'voice' of the original text and how much is actually the 'voice' of the embedding text. Thus, indirect representation of discourse can be used manipulatively, by the embedding text to subtly insert its own voice into what is supposedly an accurate representation of the voice of another text. Such manipulation of representation can be used for a variety of purposes, such as providing the appearance of support from other social actors for the position of the embedding text or for setting up a 'straw man argument', which the embedding text can easily counter. This kind of manipulation can also be achieved with direct discourse representation, by taking quotes out of context or outright fabrication, but it is much less subtle and easily identifiable. Thus analysis of discourse representations made in a text is valuable, because it provides

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insight into what other texts the text being analysed considers important, as well as the resources it draws on to do its work. Discourse representation is the reasonably explicit citing of other texts within a text, but other texts and knowledge can be referenced in more subtle ways as well, such as through the use of presupposition.

Presuppositions are simply propositions which are taken as already established or given within a text. An intertextual understanding of presuppositions assumes that they are a way of incorporating other texts, with Fairclough (1992, pp. 120-1) adding 'that in many cases of presupposition the "other text" is not an individual specified or identifiable other text, but a more nebulous "text" corresponding to general opinion (what people tend to say, accumulated textual experience)'. It can also be the case that a proposition being presupposed in a text is actually asserted and established in another part of the same text. A simple example of presupposition is the sentence 'You can't drive, you're too young'. The presupposition here is that age has an impact on a person's ability to drive a vehicle. Of course, presuppositions can be much more subtle and/or complex than this, as well as be more or less contestable. Similar to discourse representation, presuppositions can also be used manipulatively within a text to help it do work. Presuppositions can be powerful manipulative tools, as they are generally subtle and constructed as 'logical' or 'common sense', which makes them difficult to challenge if one does not have expert knowledge or a strong ideological stance related to the proposition being presupposed. In addition, presuppositions do not have to be factual or 'true' (a debatable concept in itself). Virtually any proposition can be presupposed within a text in order to assist it in doing work. The text producer does not even have to be aware that what is being presupposed is actually contestable. Analysing the presuppositions within a text provides great insight into how the text producer(s) constructs the world and their ideology, as it identifies their fundamental assumptions about the nature of the world, that is, what they know/believe to be true.

I will now move on to a discussion of constitutive intertextuality, which is actually the previously mentioned concept of 'interdiscursivity' that Fairclough (1992, p. 104) re-labelled in order to 'underline that the focus is on discourse conventions rather than other texts as constitutive'.

As stated previously, interdiscursive analysis is 'analysis of which genres, discourses and styles are drawn upon, and how they are articulated together' and constitutes the link between

semiotic and social analysis (Fairclough, 2009, p. 170). Every text draws on a different mix of genres, discourses and styles, thereby reworking the relationships between them, in order to achieve a particular outcome or objective. Each particular structuring of these relationships then feeds back into the orders of discourse, with the potential of becoming relatively permanent and thereby achieving social change. In this way, orders of discourse, and therefore social practices, are in a constant state of flux, with texts constantly reinforcing and reworking the social structuring of genres, discourses and styles (Fairclough, 2009). This demonstrates the potential of social actors to utilise existing social resources to affect social practices and structures (Fairclough, 2005a). As Fairclough (2005a, p. 926) contends:

> *Interdiscursive analysis allows the analyst to assess the relationship and tension between the causal effects of agency in the concrete event and the causal effects of practices and structures, and to detect shifts in the relationship between orders of discourse and networks of social practices as these are registered in the interdiscursivity (mixing of genres, discourses, styles) of texts.*

The interdiscursive aspects of texts are manifested through their semiotic features.

While Fairclough (2009) focuses exclusively on interdiscursive analysis, in his earlier work he (1992) argues that this dialectical relationship applies to all aspects of discourse practice. It is this influence of texts on social practices, the latter being what are generally of interest to social scientists, which makes the former worth analysing (Fairclough, 2009). A primary concern here is to what extent a text reproduces or is transformative of existing orders of discourse, and thereby of existing social practices and structures (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999).

Stage 3 – Consider whether the social order 'needs' the social wrong

In this stage the analysis shifts from what 'is' to what 'ought to be'. The researcher is called upon to decide whether the current social order inherently gives rise to the examined social wrong and, if so, should it therefore be modified or replaced. Of course, one needs to establish through logical argument that the social wrong is indeed an irrevocable part of the current social order (Fairclough, 2009), which I do in the subsequent three chapters which discuss the findings of the study.

A useful question to ask in this stage is what needs to happen to address the social wrong and would this require a significant change in the social order? If a significant change is required, it implies that the current social order does 'need' the social wrong, as it helps to maintain the existing relations of power and dominance (Fairclough, 2009). Once it has been determined whether or not the social order needs the social wrong, the next stage is to identify ways of bypassing or overcoming the obstacles to addressing the social wrong, whether this can be done within the existing social structure or whether it requires the changing of it. Again, this question is addressed in the following three chapters.

Stage 4 – Identify possible ways past the obstacles

This stage follows on from the previous one and continues the focus on what 'ought to be' rather than what 'is'. The aim here is to develop viable means of 'moving past' the obstacles to addressing the social wrong so that it can be addressed. The suggested means should focus on the dialectical relationship between semiotic and social elements, and working within existing social processes (Fairclough, 2009). According to Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), what is important in this stage is to not focus on the dominant discourses which perpetuate the social wrong being examined, but rather to examine the full range of discourses which comprise the related order(s) of discourse. Very rarely is a practice universally agreed upon; it is almost always contested in some way and these contestations have a semiotic dimension. It is these contesting discourses which can be examined and potentially leveraged to create the desired change. Hence, the best way to 'move past' obstacles to change is to critique processes that reinforce the status quo, create alternative discourses, and support existing contesting discourses. This is the ultimate purpose of CDA.

It is also what makes CDA in general, and Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach in particular, useful for critical policy analysis, because critical policy analysts too are primarily concerned with achieving progressive change through critiquing policies that reinforce or worsen existing unequal power relations and creating alternative discourses.

Critical policy analysis & policy-as-discourse

My project is a critical analysis of Greenwood City Council's policies towards international students. That is, I am doing 'critical policy analysis' (Taylor, 1997; a term she borrows from

Prunty, 1985). According to Taylor (1997), citing the arguments of Troyna (1994), 'critical policy analysis' is a form of critical social research which is not only interested in the what and why of policy, but also in challenging those considered unfair or that reinforce existing unequal power relationships. Hence, my purpose in investigating Greenwood Council's policies towards international students is to determine whether they address the marginalisation of international students and, if not, to challenge them for not doing so.

In 1997 Taylor reviewed the influence of theories of discourse on critical policy research, and then in 2004, based on those developments, she advocated the use of CDA in critical policy research (discussed below). As previously indicated, this is a call which I have chosen to follow, as I am using Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach to CDA for my analysis. Nor am I alone in this, with many other critical policy analysis scholars also utilising Fairclough's approach to CDA in their research, for example, Jacobs (2004), Marston (2002), and Thomas (2005). However, to use CDA in critical policy analysis requires that one have a particular view of policy, that of policy-as-discourse.

According to Ball (1993), policy can be conceived of in two ways, as either text or discourse. The former sees policy as 'representations which are encoded in complex ways (via struggles, compromises, authoritative public interpretations and reinterpretations) and decoded in complex ways (via actors' interpretations and meanings in relation to their history, experiences, skills, resources and context)' (Ball, 1993, p. 11), and is influenced by literary theory. The latter, based on the work of Foucault, views policy as something that 'produces' truth and knowledge, creating a 'regime of truth' 'through which people govern themselves and others' (Ball, 1993, p. 14). It does this by determining 'what can be said and thought… who can speak, when, where and with what authority' (Ball, 1993, p. 14). Ball (1993) does not contend that one conception is better than the other, instead arguing that both are legitimate and potentially useful, and that what policy analysis needs is more concepts not less. Hence, the purpose of his paper was to 'add tools to the toolbox', not take them away.

However, he (1993, p. 14) does suggest that perhaps the view of policy as text,

> *concentrates too much on what those who inhabit policy think about and misses and fails to attend to what they do not think about. Thus we need to appreciate the way in which policy ensembles, collections of related policies, exercise power through a* production [original emphasis] *of 'truth' and 'knowledge', as discourses.*

That is, conceptualising policy as a form of discourse adds a new dimension to our understanding of policy compared to that provided by a view of policy as simply text. Indeed, I would argue that using CDA to analyse policy has the advantage of combining both the aforementioned conceptions of policy, in that it incorporates linguistic analysis of texts as well as an analysis of those texts as discursive events and therefore a form of social action, and thereby providing a tool which is greater than analysing discourse as simply either text or discourse alone.

This view of policy-as-discourse has proven popular with many policy scholars, particularly as it is seen to be useful for identifying why changes to policy generally fail to effect real changes 'on the ground' (Bacchi, 2000). Bacchi (2000, p. 48) contends that

> *The premise behind a policy-as-discourse approach is that it is inappropriate to see governments as responding to 'problems' that exist 'out there' in the community. Rather 'problems' are 'created' or 'given shape' in the very policy proposals that are offered as 'responses'.*

In addition, this control over policy also allows government to largely determine who the problem applies to, how it can be solved, who is (and is not) responsible for achieving that solution, and who is allowed input on the discussion (Bacchi, 2000). Given such an understanding of policy, it is incumbent upon policy scholars to adopt a critical approach to their analysis, as their focus should not be on 'problems', but rather on 'problematisations' (Bacchi, 2000).

Viewing policy-as-discourse, combined with the importance of taking a critical approach to its analysis, suggests a role for CDA in critical policy analysis. For if one sees policy as discourse, then, by extension, critical policy analysis becomes critical discourse analysis. This is a position supported by Taylor (2004, p. 436), who, building on earlier arguments made by herself (1997), as well as those of Ball (1993) and Bacchi (2000), contends that 'CDA is particularly appropriate for critical policy analysis'. This is because

> *it allows a detailed investigation of the relationship of language to other social processes, and of how language works within power relationships. CDA provides a framework for a systematic analysis – researchers can go beyond speculation and demonstrate how policy texts work.* (Taylor, 2004, p. 436)

I would argue that it is this provision of frameworks for systematic analysis that is CDA's most important contribution to critical policy analysis, as this was something which was

lacking in earlier policy-as-discourse analyses and its presence improves the robustness of findings (Taylor, 2004).

Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach to CDA provides just such a framework and, as previously mentioned, is the one I have chosen to utilise for this study. For if policy is conceptualised as discourse – or as 'semiosis' to be consistent with Fairclough's (2009) language – then it is realised as texts, such as the policy documents I have collected and interviews I have conducted for this study. These texts can then be systematically analysed, using Fairclough's (2009) framework (discussed in the previous section), to determine the social structures they reflect and the social action they carry out. In the case of this specific project, I will use Fairclough's (2009) framework to analyse the policy documents and interviews I have obtained from Greenwood City Council in relation to their social inclusion-based policies towards international students and determine how the Council constructs the identity and place in the world of international students. Then, using my normative judgement, I will discuss whether, and to what extent, such constructions address international students' marginalisation within the Greenwood City community.

Conclusion

In this section I have described my analytical framework, in the process discussing the view of policy as discourse, how this made CDA appropriate for use in critical policy analysis, and the specific framework for analysis using Fairclough's (2009) 'dialectical-relational' approach to CDA. The following three chapters present the findings from my analysis of the Council policy documents and interview transcripts from utilising that approach to CDA. The chapters also discuss those findings in terms of established social inclusion discourses and their effect on the marginalisation of international students. Specifically, the next chapter focuses on Step 1 of Stage 2 of Fairclough's (2009) framework and analyses the context, or conjuncture, of the texts analysed.

Chapter 6: Context

Introduction

In this chapter I will present and discuss the context of my study. Context, or the 'conjuncture' as it is called by Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), is key to understanding the meaning of the texts analysed in the study. Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999, p. 61) define the conjuncture as 'a specification of the configuration of practices which the discourse in focus is located within', where 'discourse' here means 'semiosis' in terms of Fairclough's (2009) later framework. As discussed in Chapter 4, which outlined the conceptual framework for this study, analysing and understanding context is critical to doing CDA, because all meaning is socially constructed and can only be read with reference to the particular context in which it is produced (Locke, 2004). For example, the meaning of particular words or phrases can vary greatly depending upon who is saying them, where, to whom, and when. Hence, for those that conduct any sort of critical discourse analysis, knowledge of the context of the texts under analysis is a necessary first step.

Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999, p. 61) explain that, in regard to analysis of the conjuncture, the focus 'is on the configuration of practices associated with specific occasioned social goings-on.' That is, within Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach to CDA, any analysis of the semiotic aspects of a social wrong must first identify and be situated in the social practices that relate to the specific instance of that social wrong under examination. In this study the social wrong is the application of discourses of social inclusion to address social justice issues relating to subordinated minority groups by governments and private institutions. The specific instance of this social wrong which is being analysed relates to Greenwood Council's social inclusion policies towards its international student population. Relevant (networks of) social practices relating to the social inclusion of international students include, but are not limited to, the system of government in Australia and the place of the Federal government and local government within that system, and the Australian international education 'industry'.

The semiotic aspect of these (networks of) social practices, referred to as orders of discourse, need to be taken into account. In Fairclough's (1992, 2009) work, social fields, institutions and organisations, are comprised of networks of social practices. Therefore, they are also comprised of networks of orders of discourse, which are the semiotic aspect of social practices. It is within these networks of social practices and orders of discourse (and the social events and texts through which they are manifested) that the texts under analysis need to be located. Figure 6.1 below presents a diagrammatic explanation of this.

To provide an understanding of power within the analysis of the conjuncture, Fairclough draws on Bourdieu's concept of social 'fields'. Fairclough (2000) equates networks of social practices with fields, in that networks of social practices represent relations of power that exist in society to define and shape meaning hierarchically. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, orders of discourse, in their largest sense, are the semiotic aspect of fields that wield power in defining the 'problem' of international students and solutions to the problem. According to Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999, p. 24), these networks of social practices, and therefore also orders of discourse, are embedded in and determined by networks of power relations, with 'shifting articulations of practices within and across networks… linked to the shifting dynamics of power and struggles over power'. Indeed, such power relations involve constant struggle, as 'power is not simply exercised, it is also fought over, and fought over in discourse' (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 62). Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) semiotically operationalise this power struggle by referring to the concept of interdiscursive articulation – the mix of genres, styles and discourses drawn on by a text that operate as a form of power strategy utilised by text producers to suit their interests.

In summary, discourse (text and talk), as a form of social action, is a power resource that both reflects and can influence existing networks of power relations. This is achieved via the dialectical relations between texts and orders of discourse (as the semiotic aspect of social practices), and social practices and social structures, where power relations are a function of social structures (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). The networks of social practices which make up the conjuncture or context therefore provide evidence as to existing power relations in society which may not be immediately apparent.
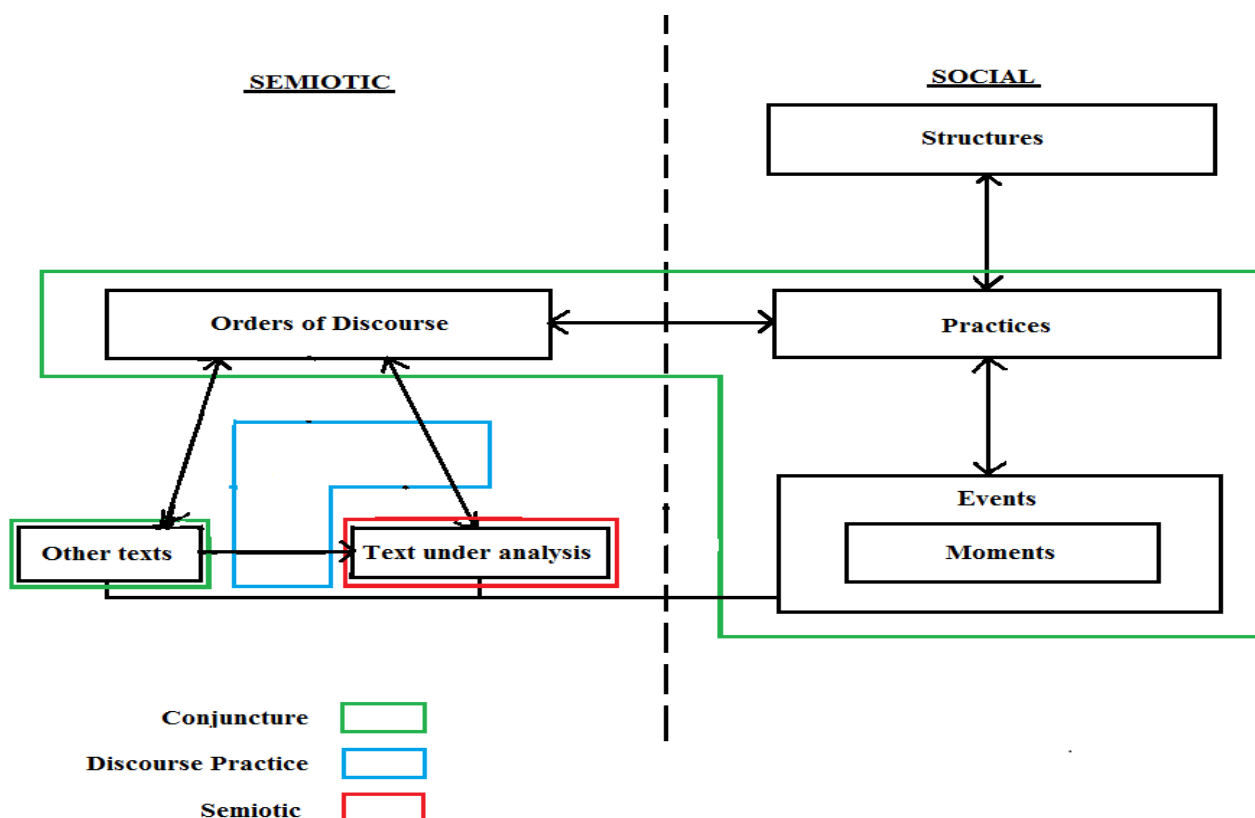
Figure 6.1 – Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach

It can be seen that Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach divides the world into corresponding social and semiotic dimensions, which are dialectically related. Each dimension has multiple levels, which increase in abstraction, from the lower level of concrete social events and texts, through the intermediate level of social practices and orders of discourse, to the abstract level of social structures. Texts are the semiotic aspect of social events, and orders of discourse are the semiotic aspect of social practices. Within this model, social structures do not have a semiotic, or even substantial, aspect and can only be inferred from analysis of the intermediate level (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). Each level is also dialectically related to the level above and/or below it. Analysis of the conjuncture (indicated by the green box) involves examining the network of social practices and corresponding orders of discourse as expressed via social events – or, more specifically, the moments of social practices those events contain – and their corresponding texts, within which the particular texts being analysed are located. That is, how other events and practices, along

with their corresponding semiotic aspects, relate to and influence the specific instance of the social wrong being examined (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 2009).

In the case analysed in this thesis, the texts under analysis are the policy documents and interview transcripts described in Chapter 4. The policy documents are the main semiotic aspect of the Council's international student support program and social inclusion policy efforts. The events which are the presentation of such programs/policies are almost entirely semiotic in nature, with the material aspects, such as the distribution of the documents themselves and any ceremonies accompanying their publication, being unimportant for the purposes of this study. The interview transcripts are the semiotic aspect of the events that were the interviews I conducted with key informants. They are related to the policy documents in that they also draw on the network of orders of discourse which form Greenwood City Council.

The Council is made up of a network of social practices – State government legislation, people working together to create an organisation, local elections, ordnances and so on – that also have a semiotic dimension in the form of orders of discourse – such as, social inclusion, the role of local government in Australia, social justice, etc. These orders of discourse are made up of various genres, discourses and styles that text producers can draw on to produce texts. For example, the Social Inclusion Policy document analysed in this study utilises the genre of formal written public policy; is presented in a professional, educated yet passionate style; and draws on discourses of social inclusion-as-participation, social justice and human rights.

The social world in which the Council exists is also comprised of networks of social practices. These networks of social practices are equivalent to fields (Fairclough, 2009). As will be discussed below, the primary field of interest is Greenwood City Council, but it is surrounded by other fields (i.e. networks of social practices) that interact with and influence it, such as the international education industry. These other fields also produce events, and texts as the semiotic dimension of those events, that relate to those in the primary field. For example, the charging of full fees to international students and the marketing campaigns that

attempt to attract them to Australia. It is these fields (as networks of social practices and orders of discourse), and the events and texts which they produce, that forms the 'conjuncture', or context, which surrounds the texts analysed in this study.

The networks of social practices identified through the events they produce are reflective of the structures which underpin society. These structures cannot be seen, but only inferred (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). However, they influence every aspect of life and determine who has power and who doesn't, who is dominant and who the dominated. For instance, the structures of Australian society determine that educated, fluent English speaking Australian citizens are more powerful than those people in Australia who do not possess one or more of those attributes. This enables the former group to control the various fields that exist within the broader field of Australia, such as Greenwood City, and dominate those within the other group, such as international students. The analysis in the following three chapters will illustrate in detail how I have applied Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach to the case site.

This study uses a semiotic point of entry to examine the case of Greenwood Council's application of social inclusion policies to international students as a means of improving their welfare. This case is a specific instance of a general social wrong – the use of social inclusion discourses to underpin social justice policies by government and private institutions.

The social events and networks of practices which form the conjuncture in which this instance is situated, and which will therefore be analysed in this chapter, include: the social inclusion policies of the UK's 'New Labour' government and the Australian Labor Party, when they were in power; the system of government in Australia, including the relative power positions of the Federal Government and local governments; the Australian international education industry; and, finally, community practices which impact on international students. I will begin by describing the conjuncture from a broad perspective and then narrow the discussion to the specific situation in which the texts I have analysed are located.

Relevant surrounding fields

There are two relevant themes which come together to create the broad conjuncture of the situation under examination within Greenwood Council: international education and international students in Australia, and social inclusion in Australia. Each theme contains multiple fields (that is, networks of social practices), that interact to influence each other and the primary field of Greenwood City Council. The theme of international education and international students in Australia focuses on the fields of the Federal Government and the higher education sector, as well as several local practices that impact on international students, such as racism. The theme of social inclusion in Australia also features the field of the Federal Government, as well as the British government under New Labor, the field of government generally in Australia, and the Field of Power. I will begin my analysis of the conjuncture with the theme of international education in Australia.

International education in Australia

The international education 'industry' or 'sector' in Australia encompasses all of those agents (who are actually fields themselves at a different level of analysis) who are involved in the provision, regulation or promotion of education in Australia for people from outside of Australia's borders. This includes education providers at both secondary and tertiary level, but primarily tertiary, government at all levels, international recruitment agents, and industry groups (e.g., Universities Australia). However, I will focus primarily on the actions of the Federal Government, which facilitated the expansion of the 'industry', and the higher education providers, which were greatly changed by those actions.

As noted in Chapter 3, Australian higher education institutions have a long history of hosting international students. Beginning in 1951 with the creation of the Colombo Plan, providing higher education to students from other countries was primarily constructed on a discourse of it being a form of aid to developing countries (Meiras, 2004). This was operationalised via enacting (Fairclough, 2005a) full-fee scholarships for those foreign citizens selected to come to Australia to study, and inculcating (Fairclough, 2005a) the identity of international students as people who were the future elites of their home countries and who would return there after completing their studies (Meiras, 2004).

Reflecting the global shift in higher education in Australia, in 1986 the discourse of international education changed from 'aid to trade'. In that year, the Federal Government produced a discourse that required all industry sectors, including higher education, to contribute to the Australian economy by exporting. This would also reduce the burden of university funding on the public purse. For the field of higher education this meant recruiting full fee paying international students (Bradley, Noonan, Nugent & Scales, 2008) and represented a significant change in the structure of the field. No longer was teaching international students a form of foreign aid, it was now a source of income (Marginson, 2012). This changed perspective in regard to international education, from aid to income, was reflected in new discourses and styles within the orders of discourse comprising the semiotic dimension of higher education institutions, as well as that of the Federal Government.

From the perspective of those outside Australia, Australian higher education institutions were now commercial institutions, open to anyone able to meet the admission requirements (including obtaining a study visa) and pay the required fees. This was achieved through the Federal government and higher education institutions producing discourses constructing the latter as commercial enterprises, that is, as businesses. This discourse was operationalised via higher education institutions enacting (Fairclough, 2005a) full fees for international students, uncapping the number of places available to them and overseas-based promotional activities to recruit potential international students. It also inculcated (Fairclough, 2005a) new identities for both international students and higher education institutions. International students were now bone fide educational sojourners and higher education institutions were now in the business of international education. Some critics viewed this in more crass economic terms, i.e. international students were now customers and 'cash cows' (see, for example, Forbes-Mewett, Marginson, Nyland, Ramia & Sawir, 2009; Stapleton, 2009), while the latter were commercial suppliers of a product (Marginson, 2012). This new identity for higher education institutions resulted in their adopting the discursive style (Fairclough, 2005a) of business rather than institutions of higher learning, at least with regard to potential international students and their families (Marginson, 2011).

This new commercial structure of the international face of the fields of higher education institutions was reinforced by a steady decline in Federal funding, beginning in the early

1990s (Marginson, 2011; Marginson, *et al.*, 2010; Thakur & Hourigan, 2007), so that, in order to maintain their financial capital and defend or enhance their position within the field of higher education, institutions came to rely more and more heavily on fees from international students. The Federal Government similarly relied on the economic benefits of international education as a way to reduce outlays on higher education. Recruiting international students was made easier by the creation in 2001 of a study-to-migration pathway by the Federal Government. This was achieved by modifying the practices involved in obtaining permanent residency to allow for international students to apply while in Australia and making the possession of a wide range of locally earned tertiary-level qualifications a virtual guarantee of one's application being successful (Senate Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009). These changes to the fields of higher education institutions and the Federal Government resulted in a very large increase in the number of international students in Australia by 2009 (Australian Education International, 2013a).

The dominant discourse that constituted the 'international education industry' was now one of commercialisation and income maximisation. Higher education institutions used the communication style of a business, constructing themselves as suppliers of a product and international students as customers (Marginson, 2011, 2012; Paltridge, *et al.*, 2014). This commercial focus meant that higher education institutions sought to constantly maximise revenue, operationalised via increasing international student numbers and fees, while minimising costs. The minimisation of costs was operationalised in numerous ways, one of which, most importantly for this study, was by enacting measures to minimise the level of support provided to international students (Deumert, *et al.*, 2005; Forbes-Mewett & Nyland, 2008; Marginson, *et al.*, 2010).

This new order of discourse was exemplified by the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act* 2000 (ESOS), a regulatory framework implemented by the Federal Government for higher education institutions that hosted international students. ESOS outlines government and education institutions' formal responsibilities towards international students and in so doing constructs them as consumers of educational services who possess only the limited rights of the customer (Marginson, *et al.*, 2010). Those rights, in addition to being vaguely worded, require higher education institutions to provide only minimal support

services that, apart from some limited applicability to issues involving accommodation, are restricted to on-campus life (Paltridge, *et al.*, 2012).

The provision of on-campus support by higher education institutions creates a range of issues for international students and how we understand their Australian education experience. However, it is noted in the literature that the majority of international students' most serious problems are not able to be addressed by higher education institutions because they occur off campus (Marginson, 2011). As discussed in Chapter 3, international students experience a range of problems in Australia and most involve their lives outside their educational institution. It is off-campus that international students confront problems such as finding suitable accommodation and employment, exploitation by landlords and employers, personal safety concerns or discrimination by locals (Marginson *et al.*, 2010; Paltridge, 2009). Indeed, it is an unfortunate fact that a number of international students have died or been killed off-campus under terrible circumstances (see, for example, Marginson *et al.*, 2010; Olding & Kwek, 2012).

The network of social practices implied by the order of discourse of the international education industry leave international students, particularly those who do not attend a large university, to deal largely on their own with problems that occur in their lives (Marginson, *et al.*, 2010). Combined with how international students are legally constructed by government, as well as local social practices external to the fields of higher education institutions that affect international students, this makes international students particularly vulnerable to negative life experiences. This is discussed in the following section.

International students

How international students are constructed in Australia in a formal legal sense by Federal government discourse, combined with certain local social practices, makes them particularly vulnerable to negative life experiences. First, international students are constructed in Australia, via government immigration discourse, as temporary migrants. This means they have limited rights and some significant responsibilities which impact negatively on their welfare (Deumert, *et al.*, 2005). Second, local practices, such as the procedure for applying to rent accommodation, also create potential issues. The vulnerability these two factors create for international students is further exacerbated when international students arrive in

Australia with limited relevant capital for the fields which they must function within, for example, social networks (Babacan, *et al.*, 2010). I will discuss each of these factors in turn.

Legal construction of international students by government

International students in Australia are constructed by government discourse in ways that limit their rights. A consequence of this is that the capital they require to participate in the fields that comprise normal life, such as education or healthcare, is significantly higher than that required of locals. While their ability to acquire that capital, for example by working, is reduced in comparison to locals. The two primary discourses relevant to this discussion are how international students are constructed in the fields of education and mode of citizenship as temporary residents.

First, international students are constructed as customers in terms of their relationship with their education provider by the dominant 'commercial' discourse of the field of international education, with the limited rights that this entails. A function of the commercial structure of this field is that the fees charged to international students are typically very high. This is because higher education providers can charge whatever price they choose (while the majority of locals have their course fees capped by the Federal Government) so long as the cost of the course is fully covered, demand has historically been very high, and decline in Federal funding for universities has forced them to subsidise the cost of research and educating local students with international student fees (Marginson, 2011). This means that the financial capital required of international students to participate in the field of higher education in Australia is quite substantial.

Second, international students are constructed by government immigration discourse as a specific form of temporary migrant. The rights attached to this status are, again, quite limited (Deumert, *et al.*, 2005). International students do not have the right to vote, which largely eliminates their political capital and consequently their ability to affect the practices governing their lives by participating in the field of politics. They are also not allowed to work more than 40 hours per fortnight during semester (hours are unlimited outside of semester), and their access to public health care is limited and requires private medical insurance. In addition, the governments of the two states with the largest numbers of international students – New South Wales and Victoria – limit their access to public transport concessions, which further increases their cost of living (Paltridge, *et al.*, 2012).

These aspects of being an 'international student' in Australia both impose significant costs on international students. It also limits their ability to either earn money (i.e. obtain financial capital) or influence social practices to reduce the capital required for participation. The minimum financial capital required of international students to operate effectively in some of the most important fields to which they belong, such as the healthcare system or their specific higher education institution, is therefore quite high, while their capacity to obtain that capital in Australia is limited compared to locals. This can have significant negative impact on the welfare of international students if they have limited capital and are forced to choose which field to utilise it in.

Local social practices

Linked to students' limited rights and high economic responsibilities are the problems students face as a consequence of some social practices in Australia. The most relevant are those to do with finding accommodation and employment. These problems are intensified by xenophobic social attitudes towards international students. Such practices disadvantage international students even further in addition to those created by how they are constructed by government discourse.

The field of rental accommodation in the two Australian cities with the most international students – Melbourne (the city where my case site is located) and Sydney – was very competitive in the mid- to late-2000s. With the number of potential renters significantly higher than accommodation available, there was substantial pressure on both the financial and informational capital required by students to obtain accommodation. That is, with increased competition for scarce accommodation, not only did rental prices increase, but real estate agents tightened application processes requiring more background information, such as previous rental history and a local referee. Both of these capital requirements were difficult for many international students to meet (Babacan, *et al.*, 2010; Marginson, *et al.*, 2010). As a consequence, such international students were forced to live in accommodation with more attainable capital requirements, such as in low SES neighbourhoods, which exposed them to greater risk of violent crime (Babacan, *et al.*, 2010; Jakubowicz & Monani, 2010), or in very poor accommodation, such as overcrowded, often poorly maintained, and sometimes illegal, boarding houses (Babacan, *et al.*, 2010; Marginson, *et al.*, 2010; Senate Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009).

Similar to the field of rental accommodation at the time, the labour market field in Melbourne during the mid- to late-2000s was extremely competitive. Combined with the limitations placed on international students in regard to the number of hours they can work per week during semester (discussed above) and their need to attend class, international students who needed to work to support themselves often took jobs with poor pay, conditions and/or working hours. Such jobs included convenience store clerks, taxi drivers, and other types of service roles (Babacan, *et al.*, 2010). Although providing flexible hours and not requiring skills, this type of employment commonly featured exploitation of workers (Babacan, *et al.*, 2010) and often high exposure to violent crime (Australian Institute of Criminology, 2011). Admittedly, exploitation of such international student workers is facilitated by their lack of knowledge about their work rights in Australia (i.e., informational capital), but the potential for this exploitation to occur is primarily a function of the unscrupulous employers in the labour market (Nyland, *et al.*, 2009).

The difficulties international students faced with regard to obtaining decent accommodation and employment were exacerbated by the xenophobia of some members of the Australian community. As well as experiencing such attitudes being upsetting, in and of itself. Although often denied or minimised in the discourses of authorities and conservative media (Paltridge, *et al.*, 2014), racism is constructed as a relatively common practice in Australia by international students (Babacan, *et al.*, 2010; Marginson, *et al.*, 2010) and academic discourse (Marginson, 2011, 2012). Such racism takes both overt and subtle forms. Examples of moments of the former include violent assaults upon international students of South Asian appearance (see, for example, Healy, 2009a, 2009b; Ross, 2009), while examples of moments of the latter include 'unwelcoming' looks and a reluctance to engage in communication (Marginson, *et al.*, 2010). While instances of subtle forms of racism are by far the most common, racism towards international students in any form contributes to their 'othering' in Australian society (Marginson, 2012; Marginson, *et al.*, 2010). This has the effect of reducing the value of the capital they possess and/or increasing the capital required for participation, which reduces both international students' ability to participate and their power, pushing them towards the margins of Australian society (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

In summary, the construction of international students by government discourse and the effects of local social practices create social structures which disadvantage international

students economically and socially, threatening their wellbeing and safety (Marginson, 2012; Marginson, *et al.*, 2010; Nyland, *et al.*, 2009). However, while there is clear evidence that international students are disadvantaged by the structures of Australian society, this does not necessarily mean that they will all experience significant negative life events.

Capital international students bring with them

An important determining factor in the actual level of disadvantage experienced by individual international students as a result of the structural violence they are subjected to is the amount of relevant capital they bring with them to Australia. This includes financial, informational (e.g., knowledge of host city and employment rights), social (e.g., family, friends, community), linguistic (i.e., English language ability), and racial (i.e., the more Caucasian one looks, the less racism experienced). Those international students with large amounts of relevant capital, particularly financial, linguistic and racial, are more able to ameliorate the effects of structural inequalities and avoid negative life experiences.

Unfortunately, some (there is no reliable estimate of exact numbers) international students do not come to Australia with sufficient amounts of relevant capital, preventing them from mitigating the effects of structural violence. Consequently, they are relatively powerless and are forced towards the margins, if not outright marginalised, within many important fields: for example, the previously discussed situation of international students living in over-crowded and illegal boarding houses (Marginson, *et al.*, 2010).

The disadvantages faced by international students as a consequence of structural violence forces them to make difficult decisions with regard to how they allocate their scarce capital. This can have negative consequences for their welfare by exposing them to crime, illness and social isolation (Marginson, *et al.*, 2010). For example, high fees and rent place a heavy demand on the financial capital of international students, leaving them with less to allocate to activities in other fields. This encourages many to take risks in order to reduce costs and earn money, such as living in low socio-economic status neighbourhoods with high crime rates, walking through dangerous areas and/or late at night rather than taking public transport, working jobs with poor pay and conditions, or not renewing their private health insurance (Forbes-Mewett, *et al.*, 2009; Marginson, *et al.*, 2010; Nyland, *et al.*, 2009).

Influence of public discourse about the issues faced by international students

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The structural disadvantage of international students, the practices this entails and the terrible events that result were not acknowledged in mainstream media or political discourse until 2009. In that year, a series of violent assaults upon international students of South Asian appearance in Melbourne and Sydney was widely reported in mainstream media (see, for example, Healy 2009a, 2009b; Ross 2009). Such high-profile discourses prompted formal investigations into the international education industry, as well as the welfare of international students. The findings of these investigations resulted in discourses constructing the numerous issues faced by international discussed earlier, which were then reproduced by mainstream Australian media (see Chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion of these events).

These high-profile media texts imposed and maintained, at least in part, pressure on governments and education providers to respond (or at least appear to) by keeping international student issues in the public discourse (Nyland, Forbes-Mewett & Marginson, 2010). The new discourses produced by the media about international students and the international education 'industry' constructed a different identity for the former and changed the order of discourse for the latter. A discourse of international students as victims joined the existing discourse of international students as an economic commodity within mainstream media texts (Paltridge, *et al.*, 2014). This new discourse, in addition to ones questioning the quality of regulatory oversight and therefore authenticity of many recently established, small, private education institutions, changed the order of discourse of the international education 'industry'. It was now viewed as poorly regulated and providing insufficient support to international students. To counter this new discourse and restore the industry's order of discourse to one that creates an identity of quality and safety, governments and education institutions produced reports, action plans and new laws that contained discourses of increased regulation and support (see Chapter 3 for more detail on these texts).

It was within the conjunction of these practices and events that Greenwood Council decided to act and provide support to international students within its local government area. The media discourses created a strong imperative for actions from all levels of government and education institutions that would provide a counter-discourse and adjust the social practices impacting on international students. However, the form that this action would take in the Council was influenced by another conjuncture of practices that relate to the spread of social inclusion discourses in Australia.

Australian Federal Labor government (2007-2013)

The story of social inclusion discourses in Australia has its origins in social inclusion discourse developed by British New Labor in the United Kingdom in the late 1990s. The federal Australian Labor Party was inspired by, and drew on the policies and politics of, New Labour in the UK, part of which was adopting social inclusion as a key policy discourse prior to the Australian federal election in 2007. The transition of this discourse from Europe (where it was known as 'social exclusion') to Australia was facilitated by the Australian Labor Party's (the ALP) historical and cultural connection with its British equivalent, as well as the perceived political success of its usage in Europe and the UK (Buckmaster & Thomas, 2009; Saunders, 2013). The ALP based its social inclusion policy discourses, and the structures and institutions which operationalised them (such as the Social Inclusion Board, and the Social Inclusion Unit within the Department of the Prime Minister & Cabinet) on those of New Labor (Buckmaster & Thomas, 2009). However, the discourse was renamed 'social inclusion' in Australia, probably in order to give it positive connotations which were in line with the positive discursive style of the ALP's 2007 election campaign.

The discourse of social inclusion was present in virtually all the federal Labor Party's social policy discourses from the beginning of the lead-up to the 2007 federal election (Long, 2010; Saunders, 2013). However, in 2009 it was formally expressed in the Federal Government's official social inclusion policy document, *A stronger, fairer Australia* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009b). This text proved to be highly influential, as other tiers of government and organisations developed social inclusion policies (as discussed in Chapter 1). For example, the Victorian Labor Government of the time adopted social inclusion as the basis for its social policies (McClelland, 2009), universities such as Swinburne (Swinburne University of Technology, 2010) and Monash (Monash University, 2010b) created social inclusion plans or strategies, and the Brotherhood of St Laurence constructed social inclusion as one of its 'hot issues' (Brotherhood of St Laurence, 2010). Macquarie University, eager to foster research on the topic, established a Centre for Research on Social Inclusion (Macquarie University, 2010). The Federal Government influenced lower tiers of government and private organisation to adopt social inclusion discourses via two means: directly through the operationalization of its policy discourse, and indirectly through its hegemonic power.

The Federal Government directly influenced other organisations to utilise social inclusion discourses through how it operationalised its own social inclusion-based social policy discourses. According to Fairclough (2009, p. 165), discourses are operationalised, that is, put into practice, via one of three ways: 'they may be *enacted* as new ways of (inter)acting, they may be *inculcated* as new ways of being (identities), and they may be physically *materialised*'. The Federal Government operationalised its social inclusion discourses by enacting preferential distribution of substantial Federal Government grant funding to projects that were constructed as promoting social inclusion. This provided strong incentives for lower tiers of government and non-government organisations interested in obtaining federal grant funding for social initiatives to utilise a discourse of social inclusion.

As the highest and most powerful government in Australia the Federal Government indirectly influenced other organisations to utilise social inclusion discourses through it hegemonic power. Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999, p. 24) draw on a Gramscian concept of hegemony and define it as 'relations of domination based upon consent rather than coercion, involving the naturalisation of practices and their social relations as well as relations between practices, as matters of common sense'. That is, other fields voluntarily subordinate themselves to the Federal Government, because its social dominance is perceived as natural and legitimate. This hegemonic influence is the result of the symbolic power possessed by the Federal Government.

Symbolic power is the 'power of constituting the given through utterances, of making people see and believe, of confirming or transforming the vision of the world and, thereby, action on the world and thus the world itself' (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 170, as cited in Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). The basis of symbolic power is symbolic capital, where any form of capital can be transformed into symbolic capital once it is '(mis)recognised as and [has] the effects of forms of power' (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 101). As the highest tier of government in Australia, the Federal Government possesses significant legitimate authority. It also has the greatest amount of discretionary financial resources of any government in Australia (Parliamentary Education Office, n.d.). These factors provide the Federal Government with very substantial amounts of relevant capital, both in the field of government and the Field of Power. This, in turn, makes the Federal Government very powerful, enabling it to occupy a dominant position in both those fields (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) and convert its legitimate and financial capital into symbolic capital,

thereby giving it substantial symbolic power. This, in turn, makes the Federal Government very influential in relation to other fields, including local governments, such as Greenwood City Council, and private organisations, such as Monash University. Indeed, its symbolic power is such that it is able to exert hegemony over those other fields. In the case of this study, that means that those other fields voluntarily utilise social inclusion discourse explicitly because it is already being used by the Federal Government.

As a consequence of the Federal Government enacting its social inclusion policy discourse in a way that favoured the distribution of Federal grant funding to projects that were constructed in terms of social inclusion, as well as the Government's hegemonic influence over lower tiers of government, its discourse of social inclusion was quite influential on Greenwood Council, to the extent that it caused a shift in the field of the Council (i.e., the network of practices that comprised the Council) by changing its order of discourse via the introduction of the new discourse of social inclusion. Specifically, the new discourse caused a change in the social policy discourse of the Council. The Council began drawing on social inclusion discourses in its social policy documents and formulating an official social inclusion policy of its own, initially based on the Federal Government's 2009 document but ultimately varying quite substantially (see Chapter 7 for more discussion on this point). This is discussed in more detail in the following section, which analyses the primary field – the Council.

Each of the above fields relates to and interacts with Greenwood City Council, the primary field of interest, in some way. Understanding them and their relation to the primary field provides insight into the events that occur within the primary field.

Primary field – Greenwood City Council

My primary field of interest and the one which forms the site of my case study is Greenwood City Council (hereafter 'the Council'). The two themes of social inclusion and international students discussed above are reflected and combined in the field of the Council. In this section, I discuss the practices, orders of discourse and history of events which relate to the texts analysed in Chapters 7 & 8. To assist in keeping the chronology clear, I have created a

timeline of major events (see Figure 6.2) leading up to and including the launch of the Council's International Student Support Program and social inclusion policy.

1999	2007	2008	2009	2011
			ALP social inclusion policy - *A stronger, fairer Australia* - published	
Social exclusion adopted by New Labour in the UK	Social inclusion adopted by the ALP	Taxi driver protest	Spate of violent assaults upon international students	
		Greenwood international student forum	Greenwood Council launches International Student Support Program	Greenwood Council publishes social inclusion policy
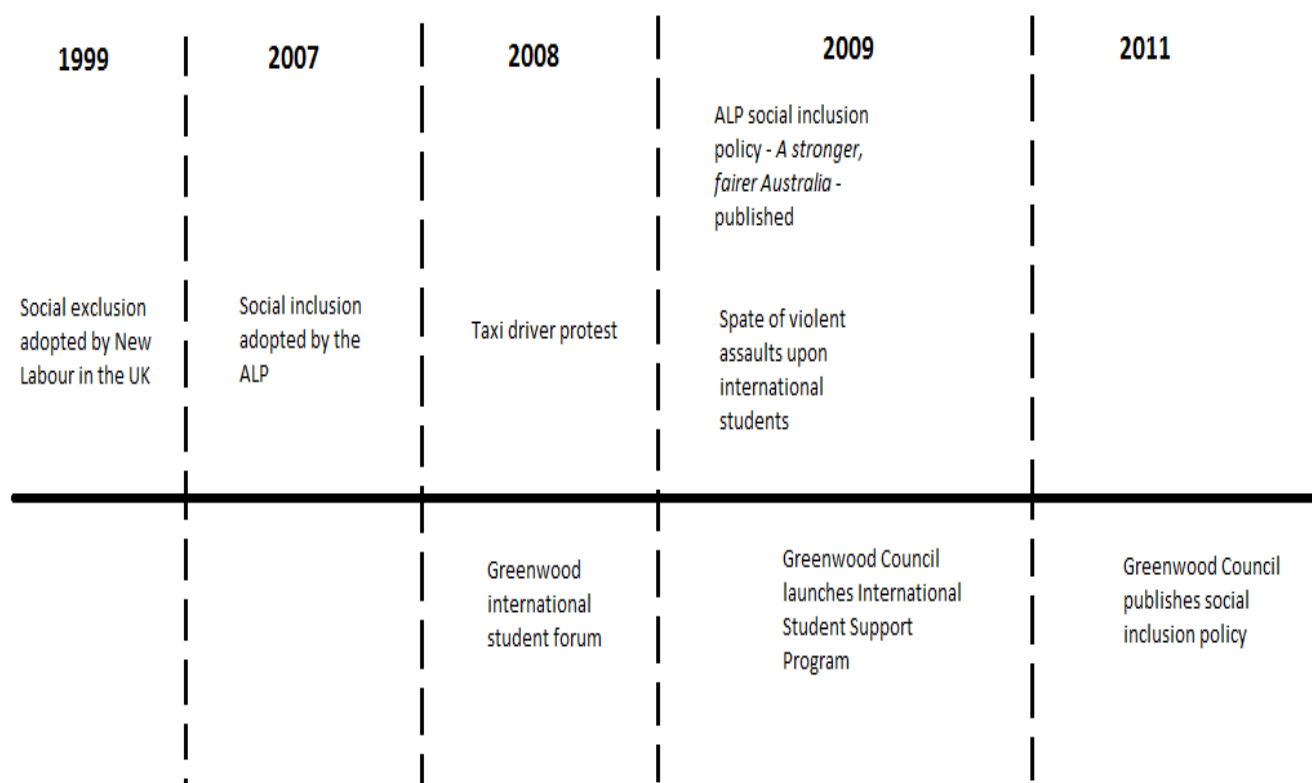
Figure 6.2 – Timeline of events

I have placed events external to Greenwood Council above the horizontal line, and those enacted by the Council below it.

Social inclusion and Greenwood Council

As discussed above, the Council was influenced to begin drawing on social inclusion discourse in its policy creation as a result of the Federal Government utilising it. Initially, the Federal Government's social inclusion discourse was drawn on exclusively. However, the Council's discourse evolved over time, as a result of consultation with other Council staff, to become unique to the Council, albeit one that still drew on elements of the Federal Government's discourse. Indeed, it was not until two years after the Council began investigating social inclusion and drawing on that discourse that it actually published its formal social inclusion policy (SIP), which is one of the key documents analysed for this

study. That is, the Council's adoption of social inclusion was a gradual process. However, social inclusion discourse began to appear in official external Council documents quite early in the process. A significant example of this is the International Student Support Program.

Based on the internal and external Council documents which I had access to, as well as information provided by the study's participants, the Council began to incorporate social inclusion discourse into its policy discourse just prior to developing the ISSP. The ISSP draws on social inclusion discourse (something which I discuss in the next chapter) and is one of the first Council policies to do so. Hence, it can be seen as an early example of the Council's use of social inclusion discourse. Indeed, this application of social inclusion discourse to international students was highlighted when it was noted at a Council meeting (3rd August 2009, p. 29) that 'The provision of support to international students is a key current social inclusion priority for Council.'

Council background and lead up to policy creation

The Council constructs itself as having a long history of being socially progressive and willing to advocate on behalf of marginalised groups. This discourse was frequently drawn on in the Social Inclusion Policy document (SIP, see Chapter 7) and by the study's participants (see Chapter 8); to the extent that it represents a clear theme within this field. For example, the SIP (p. 7) states that, 'A culture of social responsibility and advocacy on social justice issues are integral to [Greenwood] Council's identity and practice.' The importance of maintaining this image and the Council's ability to effectively enact its policy discourse were presented as being primary reasons for the Council to act to address international student issues. It was believed that not doing so would damage the Council's relationship with the community, reducing its legitimacy and thereby its symbolic capital and power in the field of Greenwood City.

The Council was already aware of the numerous issues experienced by many international students living in the city prior to the study. In 2008, the Council in conjunction with a local community organisation, held a public forum for international students living in the City so

that the students could express their views and air their grievances. Coincidentally, the forum was held at the same time as a widely reported protest in central Melbourne by predominantly South Asian taxi drivers, many of whom were current or former international students. The protest was held over increasing violence towards taxi drivers and the perceived lack of response by the Victorian State government (Fyfe, 2008; Petrie, 2008). These two events and the discourses they produced which highlighted the problems experienced by international students – including housing difficulties, financial stress and issues of public safety and welfare – fed back to the Council and initiated a review of its international student policies and practices. However, a spate of violent attacks in 2009 which were widely publicised in the mainstream media further sharpened the Council's focus on international student welfare. This resulted in more support being offered to international students living in the City.

Initial actions taken by the Council included conducting an investigation into housing stress experienced by international students and promoting homestay as a partial solution, passing a resolution encouraging the local police command to provide better protection for international students, conducting a civic reception for international students, signing a memorandum of understanding with a prominent international student organisation, and providing information and support to international students affected by the collapse of a large, private vocational education and training (VET) college. Significantly, the Council created a formal International Student Support Program to further support international students.

The International Student Support Program

The International Student Support Program (ISSP) was a suite of programs and activities specifically targeted at international students. Its purpose was to facilitate the inclusion of international students into the community and raise awareness of the contributions of international students. The ISSP program was established with the help of grant funding from a Federal Government agency as part of enacting its response to the crisis in the international education industry discussed above. The Federal Government offered grant funding to support organisations running programs aimed at promoting community harmony, which included addressing international students' issues. The funding enabled Council to hire additional staff for a formal support program for international students, complementing the

Council's existing efforts in this area. These efforts included a festival celebrating the presence of international students in the City, a program offering work experience opportunities, pamphleting residents about international students, providing a communal space for international students to meet and socialise, and organising for local families to invite international students over for Christmas celebrations.

These programs and events were viewed as highly successful by most participants, as well as the government appointed project auditor. Participants claimed that the program had made international students living in Greenwood City feel more appreciated by, and included within, the community. Similarly, the independent auditor's (a requirement of the ISSP receiving Federal funding was that it was audited) report concluded that the program was highly successful in engaging international students. In particular, it praised the Council's establishment of an international student advisory committee (ISAC).

Conclusion

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, texts can only be understood in relation to their proper context. Therefore, the discussion in this chapter has illustrated the network of practices, events and their discourse moments, that is, the conjuncture, which surrounds the texts, which will be examined in the following two chapters. This conjuncture had two themes: international education and international students in Australia, and social inclusion in Australia.

The practices of the international education industry, in conjunction with those of the migration system, rental accommodation and labour markets, as well as racism, construct social structures, which inherently disadvantage international students relative to locals. The limited amounts of relevant capital which many international students bring with them to Australia exacerbated this situation, resulting in them becoming frequent victims of violent crime and exploitation. These events were depicted in media and government discourse in 2009, necessitating a response from all levels of government and education institutions.

The social inclusion discourse of the UK New Labour government was drawn on by the Australian Labor Party in the build-up to the 2007 Federal election and once it was in government. This discourse came to influence all of the Federal Government's social justice policy discourses and was operationalised by the linking of grant funding to use of social inclusion discourse. This operationalization, combined with the hegemonic influence of the Federal Government, led to many lower-tier governments and other organisations also utilising social inclusion discourse in their policies.

These two themes of the conjuncture came together in the field of Greenwood Council, which interpreted them via its own unique structure. The result was social policy discourses that drew on discourses of social inclusion and were aimed at improving international students' welfare. Two key policy texts which epitomise this discourse – a summary of the International Student Support Program and the Council's official Social Inclusion Policy document – are analysed and discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 7: Document construction of social inclusion

Introduction

Purpose of the chapter

In this and the following chapter I present and discuss the findings from my critical discourse analysis of texts related to Greenwood Council's (henceforth, the Council) discourses of social inclusion and international students in order to answer my study's research questions. The primary research question for this project was:

- What is the impact of 'social inclusion' discourses on understandings of international students' needs, experiences and welfare?

To assist in answering this primary research question I posed two secondary questions:

- How do key people/groups/institutions understand the terms 'social inclusion' and 'social exclusion'?
- What are the implications of these understandings for policy and social discourses on international students?

Answering these research questions will guide the discussion of my findings.

This chapter focuses on findings drawn from the analysis of two key policy documents produced by the Council. These documents are the International Student Support Program document (ISSP) and the Social Inclusion Policy document (SIP). In order to frame the analysis the chapter first provides a brief summary of the data sources analysed and the location of the study. Next I will discuss the power of public policy discourse and why it is worth examining before moving on to discuss the key theme in the data, social inclusion-as-participation. To give structure to this discussion I outline Millar's (2007) framework of social inclusion as economic, social, cultural and political participation. I will then present and discuss my findings from analysing the two Council policy documents in relation to existing literature. Those findings focus on the broad structural impact of social inclusion-as-participation discourse, that is, the inter-textual level, rather than detailed linguistic analysis at the semiotic level. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the implications of the findings for international students' needs, experiences and welfare.

Data sources & case site

CDA focuses on the analysis of 'texts', where a text can be written, spoken or visual (Fairclough, 1992). In this study two of the texts chosen for analysis are two formal Council policy documents – one I have labelled the International Student Support Program (ISSP), published in the late 2000s, and the other, the Social Inclusion Policy (SIP), which was published roughly two years after the ISSP. For reasons of anonymity I cannot provide the exact years of publication of these documents.

The policy documents were chosen for two reasons. First, public policy is a powerful form of discourse because of its public nature and the perceived legitimacy of its author(s) (van Dijk, 1997b). Second, with their significant focus on international students the two documents represent the Council's official policy for addressing the issues faced by international students through the promotion of social inclusion within the municipality. They are therefore relevant texts to analyse in order to answer my research questions. In addition to analysing public policy documents, I conducted interviews with fifteen key informants who were either closely involved with creating and implementing those policies, or represented the social group affected by them – international students. The findings from this data are presented in Chapter 8.

My study site was a local government in metropolitan Melbourne – Greenwod City Council. The Council administers a city with a very diverse population, both in terms of culture and socio-economic status. This population included, at the time of my study, approximately 5,000 international students, which, while a significant number, did not make them one of the larger minority groups in the city. The Council has a long and well known history of progressive social policies and advocacy for marginalised groups. Based on statements made by several of my participants and in the SIP, the Council firmly believed that a social inclusion discourse would improve its social policy and its ability to promote social justice.

It is in light of this historical focus on social justice that the following critical analysis and discussion of the Council's social inclusion based social policies should be viewed. For while I will argue that the primary outcome of the Council's social inclusion discourse was to simply reinforce the existing system of unequal power relationships that is the cause of marginalisation, this does not invalidate the good intentions of the Council in implementing the policy. Rather, the purpose of my analysis is to demonstrate, using CDA, that even the most well intentioned social justice policies can have effects that undermine its goals and which are not obvious to its creators.

What will follow

This chapter will now present and discuss the findings produced from a CDA analysis of the Council's official policy documents – the ISSP and the SIP. This analysis will contribute to answering my research questions, with regard to how the Council constructs its official understanding of social inclusion and the implications of this for international students. The discourse contained in such texts is considered to be powerful because of its public nature and the perceived legitimacy of its author (van Dijk, 1997b). There are numerous types of social inclusion discourses (see Chapter 2), however the analysis of the Council documents reveals one primary discourse – social inclusion-as-participation.

A discourse of social inclusion-as-participation constructs a broad understanding of the needs and disadvantages experienced by marginalised groups, such as international students, and the impact of this on their welfare. However, as I show from the analysis, it also places international students on the periphery of society as a marginalised group by limiting both their agency and ability to deviate from mainstream norms. As a consequence, the discourse legitimises the existing social hierarchy, thereby reinforcing the status quo and doing little to achieve meaningful change for international students in terms of their marginalisation.

By 'meaningful change' I mean that the discourses of social inclusion found in the Council documents rarely acknowledges, let alone challenges, the underlying structures of society that produce unequal power relationships in mainstream society that marginalise particular

groups. In the case of this study, international students. The findings suggest that, in line with Preece (2001), discourses of social inclusion are produced and maintained by the mainstream, that is, those in power, and imposed on the marginalised. Hence, Council documents that draw on mainstream discourse of social inclusion are highly unlikely to significantly shift the structure of society as they reflect the norms and values of the mainstream. Instead, these discourses reinforce existing unequal power relationships by working through, and thus legitimising, established mainstream institutions, such as the Council, those that represent and work in the Council who stand as part of the existing social order (Barata, 2000; Levitas, 2005).

In the language of social inclusion the 'mainstream' refers to those people who comprise the majority of a society, often defined by the goods & services, opportunities and choices generally available to the 'average' person (Millar, 2007). The 'marginalised' are those who exist on the fringe of society, by dint of their (unequal) access to social, economic, political and cultural resources. This means that being on the fringe requires that those on the margins are constructed as socially different and in some cases, of lesser value to society. This may result from markers such as occupying particular physical or social locations, those group that do not participate in certain activities, or those who have certain citizenship status. Importantly, those on the margins lack the power to not only change their circumstances but also the problematic status created by their circumstances (Silver, 1994).

In this study I draw on Bourdieu's theory of fields (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) to explain how the community of Greenwood City is structured and the effect of social inclusion discourses on that structure. Following Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), a community can be understood as a field that is vertically structured, with one's position in the field's hierarchy determined by both the amount of relevant capital (in the broadest sense) possessed and one's perceived (by others in the field) social trajectory. What capital is considered relevant and to what extent is determined by the other members of the field, making it a source of conflict, with those in more dominant positions, such as the mainstream, more able to influence the debate. Those with more relevant capital and/or greater perceived social trajectory are dominant and form the mainstream, the figurative Centre, while the marginalised are those with less who are forced to the figurative margins or periphery of the field. Relevant capital

can include money, land or social status, but also cultural knowledge or language skills, among numerous others. Possession of such capital, or resources, is a primary cause of social differentiation which leads to social inclusion and exclusion. In my study, the mainstream/Centre is the local Australian community of Greenwood City, at the centre of the Centre is the Council. The Council, in developing and operationalising public policy, has the power to maintain the differentiation between those in the Centre and the marginalised, including international students.

The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the implications of the findings, how they contribute to answering the research questions and their contribution to both theory and practice.

Public policy discourse

Public policy can be viewed as a form of discourse (Bacchi, 2000; Ball, 1993). Like any discourse, it does not simply reflect reality but rather constructs a version of it, creating a 'regime of truth' "through which people govern themselves and others." (Ball, 1993, p. 14) Policy discourse determines "what can be said and thought…who can speak, when, where and with what authority." (Ball, 1993, p. 14) The outcome of this is that policy does not respond to problems which exist in an independent reality, but actively constructs both the 'problem' that needs to be addressed and the solutions to it (Bacchi, 2000). Hence, it needs to be recognised that how a problem is constructed in policy discourse is just as important, if not more so, as the proposed solutions (Bacchi, 2000). From this perspective, the formulation of how a problem is understood determines what can and should be done about it. In the case of this study, the Council's public policy draws on social inclusion discourses to frame the 'problem' of international students.

Policy as a form of public discourse is deliberately pushed into the public domain to contribute to a particular 'conversation' or to start one. Control of public discourse is a significant power resource due to its perceived credibility and wide distribution that allows those in power to define and defend the status quo (van Dijk, 1997b). The combination of

these two characteristics gives public discourse significant potential to affect a large number of people and explains why it is such a powerful resource. Indeed, van Dijk (1997b, p. 22) contends that control of public discourse allows one

> *...not only to control communicative events, but also to set the agenda, to define the situation and even the details of the ways groups, actions and policies are represented. If recipients have no alternative information or no access to other discourses, the credibility and persuasive rhetoric of public discourse may be such that many recipients will adopt the beliefs expressed by these biased discourses.*

Relevant to this study is the Australian Federal Government's (2007 to 2013) adoption of a social inclusion discourse and institutions supporting social inclusion to guide its social justice agenda (see Chapter 3 for a detailed discussion). To this end the Federal Government created the Social Inclusion Board and its official social inclusion policy, *A Stronger, Fairer Australia* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009b). The Federal Government policy discourse defines the 'problem' of social inclusion by denoting which groups are not sufficiently socially included and therefore needing help, what such groups must do in return for that assistance, and who is responsible for providing it. As discussed in the previous chapter, the hegemonic influence (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999) of the Federal Government, a consequence of its dominant position in the field of power, means that lower levels of government, public institutions (including universities) and NGOs with a social justice agenda adopted social inclusion as a legitimate discourse to frame their policies and activities. This includes the site for my research case study, Greenwood City Council.

As the following analysis shows, Greenwood City Council's public policy discourse draws, in part, on the broader Federal Government discourse of social inclusion. In doing this, it legitimises its role as a concerned local government that is willing to take action on social inclusion. Drawing on this broader discourse also gives the Council's social inclusion based policy discourse greater legitimacy, and therefore greater influence, as it is imbued with symbolic power drawn from the Federal Government's policy. That is, the development and dissemination of social inclusion discourse by the Federal Government, the highest level of government in Australia, legitimises that discourse, a legitimacy which is then conveyed to

the policy of other organisations that draw on the same discourse (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). As such, for the purposes of this study, the two documents (ISSP and ISP), are key instances of the Council's social inclusion based public policy with regard to international students.

Goals of the Council's social inclusion policy discourse

Before moving on to analyse the specific features of the Council's social inclusion policy discourse, I must discuss its general goals and the types of barriers it mainly attempts to address. The purpose of doing so is to acknowledge the limitations of the Council's power and therefore ability to influence various aspects of the international student experience.

The Council is far from omnipotent. Indeed, as a member of the lowest tier of government in Australia, the Council has fairly limited resources and legal authority (see the section The Role of Local Government in Australia in Chapter 3 for more discussion on this point). Its purview is focused on 'governance, service delivery, advocacy, asset management, planning, community development and regulation' (Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, 2010, p. 2) within the City of Greenwood. This focus is reflected in its social inclusion policy discourse in terms of the barriers it attempts to address. That is, the Council's discourse mainly attempts to bring about change in the social and cultural dimensions of life, although limited effort is also directed towards the political and economic dimensions.

The ISSP states that it has 3 primary goals; with each of those goals having three sub-goals.

Grounded (Feel a sense of worth, belonging and support)
- *Student issues are heard and acknowledged*
- *Social support systems are developed*
- *Students are valued through their contributions*

Included (Have a valued social status, identity and role)
- *Communities realise the benefits and obligations*

- *Neighbourhoods reach out to relate and interact*

- *Private sector regulates its behaviour*

Empowered (Have a voice, basic needs met and gain a sense of achievement)

- *Students address their own issues*

- *Systems are challenged and improved by better coordination*

- *Human rights of students are balanced with national benefit*

(Adapted from p. 7 of the ISSP)

The majority of these goals and sub-goals relate to the social and cultural dimensions of life. For example, the goal '*Grounded (Feel a sense of worth, belonging and support)*' and the sub-goal '*Neighbourhoods reach out to relate and interact*' highlight the Council's focus on building social networks between international students and the local community. While the goal '*Included (Have a valued social status, identity and role)*' can be seen as promoting a respect for, and acceptance of, international students as people, including the unique culture they bring with them to Australia.

There is some effort to address barriers in the political and economic dimensions as well. The goal '*Empowered (Have a voice, basic needs met and gain a sense of achievement)*' is mainly about providing international students with a political voice, and the essential economic and social resources required by all people. Addressing political and economic barriers is also addressed by the sub-goals '*Student issues are heard and acknowledged*' and '*Private sector regulates its behaviour*' respectively.

The SIP, while not specifically focused on international students, has a similar focus to the ISSP. The stated goals of the policy document are:

- *To build an organisation that is inclusive and reflective of* [Greenwood's] *diverse communities where social justice, accountability, participation, empowerment, human rights and diversity are core principles which inform all of our internal and external policies, practices and business.*

- *To build services and programs that are inclusive, responsive, accessible and equitable and which respond to the diversity of needs, rights and priorities of our communities.*

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- *To contribute to building inclusive and empowered* [Greenwood] *communities by facilitating equitable opportunities for all people to be heard, connected, respected and supported to participate in community life and in decisions important to their lives.* (SIP, p. 4)

Here it can be seen that the social, cultural and political dimensions of life are emphasised, although the political barriers intended to be addressed are limited to those relating to the Council. The first two goals communicate the Council's intention to lead by example in making itself and its service offerings inclusive of all community groups, including international students, both socially and culturally, with it being implied that such inclusion leads to greater inclusion in the political dimension. The example set by the first two goals then leads into the third goal of building 'inclusive and empowered' communities. The third goal focuses on barriers to social and cultural inclusion within Greenwood City communities by promoting the formation of connections, respect and participation in community life. It is also the most overtly political of the three, in that it explicitly states that everyone should '*be heard*' and communities should be '*supported to participate in…decisions important to their lives.*' (SIP, p. 4)

It is informative to compare the goals of the Council's social inclusion discourse to the list of common issues experienced by international students identified by Marginson, *et al.* (2010). Such a comparison illuminates the specific problem areas within the international student experience that the Council is attempting to address with its policy discourse. The areas of concern identified by Marginson, *et al.* (2010) are laid out in the below table:

Table 7.1

Areas of Concern	Examples of difficulties
Financial	• Having sufficient money to pay for study fees, food, accommodation, books
Employment	• Difficulty obtaining a decent part-time job • Exploitation by employers
Accommodation	• Tight housing market in major capital cities • Affordable housing being located in unsafe neighbourhoods • Exploitation by landlords
Personal health	• Maintaining health insurance • Lack of access to Medicare • Stress related mental health issues
Personal safety	• Being the victim of violent crime • Understanding of water safety
Language difficulties	• Studying in their non-native language • Understanding local colloquial language and accent
Dealing with education providers and DIAC	• Long processing times • Advocacy for issues
Social networks	• Making new friends • Interacting with locals
Cultural loneliness	• Missing the familiarity of one's own culture
Synchronisation with local requirements	• Learning and understanding host country social etiquette • Participating in common host country social activities

(Adapted from Marginson *et al.*, 2010)

Comparing the previous discussion of the areas which the Council's social policy discourse texts have focused on to the above table of areas of concern, it can be seen that the Council's discourse focuses on only a fairly narrow set of issues. Namely, 'social networks' and 'synchronisation with local requirements', as well as, to a lesser extent, 'cultural loneliness', 'employment' and 'accommodation'. However, it is interesting to note that the barriers to participation in the political dimension of life targeted in the Council's policy discourse do not feature directly in Marginson and colleagues (2010) study.

Promoting the development of social networks between international students and the local community is clearly the major focus of the Council's social inclusion discourse. The stated goals of both policy texts feature words like 'belonging', 'connected', 'valued' and 'respected' which construct an image of international students as equal members of the Greenwood City community (this construction is examined in more detail later in the chapter). Synchronisation with local requirements is targeted by initiatives such as '*Neighbourhoods reach out to relate and interact*' (ISSP, p. 7) and '*facilitating equitable opportunities for all people to be…supported to participate in community life*' (SIP, p. 4). This could also relate somewhat to ameliorating international students' feeling of cultural loneliness. The barriers international students face with regards to obtaining decent (i.e. acceptable by Australian standards) accommodation and employment is indirectly considered by the ISSP (p.7) sub-goal '*Private sector regulates its behaviour*' and the SIP goal '*To build services and programs that are inclusive, responsive, accessible and equitable and which respond to the diversity of needs, rights and priorities of our communities.*'

The emphasis of the Council's social inclusion policy discourse on barriers in the social and cultural dimensions of life is consistent with the Council's role in the City of Greenwood and its capacity to influence the structures of Australian society. That is, as a member of the lowest tier of government in Australia, the Council has limited ability to affect the economic and political practices that negatively impact on international students. Its position within the field of Australian government, and the field of power in Australia more generally, is too weak. Although there is some attention paid to constructing international students as citizens of the City of Greenwood – deserving of receiving Council services and having a voice in the decisions of the community – this does not significantly reduce the negative consequences of their construction by the Federal government as temporary migrants and the lack of rights this entails (Deumert, *et al.*, 2005). It is important to keep this understanding of the Council's position in those larger fields in mind when analysing the effects of its social inclusion policy discourse.

Social inclusion as participation

A key assumption underpinning many social inclusion discourses is that social inclusion is premised on social actors' participation in a generally well-defined and agreed on set of 'key activities' such as participation in the economy, culture and politics (Millar, 2007, see Chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion). Hence, social-inclusion-as-participation discourse constructs a person or group as socially excluded if they are unable, whether due to lack of opportunity or capability, to participate in economic, social or political activities which are considered important in the society in which they live (Burchardt, *et al.*, 2002; Hale & FitzGerald, 2007; Rees, 1998). In Australia, these key activities were defined quite broadly by the Federal Government's social inclusion discourse as education, work (i.e. employment), leisure, relationships, community activities and having a say (i.e. political representation) (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009b, pp. 2- 3). However, the specific details of what activities should be participated in within these broad areas are left to be defined in policy texts specifically focused on each area.

Social inclusion discourses may focus on numerous different means of inclusion, such as labour market participation (which ignores the benefits of non-paid work and the exclusionary effects of 'bad' paid work) or citizenship rights (which excludes non-citizens, such as international students, by definition). However, it is argued within the literature that social inclusion-as-participation discourses have the most potential for achieving positive social change. This is because, as Millar (2007) argues, they construct a broad understanding of disadvantage, and ostensibly do not exclude non-citizens from consideration or require those who are excluded to conform to mainstream (or dominant) societal norms. That is, this type of discourse is universalising and comprehensive (i.e. it purports to cover all relationships, all kinds of resources, and the present and future across all dimensions of life). After conducting a comprehensive examination of recent research on social inclusion-as-participation discourses, Millar (2007) contends that the common elements of such discourses are an acknowledgement of the role of relationships, resources, and agency, and the dynamic and multidimensional (social, cultural, political, economic; Steinert, 2003) nature of life. Millar's (2007) framework will be used to structure the analysis of the social inclusion-as-participation discourse contained within the Council documents.

Discussion framework

To guide the discussion of the Council's social inclusion-as-participation discourse Millar's (2007) framework for such discourses is used. That framework constructs a discourse of social inclusion-as-participation as having the following five features: Multi-dimensionality – the recognition that life has multiple dimensions, generally considered to be social, cultural, political, and economic (Steinert, 2003), and participation should occur in all of them; Relational – consideration of where an individual or group is placed (geographically and socially) in terms of other individuals and groups, and society as a whole; Resources – those available to people, both tangible and intangible, such as, income, goods and services, facilities, political capital, social activities; Dynamic – both the current and potential future circumstances of people and groups are considered, and; Agency – social exclusion occurs as a result of the actions, or inaction, of others, but individuals also actively respond to the situation, or risk, of social exclusion.

The discussion will focus on those aspects that produced interesting findings relevant to answering the research questions – Multi-dimensional, Relational, Resources, and Agency. Analysis of the aspect of 'Dynamic' was not found to contribute to the study's objectives. However, the way in which these documents construct diversity will also be discussed as it emerged as an important theme within the analysis in relation to answering the study's primary research question.

Overview

The Council originally drew exclusively on the social inclusion discourse of the Australian Federal Government when first incorporating social inclusion into its policies. However, in the approximately three years between adopting the concept and publishing the SIP, the Council's discourse of social inclusion evolved to become one that was unique to it, while still drawing on elements of the Federal Government's discourse. Where the Council documents interdiscursively draw on the discourse of the Federal Government will be discussed in the following analysis when relevant.

This section will begin by demonstrating how the two Council documents constructed social inclusion as participation. The relationship of the Council's social inclusion policy discourse to that of the Federal Government will then be briefly discussed. The bulk of this section will focus on discussing the individual aspects of the Council's social inclusion-as-participation discourse and their effect on how international students' needs, experiences and welfare are understood.

In the SIP document, wording is heavily used to construct social inclusion in terms of participation. This is exemplified in the below quotes, the first of which is one of the 'goals' of the policy, while the second is one of the 'principles' upon which it claims to be based (see Appendix 1 for a complete list of these principles). Discursively, placement of words and phrases within the SIP indicates the importance of the concepts presented in the document. These quotes are thus representative of how social inclusion is constructed within the SIP, where the goals construct what the policy wants to achieve and the principles determine how. That goal is:

> "*To contribute to building inclusive and empowered* [Greenwood City] *communities by facilitating equitable opportunities for all people to be heard, connected, respected and supported* **to participate in community life and in decisions important to their lives** [my emphasis]." **– Social Inclusion Policy, p. 4**

While the principle is:

> "**Participation** *– Council will ensure that the citizens and communities of* [Greenwood]*, in particular the target groups identified in this policy will have the opportunity* **to participate in decisions that directly affect their lives** [my emphasis]. *It is important that citizens, Council and other stakeholders involved and affected by Council decisions are able to* **be part of a process of participation together in dialogue and decision-making** [my emphasis] *that is informed, active, free, meaningful and which establishes mutuality in relationships. Council will promote and support community initiatives that can* **facilitate and strengthen people's social,**

economic and intercultural participation [my emphasis]." – **Social Inclusion Policy, p. 10**

In the above quotes the words 'participate' and 'participation' are frequently used in reference to how social inclusion is understood. In this way, social inclusion is explicitly constructed as participating in community life, the political decision making process, and social, economic and intercultural activities. The use of such wording indicates that the Council is drawing on a discourse of social inclusion-as-participation to construct its understanding of social inclusion. This will be further illustrated by subsequent analysis of the Council documents.

The key words 'participate' and 'participation' are also collocated with words such as 'connected', 'respected', 'dialogue', 'decision making' and 'mutuality'. Colocation is a type of cohesive marker that can be used to guide how interpreters make sense of a text by linking particular words or expressions together (Halliday, 1966, as cited in Fairclough, 1992). In the above quotes, colocation is used to construct participation as leading to international students being connected, respected, making decisions, and having dialogue and mutuality with the mainstream Greenwood community. However, as will be demonstrated in the following analysis, as well as by that in Chapter 8, this overt intention is undermined by the way that social inclusion as participation is actually constructed by the Council documents.

The ISSP, the policy document that specifically focused on international students also constructs social inclusion as participation via wording. Although it uses the actual word 'participation' rarely, the document constructs the achievement of social inclusion in terms of specific actions or activities where international students participate in activities with the local community and engage with the Council. For example, one of the activities it proposes is "*Student Support Triads*" (ISSP, p. 7), a system where a newly arrived international student is partnered with a local student and an international student who is settled in. Another is a youth lounge where international and local students can drop in "*relax, have fun and get peer support*" (ISSP, p. 7) from each other. International student activities such as "*volunteering to organise festivals and events*" (ISSP, p. 7) through which they can interact with Council

employees and locals, or creating an international student advisory committee for the purpose of "*awareness raising and* [providing] *advice to Council, other government and service providers*" (ISSP, p. 7) are also proposed. Constructing social inclusion in this way, again, indicates that the Council is drawing on a discourse of social inclusion-as-participation to inform its understanding of the concept.

This construction of social inclusion in terms of participation with the local community within the Council policy documents strongly reflects the social inclusion discourse of the Australian Federal Government. In its key social inclusion policy document, *A Stronger, Fairer Australia* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009b, p. 2), the Federal Government commits to a policy that states:

> *Social inclusion means building a nation in which all Australians have the opportunity and support they need to **participate fully in the nation's economic and community life** [my emphasis], develop their own potential and be treated with dignity and respect.*

Here, the Federal Government, through its wording (Fairclough, 1992), is explicitly constructing social inclusion as participating in Australia's community and economy. It is also collocating 'participate' with 'dignity and respect', such that having dignity and respect is both a precursor and outcome of participating in economic and community life. In this way social inclusion-as-participation is a major theme in the social inclusion policy discourse of both the Australian Federal Government and Greenwood City Council, where participation leads to numerous positive outcomes for all members of the community/nation. Indeed, the Council appears to have interdiscursively drawn on several elements of the discourse of the Federal Government in creating its own discourse. This is indicative of the hegemonic influence of the national government on lower tiers of government and how discourse reflects and reinforces existing power relationships (Fairclough, 2009). In the following sections I will discuss my findings from analysing the discourse of social inclusion-as-participation produced by the Council documents according to the previously described discussion framework, beginning with the aspect of multi-dimensionality.

Multi-dimensionality

Both the Council documents produce a discourse of social inclusion that constructs life as having multiple dimensions and therefore recognises that disadvantage can occur in any or all of them. The ISSP does not explicitly state that it recognises multiple dimensions of life. However, by constructing international students as having problems in multiple dimensions, such as their issues being "*heard and acknowledged*" (ISSP, p. 7) (political dimension) or neighbourhoods needing to "*reach out to relate and interact*" (ISSP, p. 7) (social dimension), the ISSP implicitly indicates via its wording that life is multi-dimensional.

The SIP is much more explicit in constructing life as having multiple dimensions in which disadvantage can occur through its wording (Fairclough, 1992). Stating that the Council will "*research and better understand* **all the different dimensions of disadvantage** [my emphasis] *in our community*" (SIP, p. 3), with those dimensions being "*social, economic, cultural and political*" (SIP, p. 8). These dimensions are consistent with those generally proposed in the academic literature (Steinert, 2003). However, they are different from those used in the Federal Government's social inclusion discourse, which constructs life only in terms of social and economic dimensions (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009b). This difference may be a consequence of the Council's highly multi-cultural population, aspirational view of social justice in terms of increased political participation, and the specific focus of local government on creating communities that are 'civil, equitable, culturally sensitive, environmentally sustainable and democratic' (Kiss, 1999, p. 110).

Multi-dimensionality opens up the possibilities of participation and is therefore viewed as an important element of participation based discourses of social inclusion (Millar, 2007). This is because it significantly broadens the types of disadvantage recognised and therefore the diversity of individuals/groups perceived as experiencing disadvantage and the possible remedies available to address that disadvantage. Indeed, this was the original purpose of the concept of 'social exclusion' as it was invented in France, a discourse for constructing those people who experienced disadvantage but were not recognised as such by the country's existing social support system (Silver, 1994).

In the case of international students, the multi-dimensionality of the Council's discourse enables the recognition of the numerous forms of disadvantage they experience in all dimensions of life, and the impact of this on their needs and welfare (Paltridge, *et al.*, 2012). For example, socially, international students lose the support of family, friends and community when they move to Australia to study because this dislocates them from familiar support systems in their home country, (Forbes-Mewett & Nyland, 2008). Once in Australia, international students often find it difficult to replace these relationships due to language barriers, cultural differences, and heavy study and work-loads (Sawir, *et al.*, 2008). This is exacerbated by the need to work to bridge the gap in what they have to live on and what they need to live a basic life (Forbes-Mewett, Marginson, Nyland, Ramia, & Sawir, 2009). In the absence of local networks and the unwillingness of many locals to form friendships and share networks, international students face significant disadvantage (Marginson, *et al.*, 2010). Contributing to these disadvantages are the limited rights international students are constructed with in Australia (Deumert, *et al.*, 2005; Marginson, 2012). Such issues would not be identified as problems under traditional social justice discourses, for example, poverty, yet they have very real negative consequences for international students' lived experience.

Aside from identifying such diverse forms of disadvantage, a discourse of social inclusion-as-participation constructs the means of addressing them as increasing the participation of international students in the key activities of community life. In relation to the examples just discussed, loss of social networks can be addressed by participating in the social life of the community and through such participation forming new social connections and networks. Being constructed in legal discourse with minimal rights could be addressed by international students participating in the political system and through such participation influencing government to change the legal discourse and practices which construct the rights framework which applies to international students in Australia. In this way, a discourse of social inclusion-as-participation both identifies the problem and provides the solution.

Relational

The importance of relationships and the position of an individual/group/location relative to others and society in general is another important aspect of the Council's social inclusion-as-

participation discourse. This aligns with the relational dimension in Millar's (2007) framework. In the case of Greenwood Council's social inclusion discourse as expressed through the ISSP and SIP, two relational themes are identified. First, the extent to which an individual/group/location is actually connected to, in terms of having a relationship with, those physically nearby. This theme brings to light issues about the extent of connectedness and the nature of that connection. The second theme focuses on the relative position of the individual/group/location to others. In the case of international students, this theme sheds light on their relative social position in terms of the underlying power relationships in society that defines marginalisation relative to the mainstream/Centre (Vasas, 2005). This leads us to consider social inclusion in quantitative and qualitative terms, where social inclusion is not simply about the fair distribution of resources, but also requires that individuals/groups/locations participate in the relationships considered important by society, such as family, community, workmates, and so on (Millar, 2007).

The documents acknowledge the presence of international students in the community and suggest that links between these groups and the mainstream community should be made by forming relationships with each other. In fact, this aspect is considered by the Council to be one of, if not the, most significant for achieving social inclusion. For international students, this identifies and places emphasis on one of their key issues – loss of social support networks and social isolation (Sawir, *et al.*, 2008). As well as their marginalisation in all dimensions of life relative to the mainstream Greenwood community. The proposed solution of the Council discourse is to increase international students' connections with the local community through participation in the social life of the community. However, the documents are vague as to how this will occur and unquestioningly presuppose that international students want to form such connections. I will now discuss how relationality is constructed in each of the documents before moving on to discuss the impact of this aspect of the Council's social inclusion-as-participation discourse on how international students' needs, experiences and welfare are understood.

The ISSP implicitly constructed the formation of quality relationships as important for social inclusion through the wording (Fairclough, 1992) of its principles and proposed initiatives. Specifically, this is in the principles of being Grounded, defined as 'feel[ing] a sense of

worth, belonging and support' (ISSP, p. 6), and Included, defined as 'Hav[ing] a valued social status, identity and role' (ISSP, p. 6). The words 'belonging' (as part of being grounded) and 'valued' (as part of being included), in particular, present relationships as important. 'Belonging' suggests being a part of the community; having relationships with the people within it. 'Valued' refers to the second facet of relationality, that of having deep connections with those around you rather than just superficial ones. This requires that one be valued and perceived to be of a similar social status to those around you.

The importance of relationships is reinforced through the 'initiatives' outlined to foster social inclusion in the ISSP. For example, 'Student Support Triads comprising domestic students, experienced overseas students and a recently arrived overseas student' (ISSP, p. 7), 'Living Community Guides' (ISSP, p. 7) where local families assist an international student in learning about life in Australia, and a local faith leaders forum where 'faith communities' (ISSP, p. 7) are to provide support to international students. These initiatives position relationships with the wider community as central to participation which is deemed to be the basis for social inclusion. Such activities are legitimised through the link to organised religion and the provision of pastoral care.

The wording used in the SIP explicitly constructs the formation of quality relationships as an essential aspect of social inclusion. The document frequently makes statements such as the social inclusion policy 'addresses unjust and unfair systems and relationships that create and entrench disadvantage' (SIP, p. 8), while supporting 'systems and relationships which build on people's self-respect and mutual respect; self-esteem and community pride' (SIP, p. 8). In addition, the SIP states that the

> 'Council recognises its role and responsibility to **promote stronger relationships** [my emphasis] *between international students and the broader* [Greenwood City] *community as highlighted through projects such as* [the International Student Support Program].' (SIP, p. 25)

However, the document is vague about what exactly those systems and relationships are, and what constitutes a quality relationship.

It should be noted that both the SIP and ISSP represent the formation of relationships as being a two way process. That is, both the marginalised and the mainstream are encouraged to reach out to each other. However, the emphasis is primarily on the mainstream taking action, a point that will be discussed in more detail in the later section on agency. In addition, the discourse presupposes that international students have the resources necessary, including the desire, to form relationships on the terms required by the mainstream Greenwood community. This point is discussed in more detail in the later section on resources.

Analysis & Discussion

Constructing relationships as a key aspect of social inclusion provides recognition of an important element of the international student experience and an area where they are disadvantaged. That is being shut out from relationships that the "average" person enjoys, such as family, friends, or spouse. A large body of research has demonstrated that having strong social networks is vitally important to international students' mental health and general well-being (Sawir, *et al.*, 2008; Marginson, *et al.*, 2010). Such recognition enables this disadvantage to be addressed. In the Council discourse this is constructed as being achieved through facilitating the formation of relationships between international students and the local Greenwood community. However, it is important to ask on what basis these relationships can be formed and whether that basis is acceptable to each party.

The discourse on relationship building is problematic in that it does not explicitly indicate on what basis relationships between mainstream Australian society and international students will be formed. For example, is it common interests between the two groups, the acceptance by the mainstream that the students must be included, creating an imperative for relationship building? What is presupposed (Fairclough, 1992) by the discourse is that both parties will take action and make the necessary changes in their daily lives to establish meaningful relationships. However, this presupposition ignores the impact of underlying structural and social barriers to relationship building, such as power relationships between different groups in the community, as well as social capital, such as language, connections, and so on.

The Council's social inclusion policy statements implicitly construct a requirement that relationships between the marginalised and the centre be established based on accepted (by

the mainstream) norms of civic behaviour. In so doing, this discourse creates a powerful normalising regime. The Council's policy discourse is powerful in that it is produced through policy texts of a mainstream institution (the Council) that has the legitimate right to define and then act on the problem of social inclusion. More importantly the discourse constitutes a 'normalising regime,' that is, a discourse which sets boundaries on the extent to which diversity is tolerated and thereby "subordinates and disciplines minorities" (Lewis, 2005, p. 540), helping define the border between the mainstream and those on the margins, such as international students. A key feature of this normalising regime is again the presupposition that both parties are able, willing and have the resources to conform to required norms of civic behaviour.

However, international students may not know how, or have the resources, to build meaningful relationships with the community on the terms required, and the community may not have the motivation or be willing to expend resources to reciprocate. International students may be 'too diverse' and considered a threat or challenge to the general community, reducing the chance of building meaningful relationships on both sides (Cullen & Pretes, 2000). Indeed, while the SIP explicitly states that diversity is valued, diversity also challenges the status quo and therefore tends to be controlled (something discussed in more detail later in this chapter). As the analysis in the next chapter also shows, the result is that substantial change does not occur. The inequalities remain, international students get 'blamed' for not engaging and the local community remains secure in the knowledge that there is a policy in place.

The key presupposition (something taken as already established in another text; Fairclough, 1992) within this theme of the social inclusion discourse identified from the Council documents is that international students want to be a part of the mainstream Greenwood community and, further, that by being part of the community the causes of international students' disadvantage will be addressed. While this may seem to be a reasonable assumption with regards to marginalised groups, it is not always the case. Sibley (1998), based on a study of the Roma people of Europe, contends that there are those who do not desire to be a part of mainstream society, or only wish to be partially included, and that this desire should be respected. That said, research on international students consistently indicates that they have a

strong desire to form relationships with members of their host country (Marginson, *et al.*, 2010).

Yet, by presupposing the desire of international students to be included in the community rather than explicitly demonstrating it, say through the representation (Fairclough, 1992) of research or quotes from international students, the social inclusion discourse constructed through the ISSP and SIP reflect dominant discourses that privilege stability and consensus. That is, such presuppositions reduce the agency of international students and therefore their ability to dissent, as well as making the goal itself unquestioned. The presupposition effectively reduces the agency of international students by constructing them as voiceless, or not having an opinion that matters, in regard to the formation of relationships with locals. It is simply taken for granted that they wish to form relationships with locals. Such limits on the agency of international students is a major theme in my analysis of the Council's discourse of social inclusion-as-participation that is discussed in detail later in the chapter.

Presupposing the desire for inclusion in the discourse also makes this goal unquestioned and therefore apparently universally accepted. As a consequence, anyone who resists being included under the terms of the discourse becomes deviant and 'justifiably' excludable as they refuse to play by the 'agreed' rules (Ferguson, 1990). Indeed, this discourse potentially justifies the Council to coerce participation from international students for their supposed own benefit as well as for that of society in general (Cullen & Pretes, 2000). Again effectively reducing international students' agency and requiring their conformity with mainstream norms via establishing a normalising regime. Requiring such participation also assumes that international students and other marginalised groups/places possess the resources required to do so.

Resources

The discourse of social inclusion-as-participation produced by the Council documents also featured the possession of resources as an important aspect of social inclusion. The term 'resources' is used here in the broadest sense to mean not simply those which are material, such as money, but also those which are intangible, such as time or skills. Although neither

the ISSP nor SIP specifically uses the word 'resources', each is worded (Fairclough, 1992) in such a way that they construct some form of resources as being necessary for social inclusion, albeit in a limited way. That is, those people who do not possess sufficient quantities of the resources considered valuable by the members of Greenwood community, such as money or language skills, are relegated to the periphery, that is, marginalised. This relates to Bourdieu and Wacquant's (1992) assertion that resources (i.e. capital) are the key determinant, along with perceived social trajectory, of where one is positioned in society along the included/excluded, or centre/periphery, continuum. The issue is that the Council, as an institution representative of the mainstream, constructs what resources are necessary for participation based on mainstream norms and values thereby reinforce existing social structures.

Resources are considered important in the ISSP but they are of a particular kind, specifically financial and temporal. The discourse from the documents frames the lack of money and time as contributing factors to international students' social exclusion. To quote: [international students face] "*Compounding issues relating to difficulties in finding employment and hence financial stress,* [and] *procuring affordable accommodation near the educational institution*" (ISSP, p. 2). Additionally, international students' "engagement" with the mainstream is linked to access to financial sources as the following quote demonstrates "*often dependent on whether those students* […] *are financially independent or struggling*" (ISSP, p. 9) and that "*Students are often unavailable or hard to access due to the juggling of their educational responsibilities and working*" (ISSP, p. 9).

In addition, several of the project's initiatives sought to improve international students' ability to acquire financial resources – such as, by having the mayor speak to the local business association "*regarding exploitation of overseas students*" (ISSP, p. 7), and improving the availability and standard of accommodation through "*recruit*[ing] *local residents as homestay providers*" (ISSP, p. 7) and "*ensuring boarding houses are compliant with relevant regulations and conducting information workshops for boarding house operators*" (ISSP, p. 7).

However, despite the ISSP constructing financial and temporal resources as necessary for social inclusion, it does not emphasise them. The three initiatives described are the only ones in the document which address resources, financial or otherwise. Instead, the ISSP's main concern is to improve international students' social connectedness, as discussed in the earlier Relational section (see p157), despite the close relationship between these two aspects of social inclusion. In contrast, the SIP focuses heavily on the importance of financial resources, or lack thereof, in relation to its contribution to poverty.

Although it does not explicitly use the word 'resources', the SIP does use wording to construct 'poverty' as a primary cause of social exclusion, along with 'discrimination', and therefore a key policy focus. The document frequently refers to how "*discrimination and poverty create barriers*" (SIP, p. 4) for people to fully participate in life and "*reinforce and entrench people's experience of 'being excluded', of 'disadvantage' and of 'being shut out'.*" (SIP, p. 8) This applies to all dimensions of life, as the "*Council recognises that some* [Greenwood City] *citizens, both individually and as communities, experience exclusion from economic, social, political and cultural benefits and opportunities because of discrimination and poverty.*" (SIP, p. 10)

However, the SIP never actually defines poverty so it is not clear how broadly it is constructing the term or, in other words, which particular discourse of poverty it is drawing on. The document could be referring to the traditional construction of poverty which is focused on purely economic resources (Atkinson & Davoudi, 2000), or alternatively to more recent constructions of poverty that are similar to social inclusion in many ways (Atkinson, 2000; Burchardt *et al.*, 2002).The closest the SIP comes to clearly stating this is a single sentence in the Background section:

> "*In 2002 the findings of the* [Greenwood Poverty] *Inquiry identified the nature of poverty and social exclusion including unemployment, inadequate income, lack of food and clothing and lack of access to housing, transport, education and healthcare.*" **– SIP, p. 7**

Yet this quote does not clearly separate out which issues relate to poverty and which to social exclusion, instead ambiguously combining the two. However, the way the term is used in the rest of the SIP, that is, its word meaning (Fairclough, 1992), indicates that the SIP constructs

poverty in a fairly traditional way, as a lack of material resources and access to vital services. Such a construction ignores important intangible resources, such as language skills, though. This does not necessarily mean that the SIP discourse fails to account for those kinds of resources. Instead, they appear to be implicitly acknowledged via the construction of 'discrimination' as a key cause of social exclusion.

That is, a lack of non-material resources and the consequent denial of "*economic, social, political and cultural benefits and opportunities*" (SIP, p. 10) is constructed within the document as being, at least partially, the result of 'discrimination'. While poverty seems to be understood as a lack of material resources, the lack of non-material resources is categorised as being the result of discrimination. However, the distinction between how poverty and discrimination each contribute to social exclusion is not made clear. Regardless, the two together are constructed in the SIP as the causes of social exclusion.

Discussion

Constructing resources, whether material or material and intangible as a key aspect of social inclusion enables the discourse to link common forms of disadvantage to a lack of particular or specific resources necessary to participate in the key activities of society, such as having a home or access to transport. While possession of such resources is important for international students as it is for any other group, it may be silent on the importance of other resources. A lack of appropriate resources is a common issue international students experience (Marginson, *et al.*, 2010) and is a primary cause of their marginalisation (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). However, what is important to note is that the effect of the discourse is that the resources constructed as relevant to achieve social inclusion are determined by the mainstream with reference to mainstream assumptions about access to and use of resources. What is hidden in the discourse is that access to resources (or not) is the gateway to the Centre (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Vasas, 2005), and represented here by the Council's aspirations to bring international students into the community. However, many students will remain on the margins because they do not actually have sufficient access to the required resources, for example, political resources to give voice to their needs despite the discourse's presupposition that they do.

If we refer back to the normalising effects of the discourse, it is authored and to some degree controlled by the Council (although it will be shaped by broader national discourses of inclusion), which, as a representative body, primarily represents the interests of the (local) mainstream community, not necessarily international students' interests. As a consequence of this, the kinds of resources, how they are accessed and how they are used reflects the values and norms of the mainstream. For example, money is generally considered to be an important resource and the legal ways to obtain money are determined by the mainstream as represented by the legal system. Obtaining money illegitimately places individuals and groups outside the approved value system and therefore at risk of legally sanctioned social exclusion (i.e. gaol). However, there are groups, such as the Roma in Europe (Sibley, 1998), who do not value money or agree with the way the mainstream has determined it can be legally obtained. Such groups are socially excluded as a consequence of their non-compliance, whether voluntarily or not, with mainstream norms. In the case of international students, many tolerate illegal low paid and precarious employment arrangements in order to provide for themselves. This reinforces their marginal and 'problematic' status for the mainstream.

This aspect of the Council's social inclusion discourse therefore reinforces existing power relations by defining what it means to be included, the resources considered necessary for participation, and how those resources are accessed in terms of mainstream norms. Adding another facet to the previously discussed normalising regime, in that, international students must obtain those resources considered important by the mainstream in order to become included. This increases pressure on international students to conform to mainstream values and norms, which can be difficult for them to achieve, thereby 'keeping out' potentially threatening diversity (Lewis, 2005). In this way, this aspect of the discourse reinforces existing power relationships and their consequent social structures rather than challenging them, as only those who embrace the existing structures are able to obtain the capital required to move into the Centre (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Vasas, 2005). So long as the marginalised have no voice in the discourse there will be no structural change. A similar outcome results from the discourse's construction of agency.

Agency

Agency, the ability of social actors to choose to act or not, is a vital aspect of discourses of social inclusion as participation from both a mainstream (Millar, 2007) and a critical perspective (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). It is a vital component of this type of social inclusion, as both an idea and as a discourse, because social inclusion is something that people do to each other and is shaped by social relations that facilitate how people interact. In addition, individuals also typically respond actively to the situation, or risk, of social exclusion; they do not passively accept it (Millar, 2007). Critical scholars view agency as constrained and enabled by power relationships (and the social structures they represent) and implicates discourse in constructing and reconstructing the social world in support of dominant power interests (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). For critical discourse analysis, agency is viewed as an important element of discourse because it has a transformative effect. People produce discourse and it is only through the exercise of agency via discourse that social change can occur (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). That is, it is only through the exercising of agency, by either the mainstream or the marginalised, that the structures of society can be changed and thereby the existing unequal relationships of power which contribute to international students' marginalisation be rebalanced (Fairclough, 2009).

Importance of Agency

The ISSP and SIP construct the exercise of agency, by both international students and mainstream Australian society, as being a key aspect of social inclusion, most often with reference to or through promoting 'empowerment'. Empowering international students to increase their participation in society is a major theme in both documents. In this context, 'empowerment' is constructed as the ability to exercise agency and obtain to some degree the things that one wants. I contend that the ISSP uses the wording 'empowerment' rather than 'agency' because the former is common language and therefore more easily understood by lay audiences, and also because it has a positive tone which fits with the overall *style* (Fairclough, 1992) of the ISSP, which is to promote positive change. There is also significant emphasis on the mainstream Australian community reaching out to international students.

One of the key principles expressed in the ISSP is empowerment. The meaning of this word, 'empowered', is defined in the document as to "*Have a voice, basic needs met and gain a sense of achievement*[.]" (ISSP, p. 6) Having clarified its meaning, the ISSP then constructs the outcome of empowered international students as the students having the ability "*to negotiate the systems to ensure human rights, personal wellbeing and value for money outcomes.*" (ISSP, p. 6) Empowerment, that is the ability to exercise agency, is thus constructed here in terms of three dimensions of life, political ('have a voice'), economic ('basic needs met') and psycho-social ('sense of achievement'). It is a complex construction that relates to what is considered necessary for a decent human existence. This is further emphasised by how the outcomes of empowerment are constructed, as ensuring 'human rights and personal wellbeing'. However, this construction of empowerment also implicitly requires that international students have the necessary resources to meet their basic needs, express their voice and negotiate required systems. Yet, as discussed above, the possession of such resources by international students are generally presupposed by the discourse and thus placed outside of consideration.

To achieve empowerment objectives the ISSP proposed several initiatives which call on the concept of agency so that international students and the community could achieve social inclusion. For example the provision of "*Student Support Triad*[s] *comprising domestic students, experienced overseas students and a recently arrived overseas student*" (ISSP, p. 7) assumes that local and international students will reach out and engage with each other in order to achieve a mutual goal of helping a recently arrived international student settle in. The intention being that the newly arrived student will feel more empowered because the support provided would help them meet their basic needs more quickly. The assumed follow on from this is that the student will also be more connected and have access to more capital, further increasing empowerment. It was also likely hoped that participation in the initiative would provide a sense of achievement to all involved.

The "*Living Community Guides*" initiative focused on local families where "*local families 'adopt' a student and help them 'learn the ropes' of life in Australia*" (ISSP, p. 7). The purpose of this initiative is again to encourage the local community to reach out to international students. Finally, the creation of an International Student Consultative

Committee to help raise awareness of international student issues and provide *"advice to Council, other government and service providers"* (ISSP, p. 7) relates to giving international students a voice in the local community. Together these initiatives produce a discourse that frames agency by both the community (i.e. mainstream) and international students (i.e. the marginalised) to be a key aspect of social inclusion.

The importance of empowerment to the Council's discourse of social inclusion is demonstrated in the SIP where it is identifiable as one of the key principles on which the SIP is based. In the same manner as the ISSP, 'empowerment' is used to indicate agency in a way that is easily understood by lay people. The idea of empowerment has positive connotations that match the overall *style* of the SIP, in a similar way that the document is a 'social inclusion' policy rather than a 'social exclusion' policy.

> *"**Empowerment** – Council recognises that* [Greenwood] *citizens are rights holders and that Council has a duty and responsibility to acknowledge and fulfil these rights. **Council recognises that meaningful participation by citizens can only happen when Council's engagement process is supportive, builds on participants' experiences and strengths and when social, cultural and other barriers are addressed and removed** [my emphasis]. Social exclusion can deny people's capacity for self and mutual respect and dignity. Economic, social and cultural empowerment are interlinked and require integrated approaches. Council will strive to develop and support community initiatives that include integrated understanding and approaches."* **– SIP document, p. 11**

The principle indicates the Council's belief that participation cannot occur unless the marginalised are empowered to exercise their agency. Such empowerment is constructed as requiring that external barriers be removed, although it is not specified what these barriers are. A focus on the removal of external barriers again presupposes that international students have the resources necessary, including the desire, to participate on the conditions set by the mainstream.

One of the policy's main goals is to *"contribute to building inclusive and empowered* [Greenwood City] *communities*[.]*"* (SIP, p. 4) Where some of the elements of such a community are constructed as being those *"most affected by exclusion are increasingly able*

to enjoy and take part in community life and social, economic, civic and cultural opportunities", and everyone is "*encouraged, supported and provided with opportunities to participate in decisions that impact on their lives*" (SIP, p. 15). Such statements appear to construct room for marginalised groups, such as international students, to exercise their agency. However, as will be demonstrated below, the 'opportunities' for participation are constructed in terms of mainstream values and norms which may make them unappealing or difficult for international students to participate in.

Empowerment as expressed in the above quotes constructs a significant role for the Council in reaching out to include those who are perceived as marginalised in order to empower them. The implication is that the Council is deemed as a legitimate body to exercise agency to include marginalised groups as part of its role as a community decision making body and elected government. In its definition of 'inclusion' the SIP constructs particular actions that are required of the Council to ensure it meets its obligations in relation to social inclusion:

> *Inclusion: Describes Council's goal to proactively seek the participation, input, ideas and views of* [Greenwood City's] *diverse communities to ensure that services delivered, programs and policies developed and implemented respect the rights of, and reflect and meet the needs and aspirations of everyone in* [Greenwood City]." – **SIP, p. 8**

A focus on empowering the marginalised to enable them to exercise their agency, as well as requiring the Council to exercise its own, is a key aspect of the discourse produced by the SIP. However, as will be demonstrated in the following section, such a goal proves illusory, with the Council discourse instead serving to limit the agency of international students.

Discussion

The construction of agency through the Council's policy documents appears to place responsibility for achieving social inclusion on both mainstream Greenwood society and international students. On the surface this implies a view about social consensus and cohesion where inclusion is a joint project. This prevents either group from blaming the other for social

exclusion without first establishing that they themselves have actively made efforts towards social inclusion. It also means that neither the marginalised nor the mainstream can ignore the other or allow them to be passive in efforts to increase social inclusion. This reflects Millar's (2007) claim that inclusion can only be achieved if mainstream society exercise their agency to let the marginalised in and the marginalised exercise their agency to enable inclusion.

The effect of the discourse is to legitimise the pro-inclusion focus of council. By explicitly stating the intent to empower international students and other marginalised, it suggests, on the face of it, that the Council is focused on building grassroots capability rather than imposing a top-down solution where international students, for example, are not given a voice. Such an approach addresses criticisms oft cited in the literature that discourses of social inclusion are used by the authorities to legitimise their right to control social outcomes and in doing so, maintain the status quo (see, for example, Alden & Thomas, 1998; Hale & FitzGerald, 2007). However, a critical analysis of the Council's official social inclusion discourse towards international students reveals that the discourse actually constructs international students in a way which limits their agency. This is a result of the activities which they should participate in being determined by the mainstream, being constructed as having only a limited role in achieving their own social inclusion, and their voice not being represented in the discourse.

How the discourse limits agency

The social structures of society operate to constitute and reconstitute power relationships through significant discursive effects (van Dijk, 1997a). Those at the margins are forced there by the existence of the unequal effects of power relationships established and maintained, at least partly, through discourse (Fairclough, 2009). According to van Dijk (2006a, 2006b), who has done extensive research using CDA into the use of discourse to maintain existing unequal power relationships, there are two frequently used discursive means of achieving this. First, denying the marginalised access to powerful means of communication (e.g. public discourse, news media) and two, constructing the marginalised in a way that emphasises negative aspects of their existence and/or deemphasises positive aspects (van Dijk, 2006a, 2006b), that is by 'othering' them. Both of these discursive means serve to reinforce existing unequal power relationships by limiting the agency of the marginalised.

The first method works by limiting the ability of marginalised groups to exercise their agency to produce discourses that have the capacity to influence, challenge and change existing social structures. The agency of marginalised groups is limited if the discourses they produce are not disseminated or are deemed unimportant to those that matter, in other words their voices are muted or silent (van Dijk, 2006a). The second method relates to the ability of discourse to affect the lived experience of people (Fairclough, 2009). Discourse is not just abstract talk and/or text but has consequences for people's lived experience as people act based on the reality in which they perceive themselves to exist. Therefore, individuals/groups/places which are discursively constructed as marginalised or with characteristics that marginalise them will be treated as such by those who are influenced by that discourse. Consequently, a common feature of constructions of the marginalised is either passive agency (e.g. victims, unable to help themselves) or negative agency (e.g. criminals, violent) (van Dijk, 1997b). Discourse can therefore impact on one's ability to exercise agency by creating social structures that limit agency. These two methods are somewhat inter-related in that if a group is constructed as powerless or unimportant it is unlikely that they will have access to powerful means of communication. The above discussion has important implications for my findings regarding the effects of Greenwood Council's social inclusion discourse on the agency of international students, as I have identified use of both of these discursive means in the social inclusion discourse of the Council.

Construction of international students' agency

The social inclusion discourse of the Council, through its wording, focuses almost exclusively on what it and, to a lesser extent, the community and the private sector, can do for international students. There is very little mention of what international students themselves can do to address the issues facing them. This emphasis on the role of the mainstream has serious consequences for how international students' agency is discursively constructed through Council policy.

Perhaps contrary to the Council's intentions, it is clear that international students have nonetheless been constructed as passive recipients of Council goodwill and beneficence. To

illustrate, the ISSP states that it is based on three principles – Empowered, Grounded and Included – with each principle having three goals, and a number of actions and projects listed under each goal. Yet, only one of these nine goals – "*students address their own issues*" (ISSP, p. 7), under the principle of 'Empowered' – envisages international students as active participants in achieving their own empowerment. In addition, the ISSP lists 25 actions and projects, but only five actually involve international students acting on their own behalf when analysed through the lens of CDA, with the remainder relating to actions to be taken by others. Further, three of those five are listed under that same goal of "*students address their own issues*" (ISSP, p. 7). However, there are no goals or projects/actions listed under the principle of 'Included' which involve action from international students. This implies that while international students can help empower themselves to some extent, it is primarily up to the mainstream community whether or not they are included. This is consistent with the previously discussed literature, which indicates that inclusion is something offered by the in-group to others (Millar, 2007).

The remaining two actions/projects which promote international students' agency not listed under the aforementioned goal are listed under the principle of 'Grounded'. One is an action in which the Council states its intention to support international students – in unspecified ways – "*to resolve their issues particularly when systems fail them*" (ISSP, p.7). The second is a project, under the goal of "*social support systems are developed*" (ISSP, p.7), called "*Student Support Triads*" where "*domestic students, experienced overseas students and a recently arrived overseas student*" (ISSP, p.7) are put together in a mentoring relationship. What is important to note about these latter two initiatives is that they construct international students as requiring assistance from the local community – either a local student or the Council – in order to exercise their agency. Hence, even in those situations where international students are encouraged to exercise their agency, they are depicted as still often needing help to do so. This suggests to readers that international students are not really able to help themselves and are instead at the mercy of circumstance unless provided assistance by the mainstream. This theme within the Council's discourse also defines the ways in which international students can help themselves, rather than providing them with the freedom to decide.

What the principles, goals and proposed initiatives/actions of the ISSP have the effect of doing is constructing international students, via wording, as relatively passive recipients of assistance from the Council and its employees. A group that has only a minor role to play in improving their own welfare, rather than active agents capable of helping themselves. Construction of international students as having only a limited role in obtaining their own social inclusion is also seen in the discourse of the SIP.

Similar to the ISSP, the discourse of the SIP constructs the community (including international students), via its wording, as having relatively little ability to affect their own situation. Instead, community groups are framed as largely dependent on the Council to facilitate their inclusion. The Council is constructed as the primary actor with regard to implementing and achieving social inclusion due to its power, resources and legitimacy, with two of the three goals of the SIP being focused on the Council and its services and programs. This further reinforces the Council's position of authority within Greenwood City.

Despite frequent general assertions about encouraging participation and working with the community in the SIP, the detailed breakdown of the policy's goals leaves little room for action by the general community, including the marginalised themselves. To illustrate, of the 30 'elements' listed which would constitute achievement of the policy's goals, only seven contain wording which construct the community as exercising some form of agency. Such words/phrases include 'participate in decisions', 'express', 'act' and 'advocate'. Some examples of these are:

- *"People and communities are encouraged, supported and provided with opportunities to participate in decisions that impact on their lives individually and as communities*
- *People and communities understand and express their rights and act in collaboration with others*
- *People and communities advocate on behalf of each other"* **– SIP, p. 15**

Here, too, it can be seen that, similar to in the ISSP, even in those seven 'elements' where the community is exercising agency it requires assistance from the Council to do so in two of them – "*People and communities are encouraged, supported and provided with opportunities to participate in decisions that impact on their lives individually and as communities*" (SIP, p.

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15) and "*Initiatives are developed which promote community relationships across diversity*" (SIP, p. 15).

This construction of the community and international students in the SIP and ISSP, respectively, as having only a minor role to play in achieving social inclusion and frequently constructing even this limited exercising of agency as being facilitated by the Council downplays the ability of the excluded to respond to their situation (Millar, 2007) and thereby challenge existing social structures (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). Yet, international students have proven that they are capable of exercising agency in order to attempt to address their marginalised situation. For example, by forming student associations to advocate for themselves such as the Australian Federation of International Students (2015), or staging large scale street demonstrations to protest the lack of support provided by government like the previously discussed taxi driver protest in Federation Square in 2008 (Fyfe, 2008; Petrie, 2008). Such activities and the clear exercising of agency they indicate are essentially ignored by the Council policy documents. This construction is exacerbated by the lack of representation of the voice of those targeted by this discourse within the policy texts.

<u>Voice of the marginalised</u>

Despite both the ISSP and the SIP professing to be based on extensive consultation with international students and the general community (which includes international students) respectively, the voices of those groups are only vaguely represented indirectly, and never directly, in the discourse of either document. The only voice that is clearly represented is that of the Council, as the author of both documents. Discourse representation is a feature of manifest intertextuality and refers to what and how pieces from other texts are presented in the text being analysed. It can be direct, which is when the represented text is included in its original format (e.g. as a direct quote), or indirect, which is when the represented text is modified (e.g. presented in a summarised format) (Fairclough, 1992). The way that the voice of international students is represented in the ISSP and SIP limits their agency as it hides their discourse from the audience, reducing its ability to influence. That is, they are denied access to a powerful resource that they could use to improve their social position (Bourdieu &

Wacquant, 1992). As mentioned earlier, this is a common feature of discourses about the marginalised (van Dijk, 2006a).

The ISSP explicitly states that the Council consulted international students, with "*over one hundred students* [speaking] *openly about their experiences in Australia and over three hundred students participat*[ing] *in the online survey*" (ISSP, pp. 4-5). The resulting "*personal narratives of their hopes and aspirations, the impacts of failed systems and the difficulties of keeping body and soul together were distilled into a model that would guide Council's response.*" (ISSP, p. 5) Thus, technically, the entire section of the ISSP document which discusses the model is supposedly an indirect representation (hence the passive voice) of international students' discourse, albeit interpreted by the Council.

However, it is never marked on the surface of the text which part(s) of the discourses of the model are representations of international students' voices and which parts are purely the voice of the Council. That is, the use of indirect representation makes ambiguous whose voice is actually being represented at any point in the text. This is a common use of indirect representation (Fairlcough, 1992). In this case, what such ambiguity does is obscure the source of the ISSP model and the policies it suggests. While it is stated explicitly a single time that this discourse indirectly represents the voice of those it targets – international students – which gives it legitimacy, the actuality of this is unclear in the subsequent text due to a lack of surface markings. Hence, while it is implied that the voices of international students are represented throughout the text, there is no consistent evidence of this. The only clear voice is that of the author, Greenwood Council.

As with the ISSP, within the text of the SIP there is no direct representation of the voice of community groups or anyone considered a member of one of the groups listed as 'at risk' of exclusion. The voice of the Council is the only one directly represented. In fact, there are only two brief indications within the text that the community contributed to the development of this policy and therefore their voices are indirectly represented. Those indications include a sentence within the 'Mayor's foreword' at the beginning of the document stating that he

"would like to thank all individuals and groups who have contributed to shaping this Policy..." (SIP, p. 3) and another in the Background section stating that,

> *"[Greenwood Council] has defined its own policy based on its own history of addressing inequities and social justice, taking into consideration the national, Victorian policies and legislation, and most importantly the local context and experience of* [Greenwood City] *citizens."* (SIP, p. 7)

However, unlike in the ISSP, here it is not even clear which "individuals and groups" are being referred to and whether they include any of those people/groups targeted by the policy, or whether the "experience" of Greenwood's citizens (indeed, who is a "citizen"?) was obtained via direct consultations specific to the development of this policy or simply from the Council's general everyday interactions with the community. It is therefore impossible to tell from the text whose voice, apart from that of the Council, is actually being represented and therefore who, if anyone apart from the Council, is exercising their agency in relation to creation of this social inclusion discourse.

While I was informed by the Council that community consultations for both the ISSP and SIP were conducted, that is largely irrelevant with regard to the impact of the texts. That the voices of international students and other groups targeted by these polices aren't clearly marked in the documents positions them as outside of the policy process (Fairclough, 1992). As there is no indication from the surface of the text if international students' voices have been represented in the policy discourse, the Council and not those targeted by the discourse is constructed as owning it. Therefore, despite the distillation of the consultations, the Council discourse may well be representative of its own priorities and not necessarily of those engaged in the consultation. This perception reduces the capacity of international students and other marginalised groups to exercise their agency through discourse and affect the structure of society in order to improve their social position.

Another feature of the discourse that highlights the lack of voice of international students in these documents and the limited agency which it attributes to them is the presupposition

(Fairclough, 1992) that international students want to be included. That is, the discourse takes as given that international students actually want to be included and are just waiting for someone to reach out a hand and enable them do it. It is true that the international students interviewed as part of my study, as well as the literature on international students in Australia (see, for example, Sawir, *et al.*, 2008), indicate that the vast majority would indeed like to interact more with Australians and have more opportunity to participate in the community. However, there is no explicit statement in either document from an international student that international students actually want to become socially included. While this may be an accurate assumption, the fact that international students do not explicitly express this view in either document silences the voices of those targeted by the discourse.

The absence of the voices of international students and other marginalised people in the discourse disempowers international students and gives the impression that the Council is going to impose social inclusion whether the target groups want it or not, thereby denying their subjectivity. It also constructs international students and the marginalised as having little control over their own lives and being people who are mainly acted on, i.e. lacking agency. The consequence of this is to objectify international students and other marginalised groups. According to Nussbuam (1995), there are seven ways a person can be objectified; including denial of agency (inertness) and denial of subjectivity (feelings and experience are unimportant). Therefore, to the extent that international students and other marginalised people's agency and subjectivity are limited or denied by the discourse, they are objectified by it (Nussbuam, 1995). Such an outcome is morally objectionable as it reduces them to a status that is less than human (Nussbuam, 1995).

From the above examples it can be seen that this discourse of social inclusion both limits the agency of international students and makes even some of the few times that they are encouraged to exercise their agency contingent upon being facilitated by representatives of the mainstream. It achieves this in two ways. First, by minimising the voice of international students in the texts via representing them only indirectly such that their discourse is obfuscated (Fairclough, 1992) and thereby has little impact on the audience (van Dijk, 2006a). This is in contrast to the voice of the Council, which is clearly and, as the nominal text producer, directly represented. Second, the discourse produced by the texts constructs

international students, through its wording, as being fairly passive agents, having only a limited role in achieving their own social inclusion. The Council has determined who is going to act and the vast majority of the work is to be performed by those other than the ones experiencing the problem – international students. Essentially, this discourse of social inclusion has the overall effect of constructing international students as fairly powerless and voiceless objects who are acted on for their own good but are largely incapable of helping themselves or contributing to discussions about how to help them. Based on my subsequent discussions with several elected members and employees of the Council, I am sure that this was not the intention of Greenwood Council when it was formulating its social inclusion policy. However, it is nonetheless the practical effect.

The unfortunate outcome of such a construction is the reinforcing of existing unequal power relationships between international students and Australian society. As noted above, agency is required in order to affect social structures and the power relationships that are inherent to them (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). As this discourse limits the agency of international students it also reduces their ability to rebalance those unequal power relationships which are major contributors to their marginalisation and related issues (Fairclough, 2009). Hence, the discourse of social inclusion produced by Greenwood Council, despite good intentions to improve the situation of international students, actually serves only to reinforce the status quo. International students remain forced into the periphery by the unequal power relationships and social structures in Australian society, unable to improve their social position (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

Diversity

Recognition of diversity is a prominent theme in the Council's social inclusion-as-participation discourse. It is an important one to analyse as one of the major criticisms of social inclusion discourses in general in the literature is that they deny difference and enforce conformity of the marginalised with the mainstream (see, for example, Edwards *et al.*, 2001). However, Millar (2007) contends that one of the main advantages that a discourse of social inclusion based on participation has over other types of social inclusion discourses is that it eliminates this concern. Participation based discourses are supposed to do this because the

ultimate aim is participation in the activities of society, rather than 'inclusion' into that society. The latter seen to imply conformity to the values and norms of mainstream society as a condition of inclusion, while the former does not. However, it is argued in this section, using the discourse of the Council as an example, that this is not necessarily the case. A discourse of social inclusion-as-participation can limit diversity and require conformity with the dominant cultural position by imposing a normalising regime, despite the frequent statements within the documents that the Council values diversity.

The ISSP explicitly states that one of the "*underlying assumptions of the* [ISSP] *model are that* [international] *students are unique and diverse...*" (ISSP, p. 6) The document does construct them in this way to a certain extent. Mainly in terms of coming from many countries:

> "*China and India are by far the largest source countries for international students*[…] *Other large source countries for international students include Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Nepal, Indonesia, Brazil and the United States.*" – **ISSP, p. 1**

As well as having significant cultural diversity in that "*International students provide a window into the cultures and people of the world*" (ISSP, p. 2) and interacting with them "*expands one's knowledge and understanding of various cultures and learning about the issues, customs and traditions in other parts of the world.*" (ISSP, p. 2) Thus, on the surface at least, the ISSP does recognise and present international students as a diverse group of people.

In comparison to the ISSP, the SIP is much more explicit about the importance of diversity, stating that it "*recognises diversity* as an inherent and defining feature of community life [emphasis in original] *where people's different ways of 'being and doing' are equally acknowledged and valued*" (SIP, p. 8). The need to account for and respect the diversity of the community while working towards social inclusion is stated numerous times in the text. Indeed, the SIP (p. 4) notes that "[Greenwood City Council] *has a long-standing commitment*

to serving and responding to the diverse needs of its community." This, as previously discussed, contributes to the Council's reputation for being progressive and focused on social justice. Indeed, two of the three goals of the SIP explicitly emphasise the importance of diversity:

> "*1. To build an organisation that is **inclusive and reflective of** [Greenwood's] **diverse communities** [my emphasis] where social justice, accountability, participation, empowerment, human rights and diversity are core principles which inform all of our internal and external policies, practices and business.*
>
> *2. To build services and programs that are inclusive, responsive, accessible and equitable and which respond to **the diversity of needs, rights and priorities of our communities** [my emphasis].*" **– SIP, p. 4**

Diversity is also another of the key principles indicated as underlying the SIP:

> "***Diversity** – Council recognises, welcomes and celebrates the diversity of* [Greenwood] *citizens and communities. People are diverse in abilities, age, sexual orientation, cultural values and practice, religions and beliefs, gender, ideas, lifestyles, and experiences. Council recognises that diversity has been a basis for injustice and discrimination for many people and communities. Recognition of the contribution of diversity to the lives, experiences and resources of communities is an important starting point. Council will seek to adapt its processes for policy development and program and service implementation and evaluation in ways that can accommodate and reflect this diversity. Council will seek to advance diversity in ways that further enhance people's individual and collective human rights in the context of relationships of mutual respect and reciprocity.*" **– SIP, p. 11**

The above quotes clearly indicate that, on the surface at least, the Council documents make a significant effort to clearly articulate a respect for and valuing of diversity. This fits with the Council's position as a socially progressive and social justice focused local government previously discussed. However, this sentiment is undermined by how the discourse is constructed.

Discussion

Supporting diversity is an interesting contention with regard to discourses of social inclusion, as one of the primary criticisms of such discourses in the literature is that they imply conformity to mainstream society norms (Steinert & Pilgram, 2003, as cited in Millar, 2007) and deny difference (Edwards *et al.*, 2001). Such criticism is not without warrant, as social inclusion can, and has, been used by the mainstream to unilaterally impose their identity and values on marginal groups under the guise of helping those groups (Preece, 2001). By explicitly acknowledging the value of diversity in their discourses the Council is attempting, whether intentionally or not, to alleviate this concern with regard to its specific discourse of social inclusion. While this valuing of diversity is likely sincere it is undermined by what the particular discourse of social inclusion based on participation produced by the Council documents requires the marginalised to do.

A discourse of social inclusion as participation is intended to allay fears that social inclusion denies difference (Edwards *et al.*, 2001) and imposes conformity with mainstream norms on the marginalised by focusing on participation in the 'key activities' of mainstream society, rather than simply becoming more like the mainstream/Centre (Millar, 2007). However, analysis of the Council's discourse using CDA reveals that there is still significant cause for such concerns, due to the nature of those 'key activities' to be participated in being determined by the mainstream, not the marginalised.

This control over what is considered to be a 'key activity' is a result of the previously discussed silence of international student voices in the documents. Only the Council's voice is represented, indicating that it controls the discourse and therefore also determines what activities are 'key'. In the absence of alternative voices, especially those of international students, it can be assumed that those activities chosen will reflect the norms and values of the mainstream, as represented by the Council. This creates a normalising regime that only admits to the mainstream/Centre those international students who have the resources necessary to participate in the key activities of mainstream Australian society and form relationships with them on their terms (Lewis, 2005). Consequently, encouraging

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participation in such activities is still an attempt at enforcing conformity to mainstream norms and limiting diversity as the marginalised are being pushed to participate in activities valued by the mainstream, but not necessarily themselves, with refusal or inability to participate justifiable grounds for exclusion (Ferguson, 1990). In this way, diversity within the Centre is limited to what is considered 'acceptable' by the Council/mainstream.

The only way for this not to be the case is if the marginalised have an equal voice and input into deciding what activities are to be considered 'key'. However, as demonstrated in the previous section on agency, the discourse produced by the Council documents does not feature the voice of international students or members of any other marginalised group. This has the effect of denying their agency and ability to contribute to the social inclusion discourse.

The reason for the Council limiting diversity is that diversity represents change to existing social structures and power relationships, which is potentially threatening to those in dominant social positions. The socially dominant, that is, mainstream society and its institutions, such as the Council, therefore only allow diversity to the extent that it is not threatening to their position of dominance. Imposing a normalising regime achieves this (Lewis, 2005). Indeed, it is my contention that one of the reasons that social inclusion is such an attractive discourse for the mainstream is that it provides the impression that something is being done, while not threatening existing social structures and therefore the mainstream's dominant social position.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented and discussed my findings from my critical discourse analysis of two Greenwood Council public policy documents – the International Student Support Program document (ISSP) and the Social Inclusion Policy document (SIP). The discourses produced by these two documents were analysed because of the powerful nature of public policy texts to "not only to control communicative events, but also to set the agenda, to define the situation and even the details of the ways groups, actions and policies are represented."

(van Dijk, 1997b, p. 22) The findings discussed in this chapter have contributed to answering the study's research questions. Those being:

- What is the impact of 'social inclusion' discourses on understandings of international students' needs, experiences and welfare?
    - How do key people/groups/institutions understand the terms 'social inclusion' and 'social exclusion'?
    - What are the implications of these understandings for policy and social discourses on international students?

Examination of the Council policy documents identified that the Council's official discourse was one of social inclusion understood as participation, with social exclusion constructed as the opposite, that is, lack of participation. The effects of this discourse on how international students' needs, experiences and welfare are understood were discussed using Millar's (2007) framework, with the discussion highlighting the implications of the discourse in terms of multi-dimensionality, relationality, resources, and agency being addressed. The effect of the discourse on diversity was also discussed. It was shown that although the discourse of social inclusion-as-participation produced by these documents constructed a broader understanding of international students' needs, experiences and welfare to some extent, it also comes with negative consequences that undermine its stated objectives and reinforce existing unequal power relations and social structures.

The positive effects of this discourse for how international students are understood include its multi-dimensionality and broadness, identification of the importance of relationships and resources, and the supposed encouragement of agency. Recognition of the multiple dimensions of life and the various forms of disadvantage that can occur in those dimensions is valuable for international students as they can experience issues in all dimensions of life (Marginson, *et al.*, 2010. The possession of appropriate resources is also essential to international students, as a primary cause of their marginalisation is lacking such resources, such as money or information (Forbes-Mewett, *et al.*, 2009). The formation of quality relationships with the communities in which they live is also important for international

students. Social isolation is a common problem many face, as well as one that contributes to creating other issues, such as mental health problems (Sawir, *et al.*, 2008).

The emphasis on the exercising of agency does, on the face of it, provide international students with the capacity to effect positive change on current social structures (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). The discourse appears to construct social inclusion as active participation by the entirety of society (i.e. the Council, the mainstream community and the marginalised), rather than simply passive access for the marginalised, which may not lead to actual participation. International students are encouraged to actively address their situation and the mainstream Greenwood community is encouraged to actively seek to include international students (Millar, 2007). This characteristic of the discourse appears to recognise that the marginalised exercising their agency, even if facilitated by the Council, is the only means by which positive change can occur (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999).

However, CDA analysis revealed that, in reality, the discourse of social inclusion as participation produced by the ISSP and SIP actually limits the agency of international students and other marginalised groups. It does this in two ways. First, by constructing only a limited role for international students in achieving their own social inclusion, thereby setting them up as relatively passive victims who require the help of the mainstream to emancipate themselves. This devalues international students as active, contributing, and therefore valued, members of the community. Second, by not including the voice of international students the discourse denies them a role in constructing the social inclusion policy. Placing them outside of the policy debate and further adding to the perception of them as a group which is objectified; acted on rather than acting (van Dijk, 2006a, 2006b). Limiting the agency of international students reduces their ability to achieve meaningful change by affecting the existing structures of society and the power relationships inherent to them (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999).

What this discourse does not account for are the difficulties that the marginalised, including international students, have in acting in their own interests. Namely with regard to determining which activities are constructed as important to participate in. When the

discourse of social inclusion-as-participation is being implemented in a top-down manner by a mainstream institution, as is the case with the Council's policy discourse, the final determination with regard to what activities are considered to be 'key' to social inclusion is made by that institution (Alden & Thomas, 1998; Hale & FitzGerald, 2007). This can be seen in the ISSP and SIP, where only the Council's voice is represented (Fairclough, 1992). While I was informed by the Council that the discourse was based on consultations with international students, this is not represented in the documents, indicating that the dominant author of the discourse is the Council. Therefore, the list of key activities can be seen to create a normalising regime that reflects the norms and values of the mainstream (Lewis, 2005), and encouraging the marginalised to participate in them becomes a means of promoting conformity with those norms and values, thereby limiting diversity (Barata, 2000; Edwards, *et al.*, 2001; Hale & FitzGerald, 2007). Greater participation consequently reinforces the existing underlying structures of society rather than challenging them. This is a common criticism of social inclusion discourses – that they reinforce the status quo by working within existing social structures and therefore legitimise them (Preece, 2001). Yet it is those very social structures which are a major contributor of marginalisation. As a consequence, there is no social change. International students either conform to existing social practices and structures which maintain the dominance of mainstream Australians or remain on the margins, unable to access the capital they need to improve their position in the field of the Greenwood City community (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), and exposed to the negative life events this entails (Marginson, *et al.*, 2010).

In many ways this discourse can be seen as setting international students up to fail. They are required to choose between either attempting to participate in activities which they may lack the resources (including willingness) necessary to be successful at, or not participating and being labelled as deserving of social exclusion as they refuse to work with the Council. Both outcomes serve to maintain the marginalisation of international students who choose not to or are unable to conform to mainstream standards and legitimise the role of the Council to "help" them. This reinforces the dominant position of the Council specifically, and the mainstream more generally, in the field of Greenwood City by legitimising the Council (thus increasing its relevant capital) and keeping out (due to not meeting the 'admission fee') any diverse elements that threaten the status quo.

The discourse's explicit construction of diversity as valuable and appreciated is therefore undermined as a consequence of the Council not relinquishing control of what activities are required to be participated in to become 'included'. That is, the discourse only represents the Council's voice, indicating that it was the main determiner of what activities are considered 'key' to participate in. Consequently, those activities create a normalising regime (Lewis, 2005) that reflects the values and norms of the mainstream and require the marginalised, including international students, to participate in them forces conformity to mainstream values and norms (Edwards, *et al.*, 2001; Hale & FitzGerald, 2007). Diversity is therefore only allowable to the extent which the Council permits, which means to the extent that it doesn't upset existing power relationships.

Essentially, the participation based discourse of social inclusion produced by the ISSP and SIP requires that international students, and other marginalised groups, be included on the terms of the mainstream rather than on their own, or at least equal, terms. This was succinctly summarised by International student association president 3 who, in referring to Greenwood Council's social inclusion efforts (not knowing that it was my case site), stated that the Council was *"trying to tell international students how they should be included."* The result is that, despite its apparently progressive nature, the discourse makes no adjustment to the underlying social structures and unequal relationships of power between the Centre/mainstream Australian society and the Periphery/marginalised (e.g. international students). Instead, it simply reflects and reinforces the status quo. Consequently, the social justice objectives of the Council's social policy will likely go largely unrealised, although its position of social dominance will remain intact.

As long as social inclusion policy discourse is employed in a top-down manner, where the mainstream (i.e. the Council) retains control of the discourse and imposes it on the marginalised, it will never be of true benefit to the marginalised. Such a discourse will always inherently represent the interests of the mainstream and require inclusion on its terms (Alden & Thomas, 1998; Hale & FitzGerald, 2007). As a consequence, the social structures which underlie society and which cause marginalisation will not change. Progressive change can

only happen if international students themselves are given equal power to construct the discourse of social inclusion, in conjunction with the mainstream, such that it reflects their needs and wants, as well as those of the mainstream. The voice of international students must be clearly represented in the discourse. This would enable international students to construct society and their place in it such that they are included in a way which they are comfortable with. Such a discourse would have to allow for diversity, with the marginalised and mainstream negotiating a mutually acceptable basis for inclusion. International students' diverse cultural backgrounds and identities would need to be acknowledged and taken into account while working towards social inclusion. Only in this way would a discourse of social inclusion enable international students to truly be empowered and affect positive change.

In the next chapter I will present and discuss my findings from my critical discourse analysis of the texts produced by my interviews with fifteen key informants including elected members and current and former employees of the Council, members of the Council's international student advisory committee, and the presidents of several international student organisations. This will contribute to answering my research questions by detailing how the key informants I interviewed constructed their understandings of social inclusion and analysing the consequences of those understandings for how international students' needs, experiences and welfare are interpreted.

Chapter 8: Participants' Construction of Social Inclusion

Introduction

In this chapter I present and discuss the findings from my critical discourse analysis of texts produced from research interviews with 15 key informants. These included two elected members of Greenwood City Council and six current and former employees of Greenwood City Council (hereafter, the Council), three members of the Council's international student advisory committee, and the presidents of four independent international student organisations. The interviews were conducted approximately six months prior to the release of Greenwood Council's Social Inclusion Policy document (SIP) and therefore after the release of the International Student Support Program document (ISSP). However, it must be noted that the Council had been developing the SIP for several years and during that time had circulated to staff and Councillors numerous draft documents and policy examples relating to social inclusion. Therefore, while those participants interviewed and who were associated with the Council would not have seen the completed SIP at the time they were interviewed, they would have been aware of the general social inclusion discourses circulating at the Council both formally and informally as it constructed its policy documents. The findings presented in this chapter will help to answer my study's research questions. Answering these research questions will guide the discussion of the findings in this chapter.

The analysis presented uses Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach to CDA to reveal how current social structures, and the power relationships inherent to them, are reflected in and reinforced by participants' construction of social inclusion. This in turn shapes how international students' needs, experiences and welfare are understood and has implications for policy and broader social discourses on social inclusion. The analysis revealed five major understandings of social inclusion constructed by participants. I have labelled these: robust engagement, connections/relationships, access/mainstreaming, being valued and appreciated by the community, and human rights. Some of these understandings did not stand alone, but rather were built on other understandings of social inclusion, for example, the 'valued and appreciated by the community' understanding was typically presented as an addition to the 'robust engagement' understanding, such that several participants produced multifaceted constructions of social inclusion by linking two discursive

themes. However, these additions were not constant across interviewees, which is why each understanding is presented here separately. It is noted in the analysis, however, when certain constructions were used in conjunction with others to illuminate the intersections of the understandings. These different understandings of social inclusion have implications for understanding the needs and experiences of marginalised groups in general and the needs, experiences and welfare international students specifically.

Consistent with the intent of CDA, my analysis reveals ways in which the social inclusion discourses produced by the Council and the understandings produced by its employees at best do not challenge, and at worst actively reinforce, the existing unequal power relationships between the mainstream Australian community and international students (Marginson, 2012). Power relationships which, as this analysis shows, contribute significantly to international students' marginalisation in Australian society. This is because Australian society in general, and the community of Greenwood City specifically, can be best understood as a field that is vertically structured to establish and maintain the dominant position of those in power, that is, mainstream Australians. Conversely, it also establishes and maintains the marginalisation of particular groups, such as international students, for the benefit of mainstream Australians (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The one exception found in the data is the understanding of social inclusion as international students being valued and appreciated by the Australian community, which, as I will show, does challenge those power relationships to some extent. However, the other understandings, as this analysis will show, work together to reinforce the status quo by using wording (Fairclough, 1992) and other discursive features to construct social inclusion in ways that seek to further assimilate international students into the current social system.

In constructing their understanding of social inclusion, participants draw on a general discourse that presents mainstream Australian society as a fair and inclusive place. This broader discourse constructs the existing social system, its norms and its institutions; including governmental institutions and framework, as good and legitimate. In doing this, social inclusion discourse draws on discourses that justify and legitimise current social arrangements and power hierarchies. This produces a field that shapes and justifies participants' desire to better incorporate international students into that system. The

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discursive feature of collocation (Fairclough, 1992) is also used by some participants to link their understanding of social inclusion with their desired outcomes for the construct, which invariably involves the marginalised being better connected to the mainstream.

Another important implication of these understandings of social inclusion is that they are quite diverse, and different participant groups construct social inclusion in ways that are not necessarily consistent. Yet, they seem to have similar effects on the marginalisation of international students. For example, only the most senior employee interviewed, and one of the elected members of the Council, drew heavily on the official Council social inclusion discourse. In contrast, a key aspect of how social inclusion was constructed by most international students interviewed, as 'being valued and appreciated by the community', was absent from how the concept was understood by all non-international students interviewed, with one exception. Others interviewed offered a variety of understandings of social inclusion that drew on a range of alternative discourses. The effects of these understandings, regardless of what discourses they drew on, produced a specific view of social inclusion as a relatively controlled (by those in charge) and passive (there are expected actions for those who want to be included) process that does not disturb the established order in any way.

Despite, or perhaps because of, these different understandings, virtually all participants enthusiastically supported the idea of social inclusion and its application to international students. This demonstrates the ambiguity and discursive appeal of social inclusion, in that the general concept is popular, yet it is understood in a variety of dissimilar ways. These characteristics were identified in the literature (see, for example, Levitas, 2005) and discussed earlier in this thesis (see Chapter 2). What is concerning about such strong support by participants for a concept that is (apparently unknowingly to them) contested is that it creates the possibility for government to justify a wide range of policy discourses under the guise of promoting 'social inclusion' (Levitas, 2005), such as those that prevent change from occurring. While those produced by Greenwood Council and examined in this study are relatively benign, merely reinforcing the status quo, there is the potential for very harmful discourses to be enacted.

Each of these different understandings of social inclusion also excludes, or fails to account for, various aspects of international students' experience – for example, having the necessary resources to robustly engage with their local community and Australian society more broadly as legitimate members of mainstream society. Such exclusions have serious implications both for how international students are understood and how they would be affected by policy discourses based on the constructions of social inclusion identified here. I will discuss those which are the most important and relevant to the common themes of reinforcing existing power relationships and conflicting understandings of social inclusion.

Discourses of social inclusion from the view of interview participants

The understandings of social inclusion produced by my research participants were as varied as the people who constructed them. Only two – one senior manager and one Councillor – clearly drew on the Council's official policy discourse (as subsequently produced by the SIP) in their discussion of social inclusion. The reference to formal policy discourse in their discussion of social inclusion is not unexpected, given the seniority and status of these two interviewees and their formal role in representing the council and the community it serves.

Others created their own constructions of social inclusion which drew primarily on 'lifeworld' discourses (Fairclough, 1992), as well as their own personal beliefs and attitudes. Several participants also conceived social inclusion in terms of a human rights discourse that referenced their personal political beliefs and their public personas as community workers in a diverse local government area. However, all drew on a background discourse that legitimised the existing system and justified government intervention in the lives of the marginalised. In addition, a number of interviewees constructed a multifaceted understanding of social inclusion by drawing on a range of intersecting themes about social inclusion.

The distinct understandings derived from the interviews variously constructed social inclusion as *robust engagement/interaction*, *connections/relationships*, *access/mainstreaming*, *being valued and appreciated by the community*, and *the realisation of human rights*. These understandings indicate a much more diverse and multi-faceted view

of social inclusion than those contained within the ISSP and SIP documents. The below table 8.1 displays these understandings and the interview participants which constructed them. Note that several participants feature more than once – they are the ones who constructed a multifaceted understanding of social inclusion.

Construction of social inclusion	Participants
Robust engagement/interaction	- Greenwood Council employee 1 - Greenwood Council employee 2 - Greenwood Council employee 4 - Greenwood Council employee 5 - Greenwood Council elected member 2 - International student advisory committee member 1 - International student advisory committee member 2 - International student association president 1 - International student association president 2
Connections/relationships	- International student advisory committee member 2 - Greenwood Council employee 1 - Greenwood Council employee 2 - International student association president 1
Access/mainstreaming	- Greenwood Council employee 2 [frontline employee] - Greenwood Council employee 3 [senior manager] - Greenwood Council elected member 1
Being valued and appreciated by the community	- International student advisory committee member 1 - International student advisory committee member 2 - International student association president 1 - International student association president 2 - International student association president 3
The realisation of human rights	- Greenwood Council employee 1 - Greenwood Council employee 5 - Greenwood Council employee 6

Table 8.1 – Understandings & interviewees who constructed them

I will discuss each of these understandings of social inclusion, what they exclude and their implications, in turn below.

Robust engagement

Key features/meaning

The most common understanding of social inclusion produced by participants was one which I have labelled 'robust engagement'. Overall, it was utilised by eight of the 15 participants interviewed, with those eight coming from all four informant categories. The term combines key words used by two participants – 'robust interaction' and 'active engagement' – which encapsulates a common theme in the way that social inclusion was constructed using wording by those participants. 'Wording' is a discursive feature which involves text producers selecting particular words to construct meaning (Fairclough, 1992). The effect of wording is revealed through CDA because, as Fairclough (1992) argues, wording choices are never innocent or neutral, regardless of whether they are made consciously or unconsciously. The wording used in a text constructs a particular reality which has implications for how things are understood, how problems are defined and therefore how people act or are expected to react in response to that reality.

The label of 'robust engagement' is an umbrella for words such as 'engagement', 'participating', 'relating', and 'interaction', which were used numerous times by participants to construct their understanding of social inclusion. The following quotes are illustrative of how particular wording was used to construct an understanding of social inclusion as robust engagement:

> *But to address your question, social inclusion is the most basic and easy to understand an easy to address issue because it's about people, talking, **relating**, **engaging** with other people* [my emphasis]. **–** Greenwood Council employee 5

> *The other part of* [promoting social inclusion] *was to address barriers, that people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds might have; and then to take it further into creating opportunities for **interaction**, **robust interaction** amongst*

different groups including the wider society [my emphasis]. – Greenwood Council employee 4

This understanding constructs social inclusion as an easily understandable and a relatively easy to achieve process of people doing things together and getting to know each other. An idea that was elegantly expressed by one of the international student association presidents:

> *But if we had that social inclusion where more people had grassroots-level access to student perspectives, if more people were **engaged** with international students and they talked to the international students, they would find out more from individual perspectives, and that would paint the truer picture than perhaps a whole group of people talking to one person reporting to represent all international students, because then that's just one view that's coming through. But there's also going to be more **understanding** as well about international student issues, there's less likely to be perceptions that, you know, international students can't speak English, or that they're unwilling to help. All it takes is for one person to meet another student and just have a ten-minute conversation with them for them to change their perception about something. And if more people had contact with international students on an individual, personal level then those perceptions would change.* – International student association president 2

In addition to wording social inclusion as local people engaging with international students, this participant constructs the outcome of such engagement as greater 'understanding' by collocating (Fairclough, 1992) 'understanding' and 'engaged'. 'Colocation' is a type of cohesive marker that can be used to guide how interpreters make sense of a text by linking particular words or expressions together (Halliday, 1966, as cited in Fairclough, 1992). This increased understanding of international students is presented as leading to locals having more positive perceptions about international students. The implied outcome being that they are acceptable to include and that this would lead to an improvement of international students' welfare. This is discussed in more detail later in this section.

The participants who constructed social inclusion as robust engagement were focused on active ways to achieve social inclusion. The wording of this understanding is action-oriented and invokes the idea of people participating in community social and cultural events. Participants described what this would be like in terms of people interacting in a social setting, such as attending a picnic or Christmas dinner, and using that opportunity to learn about each other.

> […]*one of the things that we did really well toward the end as well was, we did share care. If you've got a spare seat at your Christmas table and we invited families in* [Greenwood City] *to offer a seat to an international student at Christmas based on the premise that, if you were in India or Malaysia during a big festival, you'd want to know what that festival was about and you'd love to go into someone's home and see what it meant.* – Greenwood Council employee 2

The construction of social inclusion in an active sense as robust engagement was contrasted with the perceived alternative of passive tolerance or acceptance of particular individuals or groups – '*respectful coexistenc*e' as Greenwood Council employee 4 put it – which was presented as insufficient for international students' social inclusion. This is clearly expressed in the following quote:

> *I think education and awareness raising is huge, and I think it is up to institutions to create opportunities for **robust interaction**, because that is the solution to everything. Not respectful coexistence.* – Greenwood Council employee 4

Such a focus on active engagement emphasises the importance of agency in this understanding of social inclusion. It requires that both international students and the mainstream Australian community, reflected more locally as the Greenwood community, freely choose to come together and engage with each other. As Miller (2007) argues, social exclusion is something done by people to other people, and here it appears that social inclusion is something that must be actively achieved through robust engagement. This emphasis on agency is beneficial for international students, as it establishes a shared responsibility for increasing social inclusion, and presents international students as a marginalised group in an active role (i.e., agents) in helping themselves rather than as passive

bystanders in efforts to address their issues. However, this assumes that the current structure of society allows international students to exercise their agency to the same extent as mainstream Australian society. To do so, international students would require sufficient quantities of the resources deemed important by mainstream Australian society, for example, English language skills. However, I contend, and the analysis shows, that that is not the case for many international students and is something which this understanding of social inclusion excludes from consideration, among other facets of the international student experience. Consequently, this understanding presents a fairly narrow and limited construction of social inclusion.

What does it exclude?

The main effect of constructing social inclusion as 'robust engagement' is to define social inclusion in a fairly narrow sense as participation in social activities (for example, picnics, meeting locals in their homes at festive times) or, at best, social and some political activities (such as community consultations), where international students are 'free' to become involved. However, such an understanding excludes from consideration several important features of the international student experience: namely, international students also experience issues in the cultural and economic dimensions of life; members of the mainstream are not always willing to 'robustly engage'; and many international students do not possess sufficient quantities of the resources – such as cultural understanding and interest in such activities, language skills and social contacts – that are necessary if they are to engage effectively with the mainstream. Indeed, the kind of robust engagement envisaged by participants seems to invoke a narrowly prescribed and limited Australian way of life (picnics, Christmas celebrations), which may not be sufficient to lead to the desired outcomes of greater understanding and the formation of connections. The below quote is illustrative of how robust engage was constructed.

> "*But to address your question, social inclusion is the most basic and easy to understand an easy to address issue because it's about people, talking, relating, engaging with other people. System's a bit more complex because it takes time and, you know, the machinery of government gets in the way.* **But there's nothing stopping people from having a picnic together.** *All it takes is someone with the foresight to organise it.*"**– Greenwood Council employee 5**

These exclusions have significant implications for how international students' experience, needs and welfare are understood and therefore the development of policies targeted at assisting them to be more socially integrated into society. 'Robust engagement' promotes a very narrow understanding of social inclusion that limits its usefulness for addressing the issues of international students. However, most importantly, it ignores the deep structural causes of international students' marginalisation, most particularly their claim to the political, social, cultural and economic resources needed to engage with the local community. Instead, this understanding justifies and reinforces the existing structures of society by focusing on better engaging international students with those structures as a means of addressing their marginalisation (Preece, 2001).

Excluding other dimensions of life

One of the main aspects of the international student experience excluded by this understanding of social inclusion relates to the problems that they face in the cultural and economic dimensions of life (Steinert, 2003). Social inclusion as 'robust engagement' focuses almost exclusively on participation in the social dimension of life. Most participants understood it as occurring via 'talking' and 'interacting', often at social events such as community picnics or cultural events, although some did construct it in a broader sense, to also include the political dimension, such as community consultation. This broader understanding involved both robust social and political engagement, with the latter mostly presented as international students and other marginalised groups being consulted by the Council and having their voices heard. Not surprisingly, this was something that was considered very important by the international students interviewed:

> [Q: Actively engage, good phrase. So what's involved in being actively engaged?] [unintelligible] **consultation** [my emphasis]*, I think that's one. And then also you've been given a task, even if it's a simple task, you feel you've done something. Also **being able to express yourself** [my emphasis].* – International student advisory committee member 1

Active social engagement with the mainstream community may address the lack of meaningful interaction with locals that many international students express a desire for, as well as helping students overcome the cultural adjustment and mental health issues related to this (see, for example, Marginson, *et al.,* 2010; Sawir, *et al.*, 2008). Similarly, by having a greater political voice (e.g. advocacy, voting rights) with government may help address the numerous issues international students have which are related to the governance structure of international education in Australia. Such as lack of public transport concessions in New South Wales and Victoria, or the weak level of support required by the ESOS Act (see Chapter 6 for a detailed discussion; Marginson, *et al.,* 2010). However, this still presents quite a narrow understanding of social inclusion, one that is silent on the issues of international students which occur in the other (i.e., economic and cultural: Steinert, 2003) dimensions of life, for example, their vulnerability to exploitation by employers and landlords, or their difficulty in securing suitable accommodation (Marginson, *et al.,* 2010).

Participants who constructed social inclusion in this way may be assuming that this narrow view of social inclusion as social, or social and political, engagement will resolve those issues experienced by international students in the other dimensions of their lives. For example, being socially connected may change their status from outsiders or the 'Other' to more mainstream. The assumed flow on effect of this is that that employers and landlords may be less inclined to exploit them as legitimate members of the workforce or that they won't be seen as a vulnerable target for crime, perhaps because they are living in more affluent circumstances (Marginson, *et al.,* 2010). However, even if this assumption is correct, it seems an inefficient way to address the serious problems faced by international students in those other dimensions of life. Such a narrow construction of social inclusion greatly reduces the capacity of the understanding to affect change, by excluding from consideration those issues which occur in the economic and cultural dimensions of life. On the other hand, a more broadly constructed understanding of social inclusion, one that incorporated all four dimensions of life (Steinert, 2003), may allow for issues such as political representation (having a say) or access to economic resources to be recognised directly.

Desire of mainstream to engage presupposed

In a similar manner to the social inclusion-as-participation discourse produced by the Council documents discussed in the previous chapter, constructing social inclusion as robust engagement presupposes that both groups are willing to exercise their agency to engage with each other. Presupposition is a discursive feature where a text producer takes as already established or given within a text a particular proposition (Fairclough, 1992). In this case, that proposition is that mainstream Australian society and international students want to engage with each other. I argue that the social inclusion as robust engagement discourse in effect places responsibility for engagement on international students, as it is already "established", by the wording of robust engagement in relation to social inclusion, that mainstream Australian society is willing to engage. Thus, there is a hidden trap in that, if robust engagement on the behalf of international students does not occur it will be construed as their fault, and not due to the unwillingness of mainstream Australian society. This understanding sets international students up to fail, as a key condition for their social inclusion – the willingness of the mainstream Australian community to engage – is beyond their control and may not exist, yet they are held responsible for robust engagement occurring. It therefore also justifies and legitimises international students' marginalisation in the eyes of those charged with the policy work of including them.

The following quote is illustrative of the complex nature of the social inclusion as robust engagement and the traps that may befall international students within this discourse. International student advisory committee member 2 brings into question the construction that the mainstream community is willing to engage by pointing to discrimination towards international students:

> *What does the community need to do? That's the biggest question. Probably the community needs opportunities to get to know the students and* **appreciate** *what the students bring to their community. And the community need to get over themselves a bit. You can take a horse to water but you can't make it drink. So* [the international student advisory committee] *can put on a dazzling array of events, initiatives, opportunities and if community doesn't want to* **engage** *then, you know, I mean people out there in the community just have to not be racist. That's the biggest question* [my emphasis]. – International student advisory committee member 2

In this quote, the speaker questions the willingness of mainstream Australians to engage socially with international students, thereby challenging the idealised view of the mainstream community as good and welcoming implied by the presupposition that they are willing to engage. However, the marginalisation of international students in Australia and their often unfair and sometimes criminal treatment by the local community suggests that, as the above quote indicates, 'racist' may be a more appropriate descriptor (Nyland, *et al.*, 2009; Ramia, Marginson & Sawir, 2013). The presupposition also places the burden of engaging, taking up the welcome offered, on international students, regardless of the suitability for international students of the processes in place to do so, for example, picnics. That is, this understanding of social inclusion as robust engagement presupposes that international students have the resources necessary, such as time and money, and are willing and able to mobilise them to engage with mainstream Australians.

Importance of resources

Social inclusion as robust engagement also excludes from consideration the importance of resources. Again, presupposition about what resources are needed, and how they are obtained and mobilised, fails to recognise the difficulties international students face acquiring sufficient quantities of the resources required for 'robust engagement'. The term 'resources' is used here in the broadest sense, including both tangible and intangible (Millar, 2007). People require language skills, time, money, transport, desire, socio-cultural knowledge and a sense of being welcome to attend social events in order to engage with the people in their community. Indeed, a major factor contributing to the marginalisation of many international students is that they lack those resources. For example, many international students are not confident in their conversational English language ability, have little time to socialise between studying and working, or simply do not find common Australian social activities, such as drinking alcohol, attractive (Marginson, *et al.*, 2010).

However, the lack of such resources is never mentioned by participants and the need for these resources 'goes without saying' according to participants. Instead, they presuppose that international students already possess them or, if they do not have them, know how to access

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them. The effect of this is to imply that the cause of international students' marginalisation is simply lack of opportunity for engagement with mainstream Australians, something that is relatively easy to address. This ignores the deeper structural issues related to the nature of being an 'international student', such as limited rights or temporary nature of their stay here which make it difficult for them to obtain important resources (Deumert, *et al.*, 2005). Issues which are much harder to solve and would require a critical examination of the inequities present in current social structures. This is something that the Council and broader society may find uncomfortable as it brings into question their positive self-perceptions and assumptions about the equitableness and inclusiveness of current social structures (Nyalnd, *et al.*, 2010).

It is possible that participants in this study considered the provision of necessary resources as an implicit part of creating robust engagement. However, by remaining silent on the need for resources as a fundamental requirement for robust engagement, and by presupposing that international students already possess them, this understanding of social inclusion effectively places discussion of the provision of such resources beyond consideration. Following this, the failure of international students to 'robustly engage' when provided the opportunity to do so then becomes a problem with the students' motivation, rather than the nature of the opportunities provided by the Council. In this way international students can be blamed for their social exclusion by the local community, because they 'choose' not to engage in activities designed to enhance their social inclusion, when it is a lack of the necessary resources to engage that is at issue.

This lack of resources is caused by the structure of the Greenwood community field which both limits the ability of international students to obtain those required resources and devalues the values of the resources they do possess. Addressing this issue would require the political will to disrupt the current social consensus to arrive at an agreement to change social structures to provide international students with more resources and/or making the resources they do have more valuable (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). For example, Federal policy initiatives could shift the international education discourse from a focus on the economic benefits of international students to the diversity benefits that having an international student cohort bring to Australian universities.

Desired outcome presupposed

Social inclusion as robust engagement explicitly words its outcomes as a greater mutual understanding between the mainstream Greenwood community and international students. In the case of Greenwood Council, this is reflected in participants' comments about the presence of international students in the local community. This is achieved through participants' collocating terms such as 'engagement' and 'understanding' when talking about social inclusion as robust engagement. 'Colocation' is a type of cohesive marker that can be used to guide how interpreters make sense of a text by linking particular words or expressions together (Halliday, 1966, as cited in Fairclough, 1992). This is exemplified in the quote below, where the lack of engagement is presented as creating a 'gap in understanding' for the Council:

> *So our mandate was around connecting and advocating working with communities. That particular population group* [international students] *hadn't been a group that we had **engaged** with previously. And particularly when we were talking about social inclusion, then it was clear that that forced a gap in **understanding** that community.* – Greenwood Council employee 1

The implied outcomes of this greater understanding are increased acceptance by, and the formation of relationships between, mainstream Australian society and international students. This is clearly expressed by Greenwood Council employee 2, who collocates 'bringing people together' with 'understanding' and 'connections':

> *I think with that particular project* [the ISSP]*, and with international students in mind, it really was about breaking down some of those **barriers of misunderstanding** between the domestic and the international students. And where international students felt isolated and domestic communities, Australian communities, felt paralysed. They didn't know how to help, what to do, they were fearful, **misunderstood**, you know. So I think it was just about facilitating **connections**, **bringing people together**, perhaps to have better **understanding**, I think.* – Greenwood Council employee 2

Thus, the intended effect of this understanding of social inclusion is not really 'robust engagement' but rather the formation of connections between mainstream Australian society and international students. However, critical discourse analysis reveals that these connections rest on presuppositions (Fairclough, 1992) that are largely illusionary and that social inclusion is more an idea than an actuality. There was no evidence offered by participants to support the idea that greater understanding will result from 'robust engagement' or that, if such understanding did occur, it would lead to the formation of relationships and the inclusion of international students. That is, the desired outcome of this construction of social inclusion, mutual understanding and acceptance of everyone in the community leading to relationships, is assumed to occur as a result of robust engagement, rather than being constructed as an inherent requirement for social inclusion.

The consequence of this is that social inclusion could potentially be officially achieved according to this specific construction – i.e., international students and mainstream Australian society robustly engaging with each other – yet the implied desired end state of understanding, acceptance and establishing relationships between international students and the local mainstream community not be. The presence of this presupposition therefore creates the possibility that international students could be officially socially included because they are 'robustly engaged' with by the local Greenwood community, yet remain disadvantaged and on the fringes of society. This is because 'robust engagement' does not require structural change and if such change does not occur there will be no improvement to international students' welfare as they continue to be denied the capital they need to improve their position within the field of the Greenwood City community (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). This finding relates to one of my main overarching points with regard to social inclusion – that it is attractive at least partly because it provides the impression that positive change is being made without challenging existing social structures.

Conclusion

Social inclusion as robust engagement was constructed by participants, via wording, as people from all backgrounds doing things together, getting to know each other and learning to be comfortable together. This involved participating in community social and cultural events, such as attending a community picnic or Christmas dinner, and using that opportunity

to learn about each other. Some participants, mainly international student representatives, also included participation in the political dimension of life in their construction of robust engagement, which involved being consulted by the Council and having their voices heard. While this understanding of social inclusion appeared to have the benefits of constructing agency for international students and placing equal responsibility for achieving social inclusion on both students and the mainstream Greenwood community, such positives are undermined by what this understanding excludes from consideration and the implications of those exclusions.

This understanding of social inclusion presupposes many of the requirements fundamental to its success and in so doing excludes from consideration underlying power relations that point to deeper structural causes of international students' marginalisation. For example, the discourse presupposes a willingness of members of Greenwood local community and by implication, mainstream Australian society, to engage with international students. In addition the discourse presupposes that international students possess sufficient resources to engage accordingly. Finally the discourse of robust engagement presupposes that engagement will lead to greater understanding between international students and the community, thereby forming valuable connections that bring students into mainstream society. These presuppositions do not account for international students' lack of citizenship rights (Deumert, *et al.*, 2005; Marginson, 2012), possession of sufficient resources to participate effectively in mainstream Australian life (Forbes-Mewett, *et al.*, 2009; Sawir, Marginson, Forbes-Mewett, Nyland & Ramia, 2012), or the local community's reluctance to embrace international students, for example where there are experiences of racism and exclusion (Marginson, *et al.*, 2010).

Indeed, those presuppositions perpetuate the unequal power relationships within the field of Greenwood community which are the major cause of welfare disparities between international students and mainstream Australian society by failing to challenge existing structures. That is, current social structures in Australia are set up to disadvantage and exploit international students for the benefit of mainstream Australians (as discussed in Chapter 6). More specifically, the discourse of robust engagement pays lip service to social inclusion for international students because international students contribute significantly to Australia's

economy and their fees prop up the country's higher education system (Senate standing committee on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009). However this discourse of social inclusion, like the others discussed below, is designed as a band aid solution to visible social issues that are a potential threat to social stability and cohesion. The discourse occludes discussion of other issues such as minimal social protections and support (Deumert, *et al.*, 2005; Marginson, 2012; Ramia, *et al.*, 2014), and there is a demonstrated reluctance on the part of government to take action to address these and other issues (Nyland, *et al.*, 2010), all in order to maximise income. This understanding of social inclusion therefore does little to improve the welfare of international students.

The understanding of social inclusion as 'robust engagement' seeks to better incorporate international students into the mainstream. It does this using established social processes (e.g. talking, going to picnics and other social activities). From the student representatives' perspective, it gives voice to the ideal of political engagement through consultation with and by international students, however this is a minor element of the discourse.. This understanding attempts to move international students from the Periphery to the Centre; however the conditions for entry are set by a normalising regime (Lewis, 2005). A normalising regime is a discourse which sets boundaries on the extent to which diversity is tolerated and thereby 'subordinates and disciplines minorities' (Lewis, 2005, p. 540). The normalising regime here is created by the requirement that international students 'robustly engage' via established mainstream processes. Those processes require that international students possess particular resources in order to participate and that the mainstream Australian community is willing to engage. These requirements act as a disciplining and exclusionary force that only allows international students with particular characteristics, and therefore considered 'acceptable' by the mainstream Australian community, to move into the Centre and thereby become included. This effectively limits the amount of diversity allowed within mainstream Australian society and international students must either conform or be 'justifiably' excluded (Ferguson, 1990). There is little to no consideration of the capability of international students to effectively participate, i.e., robustly engage, in those processes. The consequence of this normalising regime is that there is no fundamental change to the structures of society as the 'admission fee' for entry into the Centre has not changed. The capital required to move into and improve position within the the Centre remain the same (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

The primary effect of this is to legitimise and reinforce those processes of engagement, and therefore the social structures and power relationships that lie behind them (Preece, 2001). Therefore, despite any superficial changes made to increase robust engagement between international students and mainstream Australian society, the latter and its representative institutions (i.e., the Council) maintain their dominant social position. Inclusion is therefore at their discretion. It is also on their terms, as defined by the normalising regime. Mainstream Australian society or the Council can choose to stop robustly engaging with international students at any point, or change the normalising regime, such that the nature of the 'opportunities' for engagement are (even more) inaccessible, and even those international students who had managed to become included would return to being excluded. International students therefore gain no increase in power within society from this understanding of social inclusion, as their structural position relative to mainstream Australian society remains effectively unchanged. Participants who produced this understanding of social inclusion are therefore also implicitly drawing on a discourse that presents the current social system as legitimate and the best available, ruling out alternative ways of structuring society.

Reinforcement of existing social structures, that is, the status quo, or at best a lack of challenge to it, is a common theme across the discourses of social inclusion analysed in this thesis. This goes back to what I contend is one of the main appeals of social inclusion: it provides the appearance of helping the marginalised without challenging the power of the mainstream.

Formation of Connections

Overview

This understanding of social inclusion constructs the concept, via wording, as connectedness/having relationships with the people and community around oneself. It is very similar to the 'robust engagement' understanding discussed above, but goes further by constructing social inclusion as the outcome of social interaction – forming connections/relationships – rather than presupposing that these outcomes will automatically

follow. The quotes below are indicative of how participants, including international student representatives and council employees, who produced this understanding of social inclusion worded it in terms of having connections with the community:

> *But the students have expressed strongly in the past I'm told, and people like* [International student advisory committee member 1] *back this up, that they do want to make* **connections** [my emphasis] *with the local residents so* **they want to feel included in this community** [my emphasis]*, not on the outer.* – International student advisory committee member 2

> '*And it's about* **connection** [my emphasis] *with the community. I think, unlike other tiers of government, we* [in local government] *do have really great sort of capacity, whether it's the establishment of our community advisory committees. And that's where it would be really good to make sure we keep connecting with the* [International student advisory committee]*. And* **they are all about social inclusion in a way, because it's about relationships and participation** [my emphasis]*.* – Greenwood Council employee 1

Also in a similar manner to social inclusion as robust engagement, this understanding constructs the outcome of the formation of connections as greater understanding between the mainstream and the marginalised by collocating the terms. This can be done, as in the below quote, where this understanding is quite clearly presented as the outcome of 'facilitating connections, bringing people together'.

> '*So I think* [the international student support program] *was just about facilitating* **connections***,* **bringing people together** *perhaps to have better* **understanding** *I think.*' – Greenwood Council employee 2

Alternatively, it can be done more indirectly. In the following quote, from an international student association president, 'knowing your neighbour' (i.e., having relationships with the people around you) was collocated with 'understanding' in response to a question asking him to define social inclusion. Although, the two were not explicitly linked as in the previous

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quote, this participant is still representing social inclusion as people within a community knowing each other and from that knowledge establishing a mutual understanding:

> '*Now, if you're talking about social inclusions, how do people in India survive? They survive based on general **understanding**, common grounds. Out here, how many neighbours do you know who live next to your house? Do you know anyone?*[…] *Ask anyone who lives out here whether they know their neighbour. Nobody will know them.* –* International student association president 1

The implied outcome of people developing understanding between each other is presupposed as being increased social harmony within the community. This presupposition relates to the broader discourse of social inclusion having the purpose of increasing social harmony (Silver, 1994) or, to use the terminology of International student association president 1, to 'survive'. 'Survive' here refers to maintenance of a stable community, although this can most certainly impact on people's literal ability to survive.

This is consistent with literature on the purpose of local government in Australia. As Kiss (1999, p. 110) contends, local government has a significant role in shaping communities that are 'civil, equitable, culturally sensitive, environmentally sustainable and democratic', that is, harmonious and inclusive along cultural and political lines. However, as I demonstrate below, this objective is somewhat thwarted by the unequal power relationships inherent to this (and other) understanding(s) of social inclusion. Indeed, Levitas (2005) argues that a focus on social inclusion and social harmony can silence dissent and alternative views, thereby reinforcing the status quo, in the name of creating the image of a 'good' society. This also includes ignoring the existence of inequality among those who are included, a theme that recurs frequently throughout my analysis of the various discourses of social inclusion covered in this study.

Analysis and Discussion

Understanding social inclusion as the formation of connections with the community is very similar to constructing it as 'robust engagement'. Indeed, this understanding excludes most of

the same important factors of the international student experience. Those factors are dimensions of life other than the social, the possibility that members of the mainstream are not willing to form connections, and the importance of having the necessary resources to form connections/relationships. This understanding therefore has similar implications, in that it is unable to address the full range of issues experienced by international students, particularly the structural causes of their marginalisation. However, despite the close similarity of the two constructions of social inclusion, I highlight the formation of connections as a particular understanding of social inclusion for the important reason that, unlike robust engagement, it does not presuppose the desired outcome of forming connections to achieve greater understanding. That is, the understanding of social inclusion as forming connections is very clear about the desired outcome whereas the robust engagement understanding is not.

Desired outcome

The intended outcome of understanding social inclusion as forming connections is, as my label for it indicates, the formation of connections between mainstream Australian society and international students. This objective is clearly articulated by how this understanding of social inclusion is constructed. That is, social inclusion is defined here in terms of achieving connections, rather than those connections being a presupposed flow-on effect as in the case of the robust engagement understanding. The main advantage of constructing social inclusion this way is that it avoids a significant issue with the robust engagement understanding.

The issue is that, as discussed in the previous section, it is possible for robust engagement as social inclusion can be achieved, that is, international students are robustly engaged with. Yet the actual intended objective of this robust engagement, forming connections with the community and achieving greater understanding, not be achieved. This issue is overcome by constructing social inclusion explicitly as the formation of connections between the mainstream Greenwood community and international students, as it means that social inclusion is only achieved when connections are formed. The effect of this is to make it more difficult for the mainstream to claim to be promoting social inclusion, yet construct it in a way that maintains international students' marginalisation.

A benefit for international students of constructing social inclusion in this way, as having relationships with and feeling connected to the communities in which they live, is that it enables the explicit recognition of two of their most often cited problems: social isolation and forming friendships with locals (Marginson, *et al.*, 2010; Sawir, *et al.*, 2008). These two issues are very important for international students, and also contribute to a number of other serious problems, such as mental health problems, weak social support networks and lack of knowledge about Australia (Marginson, *et al.*, 2010; Sawir, *et al.*, 2008).

However, both the understandings of social inclusion as either robust engagement or as the formation of connections presuppose their ultimate desired outcomes of social harmony and increased equity between locals and international students. Indeed, the discursive chain runs something like robust engagement leads to the formation of connections, which leads to greater mutual understanding, resulting in social harmony and equity. Constructing social inclusion as the formation of connections removes one of the presuppositions from that chain – that robust engagement will lead to the formation of connections - and therefore reduces the number of assumptions that have to hold for equity and social harmony to be achieved.

Excludes cultural, political and economic dimensions of life

Constructing social inclusion as the formation of connections excludes from consideration the cultural, political and economic dimensions of life, focusing exclusively on the social sphere (Steinert, 2003). Participants who produced this understanding constructed social inclusion as literally being socially connected with the community. Such a narrow focus limits the ability of the understanding to identify the numerous problems which international students experience in those other dimensions of life. Essentially, the rights of international students to be included politically, economically and culturally are placed outside of the discourse. This produces a very limited understanding of international students' needs, experience and welfare, and implies that inclusion in those other dimensions of life are either unimportant or unnecessary. This understanding also ignores the importance of having the necessary resources to be able to form relationships that result in inclusive social ties.

Excludes the importance of resources

Social inclusion as the formation of connections ignores the importance of having the requisite resources to participate in social activities necessary for forming and maintaining connections with others, particularly members of the mainstream (Millar, 2007). Those resources include time, conversational English language skills, money (for transport, equipment, entry fees, etc.), appropriate knowledge of Australian cultural norms, and the actual desire to form connections with the mainstream Australian community, which includes feeling that locals would welcome such connections (Marginson, *et al.*, 2010; Forbes-Mewett & Nyland, 2008; Sawir, *et al.*, 2008). This understanding presupposes that international students already possess those resources as, with the exception of one, none of the participants who produced it mentioned such resources.

The implication of this presupposition is similar to that of the same presupposition in the robust engagement understanding. It enables mainstream Australian society to label as deviants and not worthy of help international students who struggle to form connections because they lack the necessary resources (Cullen & Pretes, 2000; Ferguson, 1990). This would be justified on the basis that those international students have demonstrated a lack of interest in being part of the community, that is, they have made a deliberate choice to not take up the opportunities provided to them to 'join in'. Yet the provision of such opportunities is meaningless if those targeted lack the resources required to effectively form and maintain relationships with the community, for they will be unable to take advantage of them. For example, many international students study full-time and also work part-time to cover the cost of their tuition and living expenses. Given these demands on their schedules and financial resources, many do not have the time or the money to attend community social events or other activities with the frequency required to establish, let alone maintain, social relationships with members of mainstream Australian society. Indeed, weak social networks and social isolation are two often-identified problems faced by international students, the primary causes of which are heavy study- and work-loads, poor pay and high tuition costs (Marginson, *et al.*, 2010; Sawir, *et al.*, 2008).

This lack of consideration of resources sets international students up to fail by constructing the activities necessary for social inclusion as ones which international students lack the resources to participate in effectively. Thereby demonstrating how understanding social inclusion as the formation of connections is silent on the power relations and structures which cause international students' marginalisation and therefore implicitly justifies them.

However, there was an exception. One participant, Greenwood Council employee 2, constructed international students as needing to have a certain level of capability or skills before they felt comfortable attempting to form connections with locals. In doing this she uses wording (Fairclough, 1992), by referring to 'capacity' to express the idea of resources – in her construction of social inclusion as the formation of connections:

> '*I think it's about creating a richer, more fuller environment for students. So if they're happy and they feel connected and they feel like they're getting something out of it. And for me it's* [social inclusion] *about fostering activities that **develop their skills** [my emphasis] too, so it's not just social and recreational, it's about leadership and **capacity building** [my emphasis].*
>
> …
>
> '*Yeah, absolutely, **they** [international students] **just don't understand how to connect** [my emphasis]. And sometimes they do, sometimes they manage it*. – Greenwood Council employee 2

The effect of this is to construct international students in comparative terms relative to the mainstream. In order to be included they must first gain the skills of the already included. Hence, while international students are presented here as generally needing to develop their 'skills' in order to be able to connect with locals, Greenwood Council employee 2 presupposes that the mainstream Australian community already possesses these needed skills. This constructs a reality where international students need to adjust to the requirements of the mainstream in order to become socially included. Whereas the mainstream does not need to make any significant changes, beyond being willing to accept international students (something this understanding of social inclusion also presupposes), as they already possess

the resources necessary to form connections. Such a construction reinforces a power relationship where international students are dependent on obtaining the skills needed to be included from the dominant group, that is, those considered valuable in mainstream Australian society (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). This provides the mainstream with the option to either deny access to those skills or determine that international students are not able to exercise them well enough to be included. This option provides another means of 'justifiably' excluding international students and thereby maintains the status quo (Cullen & Pretes, 2000; Ferguson, 1990).

Regardless of whether participants completely ignored the importance of resources, or included having sufficient 'capacity', in their understanding of social inclusion as the formation of connections, the effect was essentially the same. Social inclusion is still constructed on the terms of the mainstream Greenwood community. The conditions for entry into the mainstream are being held firm, not expanded to include international students, for example, by requiring locals to learn another language. That is, this understanding has established a normalising regime which international students must conform to in order to become socially included. There is no apparent effort to understand what social inclusion might mean for international students. Rather, they are required to change to become like the mainstream in order to be included, such as by improving their English language ability and becoming more culturally Westernised. This understanding therefore demonstrates and reinforces the vertically structured nature of Australian society and the unequal power relationships between international students and the mainstream, as social inclusion occurs exclusively on the terms of the mainstream Greenwood community.

Conclusion

In this section I have discussed how the understanding of social inclusion as the formation of connections. This understanding was constructed by participants, via wording, as being socially connected to the community in which one lives. Specifically, international students being socially connected to the local Greenwood community, not just other international students. The formation of such connections was linked to increased understanding between the local community and international students by collocating 'connections' with

'understanding'. This construction of social inclusion was very similar to that of social inclusion as robust engagement. Indeed, the two understandings exclude from consideration many of the same aspects of the international student experience, such as dimensions of life other than the social, the possibility that members of the mainstream are not willing to form connections, and the importance of having the necessary resources to form connections. As a consequence, the two understandings also have similar implications for how international students are understood, those being an inability to address both the issues that international students experience outside of the social dimension of life and, more importantly, the structural causes of their marginalisation.

However, understanding social inclusion as the formation of connections is different from, and has an advantage over, constructing social inclusion as robust engagement. This is because social inclusion as the formation of connections presupposes its intended outcome to a lesser degree than social inclusion as robust engagement. This has the benefit of making the intended outcome of social inclusion more clear. Consequently, it is more difficult for the mainstream to claim that social inclusion has been achieved while not addressing or giving voice to the disadvantages faced by international students. Unfortunately, this slight advantage is undermined as a consequence of excluding from consideration important factors of the international student experience. Indeed, the same factors as the understanding of social inclusion as robust engagement also excludes.

Becoming better connected with the mainstream would be an improvement for those international students who desire such relationships, however this understanding of social inclusion makes it unlikely that such connections will happen. This is because it presupposes, and thereby excludes from consideration, any alternative outcome, that members of the mainstream are willing to form connections and that international students possess the required resources. This understanding, like that of robust engagement, sets up international students to fail by declining to challenge the existing social structures and their inherent power relationships which hierarchize the Greenwood community. As a consequence, the marginalised social position experienced by international students remains (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), along with the disadvantage and negative welfare it causes (Marginson, *et al.*, 2010). While the aim is to connect international students to the mainstream community

through the formation of relationships, those connections are based on the terms of the mainstream. International students must meet the requirements of the normalising regime imposed by the mainstream Greenwood community, or be 'legitimately' excluded and marginalised.

Valued and appreciated by the community

Overview

The international student leaders constructed social inclusion as being valued and appreciated by the community. This construction was an additional facet to their understanding of social inclusion as either robust engagement or the formation of connections. These participants understand social inclusion as interacting robustly, or having relationships, with the people in the community, and feeling 'valued and appreciated' by them. This broader construction of social inclusion opens up for discussion the basis on which relations and interactions might be formed – being valued. A sentiment clearly demonstrated by the quotes below:

> *But I think a big part of social inclusion is about making people feel **valued** and giving them the opportunity to **participate fully in all aspects of the society**, and I think that's not being achieved, because a lot of international students don't feel that they're **valued** by the local community. There's that term 'cash cows', and a lot of the students that we have spoken to do feel in a way that they're being treated as 'cash cows', and they don't feel that they've been embraced and that the local community is being open to them.* – International student association president 2

> *'And also the Council sees the **value** of having international students now. And also in one of our camps some students will say they are now feel that they are **appreciated** by the community. And they feel that, before, they feel that their college [in] Australia will just take their money and don't care about them, but after they come, they feel they've been **appreciated**. I think it's really done its job, just **valuing** international students and vice versa.* – International student advisory committee member 1

This additional facet to understanding social inclusion was also produced by the international student advisory committee's facilitator, a local Australian. When constructing social

inclusion, she focused on the actions she felt the local community needed to take in order to achieve social inclusion of international students, actions which included appreciating what they contributed to the community:

> *What does the community need to do, that's the biggest question. Probably the community needs opportunities to get to know the students and **appreciate** what the students bring to their community.* – International student advisory committee member 2

This understanding is conspicuously absent from any of Greenwood Council's elected or employed members' interviews. Those participants do not appear to share this aspect of how the international student leaders understand social inclusion. This difference in understanding speaks to the different positions within the field of Greenwood City which the international student representatives and the Council employees and elected officials occupy and how these positions influence participants' use of discourse to defend or challenge power relations.

Analysis and Discussion

For those participants who produced this understanding of social inclusion as being valued and appreciated by the community, it does not stand alone but rather is an additional facet to understanding social inclusion as either robust engagement or the formation of connections. Unfortunately, it still fails to cover some of the most egregious factors of the international student experience excluded from consideration by those two previously discussed understandings of social inclusion. In particular, it also presupposes that international students already possess the resources necessary to engage or connect with the mainstream Greenwood community and that the community is willing to engage or connect.

However, the addition of international students being valued and appreciated to how social inclusion is constructed does have an important positive implication for how international students are understood and therefore how their issues are best addressed by policy. Constructing international students as people who should be valued and appreciated

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challenges the normalising regime (Lewis, 2005) inherent in the previously discussed understandings of social inclusion. It also positions international students in a socially superior position compared to those other understandings by reducing their Othering and consequently their marginalisation (Cullen & Pretes, 2000). Unfortunately, the elected and employed members of the Council interviewed do not share the importance of valuing and appreciating international students in the way that the students do themselves. This difference in understanding of social inclusion suggests that the outcomes expected by each group are fundamentally different and indeed conflicting.

Benefits to international students

Constructing social inclusion with the additional facet of international students being valued and appreciated challenges the normalising regimes operating through other understandings of social inclusion discussed so far. Those normalising regimes are based on interactions/connections between international students and the mainstream Greenwood community only occurring on the terms of the latter and make no provision for international students' lack of necessary resources. However, if international students are constructed as being valued and appreciated, then they are worthy of inclusion, regardless of whether they meet the requirements of the normalising regime. Thus, constructing international students in this way challenges the inclusion criteria set by the normalising regime and has the power to make mainstream society more inclusive of diverse groups.

Challenging the normalising regime by constructing international students as valued and appreciated members of the community has the effect of presenting international students as a legitimate part of society and less of the 'Other' because they are no longer denied inclusion by the conditions of the normalising regime. This means that they are less marginalised and more included, as 'othering' is an essential requirement for marginalisation (Cullen & Pretes, 2000), and therefore better positioned relative to the mainstream Greenwood community. The result is more balanced power relationships between the two groups and therefore more equitable social structures. It is unfortunate then that, with the exception of a single employee who was employed as a direct advocate for international students, none of the elected or

employed members of the Council included this additional facet in their understandings of social inclusion.

Only produced by international students

This element of social inclusion of international students being valued and appreciated was absent from how the majority of non-international student participants constructed social inclusion. This difference is likely due to the different positions occupied by these various participants within the field of Greenwood City specifically, and Australian society more generally, in the case of the presidents of international student organisations. According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), agents positioned at different levels within the hierarchy of a given field will have different objectives in regards to influencing the structure of the field.

The Council, which includes employees and elected officials, as the local government and representative of the mainstream community of Greenwood City is the most powerful agent within the field of Greenwood City. It therefore seeks to maintain its dominant position by constructing social inclusion in a way that reinforces the social structures, power relations and resources which support that dominant position (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). As discussed in the preceding sections, it achieves this by constructing engagement or the formation of connections in terms of accepted mainstream processes, thereby creating a normalising regime.

In contrast, the international students on the Council's international student consultative committee are members of a marginalised social group and therefore some of the least powerful agents in the field of Greenwood City. Similarly, the international student association presidents are representatives of a marginalised social group which is one of the least powerful within the general field of Australian society. Consequently, both these groups of international student representatives seek to construct social inclusion in a way that makes the resources they possess more valuable, thereby improving their power within their respective fields (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

These different positions of the various participant groups in the study dictate the underlying objective in how particular understandings of social inclusion are constructed. Powerful agents, such as employees of the Council, will, knowingly or not, defend their dominant position, while relatively powerless agents, such as international students, attempt to restructure the field in a way that is more advantageous for them. The consequence of this is that while international student representatives support the general idea of social inclusion, how they understand the concept and the outcomes they expect from it differ crucially from those of the mainstream. As this analysis has demonstrated, the understandings typically produced by the employees and elected members of the Council have a less progressive view of social inclusion than that produced by international students themselves.

It is unfortunate that constructing social inclusion with the additional facet of international students being valued and appreciated by the community is not part of how most of the elected and employed members of the Council understand the concept. Doing so would have made this understanding of social inclusion more mainstream and therefore more powerful (van Dijk, 1997b). That it is only produced by the international student representatives limits its ability to influence existing social structures because the understanding is not widely accepted by those with sufficient power to affect social structures (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). Indeed, as discussed in Chapter 7, the marginalisation of the discourse of particular social groups is a key part of the marginalisation process (van Dijk, 2006a, 2006b).

International student leaders want international students to be valued and appreciated for who they are and what they do, beyond the narrow economic benefits they bring. However, as the previously discussed understandings demonstrate, the mainstream only wishes to include those who fit with the normalising regime implicit in how they construct social inclusion. That is, those who already possess the resources required to participate in mainstream social and political activities and/or maintain social connections with the mainstream on their terms. This difference in expected outcomes from social inclusion suggests that those international students who belong to the Council's international student consultative committee are not fully aware, due to the ambiguous nature of social inclusion, what they are actually supporting with regard to the Council's social inclusion policy discourse (discussed in Chapter 7). By supporting the idea of social inclusion, but allowing the mainstream to define

it, the international student representatives are actually supporting a discourse which reinforces the marginalisation of international students, rather than alleviating it.

Conclusion

Constructing social inclusion as international students being valued and appreciated by the Australian community is a supplementary construction to understanding it as robust engagement or the formation of connections. Although this additional facet still does not address some of the important aspects of the international student experience excluded by those primary understandings, it is a beneficial addition for international students. This is because constructing international students as 'valued and appreciated' challenges the normalising regime inherent to understanding social inclusion as robust engagement or the formation of connections/relationships by presenting all international students as worthy of inclusion. Such a construction also improves international students' position within the structure of society by reducing the extent to which they are 'Othered', and therefore the extent to which they are marginalised. This improved position with the hierarchy of the field of Greenwood City consequently means less unequal power relations relative to the mainstream.

This additional aspect to social inclusion is produced by the international student representatives and it is at odds with the constructions of social inclusion produced by the majority of elected and employed members of the Council. This difference in understanding is due to the different positions within the field of Greenwood City, or Australian society more generally, occupied by these two groups – one dominant and vested in maintaining existing social structures, the other marginalised and wishing to modify those structures (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

Yet, while both groups support the idea of social inclusion, it is the mainstream and its representative institutions, such as the Council, that as a consequence of its privileged position largely gets to define what social inclusion means in Australia generally, and Greenwood City in particular. Therefore, by supporting social inclusion, a concept that the

mainstream defines for its own benefit, international student leaders are inadvertently promoting the maintenance of social structures which disadvantage and marginalise them.

Accessibility/mainstreaming

Overview

This understanding constructs social inclusion as extending the accessibility and responsiveness of Council services to people/groups/places that have previously been excluded from them. This can involve either creating new services or simply expanding existing ones to cover previously un/under-serviced people/groups/places. Expanding services to cover those previously excluded was labelled as 'mainstreaming' by the two participants who promoted it. Overall, this construction of social inclusion as accessibility/mainstreaming was articulated primarily by two senior members of the Council, one a senior manager and one an elected Councillor. However, a frontline employee also constructed the Council's actions under the International Student Support Program as 'mainstreaming' international students into service delivery.

The senior position of these participants likely explains why they construct social inclusion this way. As senior members of the Council they are responsible for deciding what services should be offered by the Council, to which social groups and at what price. It therefore makes sense for them to define social inclusion in terms of these responsibilities. In addition, as powerful agents within the field of the Council, which is the dominant agent in the field of Greenwood City, they will instinctively construct social inclusion in a way that legitimises and therefore maintains the social institutions that support their power (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). In this case, that is the Council as the provider of services which improve social inclusion.

Greenwood Council Elected Member 1 constructs this understanding of social inclusion, through wording, as the Council providing services that are accessible (i.e., does not exclude people, provides opportunity for people to use them) and responsive to the needs of a diverse community (i.e., the community has a say in what services are provided):

*So social inclusion, from my point of view, is about fine-tuning those things **so people aren't excluded from service delivery** [my emphasis] as we move forward and that we've got to actually be flexible enough to **create opportunities for people to tap into these services** [my emphasis]. And **have a say about how they shape the city** [my emphasis].* – Greenwood Council elected member 1

The interviewee went on to say a key aspect of creating accessible and responsive services, was that the Council has to 'engage with people, design the services and design the delivery' so that they suit the diverse needs of the community. He elaborates on this, emphasising that providing official access and token consultation – 'just tick[ing] a box saying, "Yes, we gave them access, yes, we spoke to them"' – is insufficient. He concluded by saying that social inclusion was about ensuring that no one was left out of service delivery:

So really social inclusion is more than that I will just provide access, it's that we'll actually say, "'Okay, we're not going to have pockets who are left out and the diversity should be celebrated at the heart of everything...'. – Greenwood Council elected member 1

It is important to note the emphasis on the importance of recognising diversity in this understanding of social inclusion. Diversity is a notable absence in the other understandings of social inclusion, such as 'robust engagement' or 'formation of connections'.

The expansion of Council services to be more accessible and responsive to the needs of a diverse community was constructed slightly differently by two participants who labelled it as 'mainstreaming'. Specifically, this term was used in reference to the International Student Support Program, which was initially run by the Council out of its Youth Services:

So, in relation to our international students, they still meet at the [Greenwood City Youth Centre]. *They're part of our youth services basically. It's **mainstreamed** [my emphasis].* – Greenwood Council employee 3 [senior manager]

And that I think is what's been interesting about the work that [Greenwood Council has] *done is that it hasn't separated* [international students] *out as a specific project, it's about **mainstreaming*** [my emphasis] *international students into service delivery.* – Greenwood Council employee 2 [frontline employee]

This version of the understanding differs from the more general version of providing accessible and responsive services produced by Greenwood Council elected member 1. The meaning of the word (Fairclough, 1992) 'mainstreaming' here is specifically the extending of already existing services to reach people/places that were previously underserviced – such as elderly people, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, young people, and international students – rather than creating new services:

So making sure that when you're working with all your different client groups in council, whether it's state or local government, you're looking at what the elderly people need, what the culturally and linguistically diverse communities need, what the young people need, and international students are part of that. So where [Greenwood Council employee] *and his work with* [Greenwood Council] *Youth Services has been so amazing is that he said, 'Well they're just another target group of the work that we do with young people. So we work with teenagers at risk, we work with kids with disabilities, we work with African young mums, we work with international students. They've got specific needs'.* – Greenwood Council employee 2

These two versions of this understanding of social inclusion are, however, similar enough that they can be discussed together. They are also the only constructions of social inclusion produced by participants that interdiscursively (Fairclough, 1992) draw on the official discourse of the Council, as illustrated by the policy documents discussed in the previous chapter, mainly the social inclusion policy document (SIP). Although that discourse dos not feature the term 'mainstreaming', its construction of social inclusion is essentially the same as the understanding just discussed.

The understanding of social inclusion as accessibility/mainstreaming reflects the goals and objectives of the SIP, the policy's construction of social inclusion as applying to all Council activities, as well as the desire to address the 'barriers' faced by the marginalised. For example, Goal 2 of the SIP (p. 4) – 'To build services and programs that are inclusive, responsive, accessible and equitable and which respond to the diversity of needs, rights and priorities of our communities' – is reflected in quotes such as the following:

> *So we're always looking at it from the point of view [of] whose voices we're not hearing, who're not participating in the programmes and services that we offer, who are the people who are benefiting from the resources that our Council invests in, our public space, our sporting grounds, our swimming pools.* – Greenwood Council employee 3

This interdiscursive drawing on the discourse of the SIP indicates that these participants' understanding of social inclusion is influenced by the Council's social inclusion discourse. Such interdiscursivity reflects these participants' adherence to existing structures of dominance and the discourses that maintain them, for as discussed in Chapter 7, the social inclusion discourse of the Council reinforces the marginalisation of international students. This constructing of social inclusion in ways that maintain existing key structures of dominance by Council employees and elected members is expected given their position within the field of Greenwood City. However, what was not expected is that only two participants would draw on the official social inclusion discourse of the Council in order to do so.

That only a small number of participants, and primarily those who were senior members of the Council, drew on the Council's official policy discourse in constructing their understanding of social inclusion is important to note. The majority of the Council's elected and employed members interviewed, as well as the international student leaders, do not understand social inclusion in the same way that it is constructed by official policy discourse and senior Council members. This suggests that the social inclusion discourse of the Council is discursively appealing but ambiguous enough that it creates space for participants to construct their own specific understanding of social inclusion within the general guidelines of

social inclusion-as-participation. The situation also suggests that the hierarchy of the field of the Council is not sufficiently vertically structured that senior members have the power to impose specific, detailed discourses on frontline employees and all elected members (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). The discursive appeal and ambiguity of social inclusion discourses is frequently noted in the literature (see, for example, Levitas, 2005), and these factors enable it to be used to gain support for social policies which might otherwise be resisted (Caidi & Allard, 2005). This will be discussed in more detail at the conclusion of this chapter.

Analysis and Discussion

This understanding of social inclusion as accessibility/mainstreaming draws heavily on the official discourse of the Council. Consequently, it is a fairly comprehensive understanding of the concept, at least from a dominant mainstream perspective. The Council's social inclusion discourse, as expressed in the policy documents analysed in the previous chapter, produces a detailed construction of social inclusion-as-participation (Millar, 2007), which was reflected in these participants' understanding of social inclusion. Miller's (2007) framework constructs social inclusion in terms of four dimensions of life, agency for both mainstream Australian society and international students, acknowledges the importance of resources through providing services that meet the needs of international students, and connecting international students with the community.

Constructing social inclusion in this way addresses some of the aspects of the international student experience excluded from consideration in previously discussed understandings. For example, considering what services marginalised groups want and delivering services that suit their needs brings resources into the broader picture of social inclusion. It is therefore an understanding of social inclusion that provides international students with some space to act in their own interest. This is partly due to this particular understanding not imposing a normalising regime as the 'robust engagement' and 'formation of connections' understandings do. However, this understanding still legitimises current social structures by working through the Council to achieve social inclusion (Preece, 2001), as it defines social

inclusion in terms of accessibility of Council services, and 'mainstreaming' international students into those services.

Agency

In comparison to the Council's official social inclusion discourse (discussed in Chapter 7), this understanding of social inclusion as accessibility/mainstreaming produced by participants constructs international students with a greater degree of agency. This is because the understanding produced by participants places more emphasis on the Council engaging with international students, designing services to suit them and not having them left out of service delivery. The result is that international students are constructed as having significant influence on decisions made by the Council that affect them. That is, they have some ability to exercise agency, even if it is facilitated by the Council. Greater agency makes international students more able to challenge social structures which marginalise them. For example, international students may be able to persuade the Council to run social activities which they find appealing, in terms of content, cost and timing, rather than just ones catered to the mainstream Greenwood community.

This increased space for international students to exercise their agency also reduces the extent to which a normalising regime can form. As the Council is pushed to include all international students – '…we're not going to have pockets who are left out…' (Greenwood Council elected member 1) – not just those who meet specific criteria which make them compatible with the mainstream. Clearly, this understanding also places a significant responsibility on the Council for ensuring social inclusion is achieved.

Mainstreaming reduces recognition of diversity

An issue specific to constructing social inclusion as 'mainstreaming' international students into service delivery is that it presents them as equivalent to other disadvantaged groups (Forbes-Mewett, 2010). On the one hand, this is advantageous, in that it positions international students as part of the established formal support system, providing them

recognition as a disadvantaged group. However, on the other, mainstreaming is detrimental for international students, because it homogenises them, making their needs and experiences equivalent to other disadvantaged groups, thereby constructing them as 'just another' disadvantaged group. In the case of Greenwood City, international students are equated with disadvantaged youth and placed under the auspices of the Council's Youth Services. Whenever such homogenisation occurs, diversity is reduced, in order to accommodate the emphasis of similarities (Forbes-Mewett, 2010). As a consequence, important issues specific to the international student experience will be ignored.

The loss of diversity entailed by this constructed similarity is demonstrated by the mainstreaming of international students into the Council's Youth Services and the consequent homogenising construction of international students as 'young people'. The quotes below are indicative of this 'generalisation', a discursive practice that involves describing a particular social group in terms of a limited number of attributes which only apply to a minority of that group (Teo, 2000):

> *That's* [the International Student Support Program] *more integrated now with our youth services, because a lot of the things that we're talking about, about engaging young people, we're actually saying whether they're studying or whatever.* – Greenwood Council elected member 1

> *Well they're just students, aren't they, young people?* – Greenwood Council employee 2

'Youth' or 'young people' are typically constructed in Australian political and social discourse as people aged between 15 and 24 inclusive (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013). However, a significant portion of international students do not fit this description. According to the official discourse of Australian Education International (2013b), 43.54% of international students are 25 years of age or older, with 16.09% aged 30 and over. Although detailed demographic information was not available specifically from Greenwood City, it can be assumed that the City's international student population is similar to the national statistics. Indeed, as can be seen in the quote above, Greenwood Council employee 2 constructs

international students as 'young people', yet in the same interview conveyed a story of a powerful personal experience she had with an international student who does not fit that constructed identity – a *"grown Sri Lankan man with three kids"*. This contradiction is emblematic of the attempt to discursively homogenise international students despite knowledge of their heterogeneity.

It is unlikely that the needs and experiences of older international students, particularly those with families living with then in Australia will be addressed by services targeted at 'young people'. Consequently, the image of an 'international student' inherent to constructing social inclusion as mainstreaming them into the Council's Youth Services actually excludes from consideration the issues of a significant portion of the City's international student population. The result is that such "non-standard" international students remain outside the norm, and most likely blamed for their disadvantage as a result of not accessing appropriate services. They are in a no-win situation they are not serviced appropriately and as a consequence are disadvantaged but this is hidden because officially they are serviced and therefore socially included.

Legitimises existing system

Constructing social inclusion explicitly in terms of the extent to which Council services are accessible and responsive justifies the Council's privileged role and position in society. This is because it positions the Council as the source of, and the only mechanism for achieving, social inclusion. Working through the existing system of local government legitimises that system (Preece, 2001) and thereby reinforces the core of the existing structure of society: the privileged position of those in the Centre (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). That is, if social inclusion is achieved according to this understanding, international students will no longer be marginalised, and therefore better positioned in society, because their needs are considered and responded to through services provided to them. In doing this the Council retains its legitimate position as the dominant agent in the City of Greenwood (i.e. it is doing the right thing or what is expected of the Council). However, the Council's power to choose who it pays attention to and how it responds to demands from the community through its own mechanisms and biases remains unchallenged.

This understanding of social inclusion may reduce the disadvantage experienced by international students and consequently improve their welfare. However, it makes no significant changes to the key relations of power in Greenwood City. Those power relationships are still heavily unequal in the favour of the mainstream Greenwood community, represented here by the Council, as the social inclusion of international students is contingent upon the actions of the Council. That is, the Council can marginalise international students again at its discretion by withdrawing or narrowing services so as to exclude international students. This prerogative also allows the Council to determine the amount of diversity that is acceptable for inclusion through its choice of which services to extend (or withdraw) and the nature of those services (e.g., cost, location, language delivered in, etc.). This establishes an implicit normalising regime that will exclude those international students who do not fit the identity of an 'international student' constructed by the Council. As a representative of the mainstream, the Council will naturally allow only diversity to an extent that does not threaten the current system of dominant power relations (Lewis, 2005).

Conclusion

From the position of those at senior levels of Council (elected and management) social inclusion is constructed as making Council services accessible and responsive to the diverse needs of the Greenwood City community. They were the only participants who interdiscursively drew on the Council's official social inclusion policy discourse (discussed in Chapter 7) when constructing their understanding of social inclusion. This suggests that either the Council's social inclusion discourse is sufficiently ambiguous to allow elected members and employees to construct their own specific understandings of the concept, and/or the field of the Council is not sufficiently hierarchical to impose its official discourse on all members.

A version of this understanding focused on 'mainstreaming' international students into existing service delivery. That is, only modifying existing services to incorporate international students, as opposed to both adapting existing services and creating new ones. This understanding homogenises international students as disadvantaged young people in

order to fit them into existing Council Youth services. The consequence of this understanding of social inclusion is that it excludes from consideration those issues which are not congruent with the Council's constructed image of international students, such as having children, leaving many disadvantages experienced by international students unaddressed (Forbes-Mewett, 2010).

This understanding of social inclusion does construct space for international students to exercise their agency by focusing on the Council engaging with them and providing accessible and responsive services. It also constructs international students as having significant input in decisions that are relevant to them. However, constructing social inclusion in terms of Council services legitimises the Council and reinforces its dominant position in Greenwood City (Preece, 2001). Thereby maintaining key social structures that create the unequal power relationships between the Council and international students. Hence, while international students may be better positioned in society under this understanding of social inclusion, as a group that should be included, they do not have significantly more power than before and can be excluded again at the discretion of the Council. Thus, their position within the Greenwood community remains tenuous, despite being considered socially included.

Human rights

Overview

Several participants also produced an understanding of social inclusion as the realisation of human rights. Although their exact constructions of what human rights meant varied, they all drew on discourses from the same tradition of human rights. As a consequence, they have similar effects on how international students' needs, experiences and welfare are understood.

Greenwood Council employees 1 and 6 constructed human rights as it applied to social inclusion as a lack of discrimination:

I think we ensure that 1) there's no discriminatory nature, we would like to ensure that there's no discriminatory nature explicitly or implicitly in our policies or programs and services. – Greenwood Council employee 1

Greenwood Council employee 5 presented social inclusion-as-human-rights as 'the right to choose', to self-determine, and the absence of external barriers to following through on that choice:

So people have a right to be included in the communities in which they live – economically, socially, culturally – they have a right to self-determine their own identity, who they socialise with and who they don't. They have a right to determine their sexuality. It's sort of a right to choose, okay? – Greenwood Council employee 5

He subsequently elaborated further, summarising his understanding of social inclusion:

But I think that, when I talk about social inclusion, I'm talking about giving people a chance to be included in things that they want to be part of, and making them welcome if they want to come. – Greenwood Council employee 5

These differences in understanding once again highlight the ambiguity of the Council's social inclusion discourse and the space it creates for personal interpretation of how the concept is understood.

Analysis and Discussion

Despite these differences in exactly how social inclusion is constructed in terms of human rights, their implications for social policy in relation to international students are similar, as they draw on the same 'negative freedom' human rights tradition, that is, order of discourse. Those implications are that it constructs a narrow and one-sided understanding of international students' needs, is silent on many of the disadvantages they experience, such as

insufficient required resources, and does not problematize the existing norms and values of the mainstream Greenwood community.

The understanding of social inclusion as human rights produced by participants draws on the traditional human rights order of discourse of 'negative freedom', or 'freedom from', where the focus is on removing external constraints, such as discrimination or excessive government restrictions, on individual action (Berlin, 1969). The removal of barriers to choosing to be included addresses some of the structural disadvantages faced by international students, but constructing this as social inclusion provides a limited understanding of international students' needs, experiences and welfare. Certainly, barriers such as discrimination, whether from government (for example, not being granted public transport concession) or the public (for example, racism) are significant issues for international students (Marginson, *et al.*, 2010). However, they can be free of such barriers to inclusion yet still experience significant disadvantage and be relegated to the margins of society. This is because freedom from discrimination, and other 'freedoms from' external impediments, do not account for lack of sufficient necessary resources to participate in society (Nussbaum, 2003), in particular the actual desire to participate in mainstream society as it currently is.

Social inclusion as human rights constructs the concept as the removal of (or freedom from) external barriers to inclusion. These barriers can be viewed as quite specific and narrow, such as explicit or implicit institutional discrimination by the Council. Or understood more broadly, as referring generally to people being able to choose to be 'included in the communities in which they live – economically, socially, culturally' (Greenwood Council employee 5; note the absence of 'political' inclusion) and 'making them welcome if they want to come' (Greenwood Council employee 5). The more broadly barriers to inclusion are defined the greater the forms of disadvantage that can be recognised and addressed. Indeed, as discussed in Chapter 2, the concept of social inclusion was originally constructed as a means of recognising forms of disadvantage that were not represented in existing social justice discourses of the time (Silver, 1994).

However, this understanding assumes that international students have the resources and desire necessary to participate in society, even if all external barriers have been removed. As with many of the understandings of social inclusion discussed in this and the previous chapter, it is presumed that international students have sufficient money, education, language skills, and so on, to be able to participate in the mainstream Greenwood community if external impediments, such as discrimination, are removed. Yet, this is often not the case, with many international students struggling to obtain sufficient resources (capital, in Bourdieu's terminology) to participate effectively in the mainstream community. Removing external barriers to inclusion without considering the resource constraints faced by international students constructs a one-sided understanding of their needs.

What is also of concern is that the barriers to inclusion are not only supposed to be addressed by the Council, but that what the barriers actually are is constructed by the Council. Just as with the processes and resources required for robust engagement and formation of connections discussed previously, this means that what is constructed as a 'barrier' will be determined relative to existing mainstream norms. As a consequence there is no challenging of the nature of mainstream Greenwood society and its attractiveness to international students, or other marginalised groups. This understanding implicitly and unproblematically constructs the current norms and values of mainstream Greenwood society as ideal and the only issue as what barriers are preventing the marginalised from taking part. It therefore ignores the possibility that the marginalised do not wish to be included in such a society while justifying existing social structures. The outcome of this understanding of social inclusion is that the possibility that the removal of external constraints is insufficient to eliminate marginalisation is ignored and international students must either assimilate into mainstream society or become 'justifiably' excluded and marginalised (Ferguson, 1990).

Conclusion

Several participants constructed social inclusion in terms of human rights. Despite some variance in the exact detail of each participants' understanding, all drew on the traditional 'negative' discourse of human rights. That is, human rights are about freedom from interference, rather than rights to assistance. Understanding social inclusion this way creates a

very narrow and limited view of international student's needs, experience and welfare and sets them up to fail. This is because this understanding assumes that the removal of external barriers to inclusion is sufficient to eliminate international students' marginalisation. However, it ignores the necessity of possessing particular resources in order to be able to participate, and by not problematizing the values and norms of mainstream Greenwood society requires international students to assimilate on pain of being justifiably excluded. Consequently, this understanding of social inclusion as human rights does not challenge existing social structures and the unequal power relationships that cause international students' marginalisation.

Conclusion

In this chapter, texts produced from interviews with 15 participants were analysed and the five understandings of social inclusion found in the data were discussed. Those understandings were social inclusion as: robust engagement, the formation of connections/relationships, being valued and appreciated, accessibility of/mainstreaming into Council services, and the realisation of human rights. This finding contributes to answering one of the sub-research questions for this study – how is social inclusion understood by various people/groups?

Two common implications resulted from these various understandings of social inclusion and contributed to answering the second sub-research question of this study – what are the implications of these understandings of social inclusion for policy and social discourses about international students? First, most of the understandings reinforce, or at best fail to challenge, existing unequal power relationships that shape the relationship of international students to mainstream Australian society. This reflects the key finding from the previous chapter, that social inclusion discourse reinforces existing social structures and power relationships that disadvantage and marginalise international students. Second, the majority of participants did not draw on the official Council social inclusion policy discourse in constructing their understanding(s) of social inclusion. This demonstrates both the strong discursive appeal of social inclusion, in that the idea of it was very popular, as well as its ambiguous nature, as participants were able to produce idiosyncratic understandings, despite the presence of an official discourse.

Both of these findings are consistent with the literature on social inclusion, where the discursive appeal and ambiguous nature of social inclusion is well-established (Levitas, 2005), as is the concern that social inclusion merely reinforces the status quo by working through established social structures and systems (Barata, 2000; Levitas, 2005; Preece, 2001). The consequences of these understandings for international students is that social inclusion does little to address the disadvantage and marginalisation they experience, and has the potential to act as a cover for policy discourse which is even more harmful than that currently in use.

Reinforces status quo

Participants in this study constructed social inclusion in a variety of ways, as robust engagement, the formation of connections, being valued and appreciated by the community, accessibility of/mainstreaming into Council services, and the realisation of human rights. Despite the diverse nature of these understandings, they have in common a focus on incorporating international students into the existing social structures and power relationships of the mainstream Greenwood community. These understandings therefore legitimise and reinforce those structures and power relationships, rather than challenging them. As a consequence, international students must either assimilate into the mainstream or be 'justifiably' excluded. This finding concurs with arguments made by Preece (2001) that by attempting to 'normalise' the socially excluded, that is, assimilate them into the mainstream community, social inclusion policies reinforce existing social structures and systems.

This lack of challenge to the existing social order also means that the mainstream determines who is allowed to be included and therefore what amount of diversity is permitted. This is achieved via establishing a normalising regime that defines the conditions of entry into the mainstream (Lewis, 2005), the 'admission fee' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Here, the normalising regime was based on having sufficient quantities of the necessary resources to participate in the typical activities of the mainstream Greenwood community. The requirement to conform to this normalising regime effectively results in the assimilation of those international students who become socially included. Those who do not conform, either

because they choose not to or lack the resources required, are 'justifiably' excluded because they 'refused' to become included (Ferguson, 1990). In this way, the mainstream Greenwood community, represented by the Council, is able to limit the diversity of those included to a level which does not threaten the established system.

Such a defence of the established social order is a result of the dominant position in the field of Greenwood City occupied by the majority of participants who produced these understandings of social inclusion. The powerful within a given field, such as members of the mainstream, will instinctively defend their position by attempting to reinforce established structures and what is considered relevant capital (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). In contrast, the powerless and marginalised in a field, such as international students in Greenwood City, will seek to challenge and reform its structures so that their capital is considered more valuable and thus attain a more powerful position (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). These efforts were highlighted by the understanding of social inclusion as being valued and appreciated by the community which was produced primarily by international student representatives.

This understanding of social inclusion as being valued and appreciated by the community was the only one that challenged existing social structures and power relationships rather than unquestioningly reproducing them. It did this by constructing international students as valuable members of the community who should be included as they are. Doing so eliminated the normalising regime imposed by the other understandings produced by participants and also better positioned international students in the field of Greenwood City, because it constructed the capital international students already possess as more valuable (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). This understanding was produced exclusively by international student representatives and reflects their subjugated social position and efforts to change that. However, such efforts are of limited effectiveness as this understanding was not also held by the elected and employed members of the Council interviewed participants who are considerably better positioned to affect change but instead chose to reinforce the status quo. So long as understandings of social inclusion are constructed in terms of including international students into the existing system, rather than challenging and attempting to

change it, they will simply maintain existing social structures and power relationships which cause international students' marginalisation.

Ambiguous nature of social inclusion

The second major theme within the findings from my analysis of the participant interview texts is that only two drew on the Council's official social inclusion discourse. Instead, most participants constructed a fairly idiosyncratic understanding of social inclusion based on a 'common sense' (i.e. lay person's) understanding of 'social inclusion' – social inclusion is being included in the social life of the community – as well as their own personal beliefs and attitudes. Thus, while most participants associated with the Council support the idea of social inclusion, they also construct their own understanding of what this entails. These variations in understanding reflect the discursive appeal of social inclusion, as well as its ambiguous nature (Levitas, 2005; Silver, 1994), which creates space for participants to construct their own understandings. It also suggests that the field of Greenwood Council is not hierarchically structured enough that senior managers and elected officials are able to impose a specific understanding of social inclusion on lower levels of the field.

Regardless of the reason for the variation in how social inclusion is understood, such a lack of awareness of the Council's official social inclusion discourse by frontline employees is concerning. This is because it implies strong buy-in and support for the Council's use of a social inclusion discourse, yet little knowledge of the exact details of that discourse. Suggesting that potentially almost any policy discourse could be put under the appealing label of 'social inclusion' and Council employees would support it. That is, the Council can potentially use a discourse of social inclusion as a means of control and social domination whose actual outcomes do not correspond with the overtly stated outcomes and which employees and elected members may not support if it was presented under a different label. Such is the potentially subversive nature of discourses of social inclusion, given its discursive appeal and ambiguity. This finding concurs with those of Levitas (2005), who contends that the discursive appeal and ambiguity of social inclusion is one of the main attractions of such a discourse for the elite, as they can use it as a cover for virtually any social policy objective.

Taken together, these two findings support my contention from the previous chapter, that social inclusion discourses are popular with dominant social actors because they have broad discursive appeal, yet reinforce existing structures of dominance. Social inclusion based policy discourses provide the impression that progressive action is being taken to improve the welfare of marginalised groups, such as international students. However, by working through established institutions and social practices the existing structures of society and the unequal power relationships inherent to them are legitimised and reinforced (Preece, 2001). Consequently, international students remain disadvantaged and marginalised.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

Introduction

This thesis has investigated how the term 'social inclusion' is discursively constructed in a local government Council and the consequent impact of this discourse on how international students' needs, experiences and welfare are understood by that Council. This is a specific instance of a more general social wrong - the application of a social inclusion discourse to a subordinated minority social group. Following Fairclough (2009), I consider this a social wrong because there are significant concerns expressed within the literature about social inclusion being used to subjugate minorities and reinforce the dominance of the mainstream (see Chapter 2). A concern supported by the findings of this study.

To carry out this investigation a qualitative case study was conducted in Greenwood City Council, a metropolitan local government Council in Melbourne that used social inclusion as a policy framework to inform its community development activities towards international students living in Greenwood City. Data, in the form of texts, were obtained from Council policy documents, as well as interviews with 15 key informants, including Council employees and elected members, as well as international student group representatives. The data were analysed using Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This research approach was taken because CDA enables the identification of power relations as they are reinforced and challenged in discourse. Such an attribute made it appropriate for this study because social inclusion is a primarily discursive phenomenon that is known to reinforce existing relations of dominance.

This research contributes to existing knowledge by using CDA to analyse the impact of social inclusion discourses on international students and thereby problematizing the concept of social inclusion as both a heuristic and antidote for the issues they face. The study also makes a practical contribution by critically analysing the well-intentioned social policy of a progressive local government and identifying the hidden effects which counteract the policy's intended outcomes.

In particular, it is concluded that Greenwood Council's social inclusion policy discourse constructs a narrow and limited understanding of international students' needs, experiences and welfare in terms of participation in the key activities of mainstream Greenwood society. The findings show that the Council's social inclusion discourse requires international students to conform to mainstream values and norms in order to be included, which limits their agency and reinforces their marginalisation. Failure to become included is presented as a deliberate choice and refusal to assimilate is grounds for justifiable exclusion. This further confirms critiques found in the literature that social inclusion discourses reinforce the status quo.

In concluding this research project, this chapter is divided into four sections. First, I will sum up the overall conclusions of this thesis and discuss how the findings answered my research questions. The next section considers the theoretical and practical contributions of this study. Third, the limitations of this study, mainly in relation to CDA, are discussed. Finally, suggested areas for potentially fruitful future research are given.

How were RQs answered?

The primary aim of this study was to critically examine a specific example of contemporary Australian discourse of social inclusion in the context of policies developed by government and the higher education sector to address the 'problem(s)' of international students living and studying in a particular Australian community. Specifically, it sought to analyse whether or not social inclusion discourses as expressed through Greenwood Council's policy and employee interviews address the marginalisation of international students living in Greenwood City.

This study came about because international students have become a significant presence in Australian society and contribute significantly to their host country, economically, politically, culturally and socially. Yet, in recent times, incidents of violence and revelations of exploitation and visa fraud, along with other changes, has brought the 'problem' of international students to mainstream attention. Given the importance of international students

to the Australian economy and education providers, efforts to address these issues, or more particularly the crisis in the international education industry they caused, came from all levels of government, as well as industry players. The crisis and efforts to address its causes roughly coincided with the introduction into Australian political and social policy discourse of the concept of social inclusion by the Australian Federal Government under the previously elected Labor Party. Likely as a consequence, many of the actions taken to deal with international students' issues assumed that 'inclusion' or, more particularly, social inclusion was the answer. With a number of the initiatives launched seeking to better 'include' international students into their local community. The argument was that international students are 'outsiders' and as such are more vulnerable to violent crime, exploitation, privation and mental health issues (Marginson, *et al.*, 2010).

Considering the rise of social inclusion discourse in Australian social policy (during the time of this study), and revelations about the many difficulties experienced by some international students studying here, it was perhaps inevitable that the concept of social inclusion would be applied in an attempt to address international students' issues. However, a review of the literature reveals that 'social inclusion' is a contested concept, with significant concerns raised about the implications of such discourses for those who are to be 'included'. With these concerns in mind, this study sought to critically analyse the application of social inclusion-based social policy discourses to address the problems faced by international students and explores the effects of these discourses on their welfare.

To achieve this overall research aim, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

- What is the impact of 'social inclusion' discourses on understandings of international students' needs, experiences and welfare?
    - How do key people/groups/institutions understand the terms 'social inclusion' and 'social exclusion'?
    - What are the implications of these understandings for policy and social discourses on international students?

With these questions in mind, I now outline the specific conclusions drawn in relation to each of them, beginning with the sub-research questions.

How do key people/groups/institutions understand the terms 'social inclusion' and 'social exclusion'?

The key people/groups/institutions referred to in this study include: employees and elected officials of Greenwood Council; international student representatives in the form of members of the Council's overseas student advisory committee and presidents of several other international student organisations; and, the Council itself as an institution. The interview participants produced a variety of different understandings of social inclusion (see Chapter 8), while the Council's official social inclusion policy discourse was based on a single understanding.

The Council policy documents produced a discourse of social inclusion-as-participation. That is a discourse which understands international students' and other marginalised groups' social inclusion in terms of participation in the key activities of a society, although the documents were vague as to the exact nature of these key activities. However, given the dominant position of the Council within the field of Greenwood City and the propensity for dominant agents to reinforce existing social structures (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), it is highly likely that the selected activities will reflect the values and norms of the mainstream Greenwood community. This discourse interdiscursively draws on the social inclusion discourse of the Australian Federal Labor Government of the time, which similarly constructed social inclusion in terms of participation. This interdiscursive connection reflects the hegemonic influence of the Federal Government over lower levels of government and demonstrates how existing social structures are represented in discourse (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999).

In comparison, interview participants variously constructed social inclusion as – robust engagement, the formation of connections, being valued and appreciated by the community, accessibility and responsiveness of Council services, and as the realisation of human rights. Interestingly, only one of these understandings, social inclusion as accessibility and

responsiveness of Council services, interdiscursively drew on the official policy discourse of the Council. Most participants appeared to construct their understandings of social inclusion by drawing on a "lifeworld" discourse (Fairclough, 1992), where social inclusion is viewed as being included in the social life of the community, as well as their own personal beliefs and attitudes. Some participants also drew on a traditional discourse of "negative" human rights (Berlin, 1969) to construct their understanding of social inclusion, where the focus is on 'freedom from' external barriers to participation in society.

The construction by participants of several different understandings of social inclusion reflects the term's discursive appeal and ambiguous nature (Levitas, 2005; Silver, 1994). Social inclusion was viewed as a positive and politically appealing ideal by all participants, undoubtedly at least partially because its ambiguity provided the discursive space for them to construct their own understandings. Such diversity of understanding also suggests that the field of Greenwood Council is not hierarchically structured enough that senior managers and elected officials are able to impose a specific understanding of social inclusion on lower level employees within the field. However, these various understandings, while diverse in their expression across the informant group, including Council officials and managers shared a positive and consensus based view of social inclusion.

Despite the variations in how social inclusion is understood by participants and the Council, all the understandings constructed social inclusion in terms of participation. The main variation occurs with regard to what constitutes participation and which aspects of life and activities should be participated in. To illustrate, the Council's discourse of social inclusion-as-participation constructs social inclusion as participation in key activities in all four dimensions of life – social, cultural, economic and political (Steinert 2003) – such as community events and political decisions making processes. In comparison, the understanding of social inclusion as robust engagement produced by some participants constructs social inclusion as international students and members of the mainstream Greenwood community "robustly" engaging and interacting with each other socially to form connections and create greater understanding. Thus, the general discourse of social inclusion in Greenwood City, and Australia more broadly, is one based on participation, with individual text producers able to construct their own specific understandings within the limits

of this broader discourse. Again, this likely reflects the influence of the Australian Federal Government in setting the social inclusion agenda in Australia.

With regard to how "social exclusion" was understood by participants and the Council, it was used as the opposite or reverse of social inclusion. The terms "social exclusion" and "social inclusion" were used interchangeably within the Council policy documents and by participants to refer to the same concept, with the specific choice dependent upon whether the discussion was phrased in terms of promoting social inclusion or combating social exclusion. This understanding of social exclusion and social inclusion as opposite ends of a continuum reflects the general order of discourse within Australia, where 'social inclusion' is used in a positive sense, while 'social exclusion' is used in a negative sense (Buckmaster & Thomas, 2009).

What are the implications of these understandings for policy and social discourses on international students?

The key overall implication for how social inclusion is understood by the Council and most of the employed and elected members of the Council interviewed is that they focus on including international students into the mainstream/Centre on the terms of the mainstream. The exact understandings which I am referring to are social inclusion-as-participation, robust engagement, formation of connections, accessibility and responsiveness of Council services, and realisation of human rights. The only understanding which does not do this is the understanding of social inclusion as being respected and valued by the community, which was only produced by international student representatives.

These understandings of social inclusion construct it as participation via processes accepted by the mainstream Greenwood community, where such processes reflect mainstream norms and values. This creates a normalising regime (Lewis, 2005), in that only those international students who participate via processes prescribed through the discourse, and possess the resources required to do so, are accepted as 'included' in the mainstream community. The normalising regime serves to maintain the status quo by constituting and reconstituting the

differences between those in the Centre and those on the margins (Vasas, 2005), disciplining the diversity of international students by excluding any who are too diverse and hence a threat to social stability and the ongoing maintenance of the underlying power structure of those in the Centre (Lewis, 2005). International students must either conform to the requirements of the normalising regime and assimilate into mainstream Greenwood society or become justifiably excluded (Ferguson, 1990). Those mainstream processes of participation are a form of social practice and working through them legitimises those practices and therefore the social structures they represent (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Preece, 2001). In this way, these understandings of social inclusion reinforce the existing structures and power relations of the Greenwood community.

These understandings of social inclusion also make it difficult for international students to resist the normalising regime and challenge the structures of the Greenwood community. This is achieved by practices that limit their agency. This limiting of international students' agency is achieved several ways. The Council's policy discourse limits the agency of international students by constructing them as having only a minor role in achieving their own social inclusion, that is, they are acted on rather than acting, and by not representing their voice in the policy documents, which denies them access to a powerful discursive resource as active agents of social policy (van Dijk, 2006a, 2006b). In a similar manner, the understandings of social inclusion produced by participants limits international students' agency by not representing their voice. That is, how elected and employed members of the Council, as representatives of the mainstream Greenwood community, constructed their understandings of social inclusion excluded key aspects of how international student representatives understood social inclusion. Those key elements challenge the normalising regime imposed by other understandings and construct international students in a superior position (this understanding is discussed in more detail later in this section). In this way, the participants I interviewed who were members of the mainstream effectively denied international students access to Council discourse by constructing international students and their representatives as passive agents.

The Council discourse and the understandings of social inclusion produced by its employees and elected members presupposes that international students have sufficient quantities of the

resources necessary to participate in the processes constructed as required for achieving social inclusion. This presupposition makes it difficult for international students to challenge the normalising regime as it places the possession of sufficient resources, including the desire to be included, outside of consideration and therefore lack of such resources cannot be used as a basis for claiming that the normalising regime is exclusionary. Indeed, this presupposition sets many international students up to fail, in that these understandings of social inclusion construct the activities necessary for social inclusion as ones which many international students lack the resources to participate in effectively, yet assume that they do possess those resources. This enables mainstream Greenwood society to label those international students who struggle to participate on the terms set by the mainstream because they lack the necessary resources as deviants, not worthy of help and deserving of exclusion (Cullen & Pretes, 2000; Ferguson, 1990). Such a label would be justified on the basis that those international students have demonstrated a lack of interest in being part of the community, that is, they have made a deliberate choice to not take up the opportunities provided to them to 'join in'.

The ways that social inclusion is constructed by representatives of the mainstream, that is, the Council itself and its employees and elected officials, creates a normalising regime which maintains the boundary between the Centre and the margins, preventing those without sufficient capital or who are "too diverse" from moving into the Centre (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Lewis, 2005). In so doing, these understandings of social inclusion justify the role of the Council in the Greenwood community and legitimise the existing structures of Greenwood society, thereby reinforcing those structures (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Preece, 2001). These understandings demonstrate how social structures are reflected and reinforced in discourse (Fairclough, 2009). As a consequence of this, the marginalisation which many international students experience is also maintained (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). However, by failing to challenge the status quo, especially by not questioning the inherent attractiveness of mainstream norms and values for international students, these understandings of social inclusion construct a reality in which international students are largely responsible for their continued marginalisation, not the Council or mainstream Greenwood society.

Existing social structures and the power relations inherent to them which cause international students' marginalisation can only be challenged by enabling international students to exercise their agency. Providing international students with agency involves them having a voice in shaping policy discourse and therefore social structures in ways that reflect their needs (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). However, the only understanding of social inclusion to do this was that which constructed it as 'being valued and appreciated by the community'. This understanding challenges existing social structures by constructing international students with an improved social position (less of an 'other') and not establishing a normalising regime that creates a barrier to entering the mainstream. Perhaps predictably, this was also the only discourse produced solely by international students.

The reason for the range of the effects of understandings of social inclusion produced by representatives of the mainstream Greenwood community in comparison to representatives of international students is that social inclusion discourse reflects the position of the producer in the field of Greenwood City. That is, those agents in dominant positions within the field will attempt to reinforce the current structure in order to protect that position, while those in subordinate positions will attempt to challenge and change the structure of the field in an effort to improve their position within it (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The dominant agents are clearly those in the Centre, the mainstream Greenwood community, and even more so the centre of the Centre, the Council. Those agents in the margins or periphery, such as international students, are subordinate to those in the Centre (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). In this way, a discourse of social inclusion presented itself not as an ideology of power, but rather as a policy perspective and a useful tool for change because of its discursive appeal.

However, as a number of scholars argue and as this study shows, social inclusion is a discourse utilised by the powerful and imposed on the marginalised in a top-down manner in order to exert greater control over potentially divisive elements within society (Alden & Thomas, 1998; Hale & FitzGerald, 2007; Levitas, 2005). Consequently, in this case the understandings of social inclusion produced by representatives of the mainstream (the Council, its managers, elected representatives and its employees) has the effect of reinforcing existing unequal power relations, thus becoming yet another tool of domination. International students must either assimilate or be labelled as deviant and their exclusion justified, yet the

attractiveness and inherent "rightness" of the Centre is never questioned (Cullen & Pretes, 2000; Ferguson, 1990). The discursive appeal and ambiguity of social inclusion discourse is used by the Council to harness support for its social policies. Basing social policy on social inclusion discourse makes it difficult to discursively resist because "social inclusion" sounds good and the discourse's ambiguity means people can insert their own understandings which makes them feel more comfortable with the discourse (Levitas, 2005).

It is contended that, based on this analysis, a primary reason that social inclusion discourses are so appealing for the mainstream is because the superficial changes in social practices constructed by the discourse gives the impression that action is being taken to address the social marginalisation of particular groups. However, the discourse has the effect of reinforcing key social structures, therefore maintaining the dominant position of the mainstream in the field of Greenwood City, in a legitimate and non-threatening way.

What is the impact of 'social inclusion' discourses on our understanding of international students' needs, experiences and welfare?

Overall, the key finding of this study is that Greenwood Council's social inclusion policy discourse constructs a narrow and limited understanding of international students' needs, experiences and welfare. International students' needs, experiences and welfare are constructed through social inclusion discourse and understood in terms of mainstream values and norms. This has the effect of marginalising international students' values and experiences (Preece, 2001). The social inclusion discourse produced by the Council encourages international students to become included into the mainstream/Centre by participating in key activities as a means of addressing their needs and improving their welfare. Yet, in order to do so, international students must conform to mainstream norms due to the normalising regime (Lewis, 2005) created by the discourse, which also limits their agency and presupposes that they possess the necessary resources to participate in the required activities (Fairclough, 1992). Failure to become included is then constructed as a deliberate choice. Refusal to assimilate is grounds for justifiable exclusion on the basis that the "help" offered by mainstream Greenwood society to become included has been refused (Ferguson, 1990).

This study has thus provided a critical and deeper understanding of the discursive effects of social inclusion discourses on policy prescriptions designed to improve international students' welfare in Greenwood City and the consequences this has for their lived experience. The discourse of the Council reflects and reinforces the existing social structures and power relationships (Fairclough, 2009) of the field of Greenwood City that position the Council in the centre of the Centre, the mainstream Greenwood community in the Centre, and international students on the margins where their marginalisation continues (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Consequently, the Council's discourse, while it may make some superficial changes to existing social practices, will not result in meaningful social change. This further confirms critiques found in the literature that social inclusion discourses deny difference (Edwards *et al.*, 2001), enforce conformity (Steinert & Pilgram, 2003, as cited in Millar, 2007), and reinforce the status quo (Levitas, 2005; Preece, 2001).

The Council policy discourse of social inclusion was developed with the intention of facilitating international students' social inclusion, a concept that had significant discursive appeal and was generally very popular with both Council employees and international student leaders. However, the social inclusion discourses drawn on and produced by the Council in order to do so actually reinforced existing unequal power relationships that are a major cause of international students' marginalisation. The discourses achieved this by limiting international students' agency, encouraging their conformity to mainstream norms and legitimising the existing social system by attempting to include international students into it. These findings are consistent with the critiques of the concept of social inclusion in the literature, that it is attractive but legitimises existing social structures and systems which actually cause marginalisation, denies diversity and draws attention away from inequalities amongst the included.

It has been argued here and demonstrated in this study that as long as social inclusion as a policy discourse is employed in a top-down manner, the mainstream will continue its control of the discourse. This does not bode well for achieving positive change for international students in terms of righting the social wrongs they face. Such a discourse will always represent the interests of the mainstream by requiring inclusion on the terms of the mainstream, that is social inclusion that does not threaten social cohesion by controlling

diversity and thereby limiting social conflict. As a consequence, the social structures that underlie society and which cause international students' marginalisation will continue to be reinforced rather than challenged. Progressive change can only happen if international students themselves are given power to construct the discourse of social inclusion, in conjunction with the mainstream, such that it reflects their needs and wants, as well as those of the mainstream. The voice of international students must be clearly represented in the discourse. This would enable international students to construct society and their place in it such that they are included in a way which they are comfortable with. By constructing the discourse on their own terms international students can harness the discursive appeal of social inclusion to effect the changes they want and thereby rebalance the current deeply unequal power relationship that exists between them and Australian society.

Contribution

Theoretical

This study contributes to existing knowledge by using CDA to analyse the impact of social inclusion discourses on how the needs, experiences and welfare of international students are understood. In adopting a critical discourse approach, the study problematises the concept of social inclusion as both a heuristic and antidote for the issues faced by international students living and studying in Australia. It identifies how a social inclusion policy discourse reflects and reinforces existing social structures and power relationships by legitimising them and limiting the ability of international students to exercise their agency. Thereby requiring either international students assimilation into mainstream society or justifying their marginalisation. This confirms critiques from the literature that social inclusion discourse denies difference (Edwards, *et al.*, 2001), enforces conformity with mainstream values and norms (Caidi & Allard, 2005; Steinert & Pilgram, 2003, as cited in Millar, 2007), and reinforces the status quo (Barata, 2000; Levitas, 2005; Preece, 2001). The study also demonstrates how understandings of social inclusion can be discursively constructed in virtually any way – to either reinforce or challenge existing structures, but will ultimately reflect the author's position within the field. This again confirms arguments from the literature (see, for example, Levitas, 2005). This study thus provides a critical and deeper understanding of the discursive effects of social inclusion discourses on policy prescriptions designed to improve

international students' welfare in Australia and the consequences this has for their lived experience in comparison to typical, non-discourse focused policy analyses.

It was identified in Chapter 7 that although the discourse of social inclusion produced by the Council policy documents, the ISSP and SIP, appeared on the surface to be empowering for international students, it actually limits their agency. The discourse had clear discursive appeal, being presented with a positive, progressive style (Fairclough, 1992), and constructing a broader, multi-dimensional understanding of international students' needs, experiences and welfare. An understanding that recognised the various dimensions of life in which international students can be excluded, the importance of relationships and resources, and which encouraged their agency. However, CDA analysis revealed that the discourse limited the agency of international students by constructing only a limited role for international students in achieving their own social inclusion and not clearly representing the voice of international students in the texts. In this way the discourse presented international students as passive, voiceless, and therefore relatively powerless, objects. These features of the Council's discourse are exemplary of two common strategies employed by the mainstream when discussing the marginalised (van Dijk, 2006a, 2006b). They are talked about rather than to, nor allowed to speak for themselves.

This lack of agency relates to what activities are constructed as being key to participate in to achieve social inclusion and the resources required to do so. As the author of the discourse and effectively the only voice that is represented (Fairclough, 1992) within it, the Council determines what those activities are, such as celebrating Christmas (Alden & Thomas, 1998; Hale & FitzGerald, 2007). This implicitly means that they are also determining the resources, both tangible and intangible, required for inclusion. That is, the marginalised must have the resources necessary to enable participation in the key activities required for inclusion into the mainstream. The 'entry fee', as Bourdieu and Wacquant (2002) would put it.

The activities chosen reflect the values and norms of the mainstream, for the Council, as a mainstream institution, inherently seeks to reinforce its dominant social position (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2002). In this way the discourse creates a 'normalising regime' based on those

norms and values, setting boundaries on the extent to which diversity is tolerated and consequently subordinating minorities (Lewis, 2005). Encouraging the marginalised to participate in selected 'key' activities becomes a means of promoting conformity with mainstream norms and values, thereby limiting diversity (Barata, 2000; Edwards, *et al.*, 2001; Hale & FitzGerald, 2007). Greater participation consequently reinforces the existing underlying structures of society rather than challenging them. A similar theme was also present in how the majority of interview participants constructed their understandings of social inclusion.

As discussed in Chapter 8, participants in this study constructed social inclusion in a variety of ways, as robust engagement, the formation of connections, being valued and appreciated by the community, accessibility of/mainstreaming into Council services, and the realisation of human rights. Despite the diversity of these understandings, they have in common a focus on incorporating international students into the existing social structures and power relationships of the mainstream Greenwood community. As in the discourse produced by the Council documents, this is achieved by constructing the basis for achieving social inclusion, whether through robustly engaging or realising one's human rights, in terms of mainstream norms and values. Thereby creating a normalising regime that must be conformed to in order to become included, with the alternative as being considered justifiably excluded (Ferguson, 1990; Lewis, 2005).

However, the understanding of social inclusion as being valued and appreciated by the community differs slightly from the other understandings in that it constructs international students in a relatively more powerful social position. It did so by presenting international students as valuable members of the community who should be included as they are, rather than as needing to change to meet some standard required for inclusion. This removes the normalising regime imposed by the other understandings and constructs the capital international students already possess as more valuable, thus improving their social position (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). It is important to note that this understanding was produced exclusively by international student representatives.

The reason the identity of the authors is important to note is because it highlights the ideological and political nature of social inclusion discourses. A nature which is not typically acknowledged within the discourses themselves nor admitted by their authors, but which examination via Critical Discourse Analysis can reveal. The discourses of social inclusion produced by representatives of the mainstream – the Council, its employees and elected members – fail to challenge or actively reinforce existing power relationships and social structures. Such a defence of the established social order reflects the dominant position in the field of Greenwood City occupied by the mainstream. The powerful within a given field will defend their position by attempting to reinforce established structures and what is considered relevant capital (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). In contrast, the powerless and marginalised in a field, such as international students in Greenwood City, will seek to challenge and reform its structures so that their capital is considered more valuable and thus attain a more powerful position (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). In this way, international students adding the additional facet of being valued and appreciated by the community to their understanding of social inclusion reflects their subjugated social position and efforts to change that.

What this finding highlights is that given the ambiguous nature of social inclusion (Levitas, 2005; Silver, 1994), and despite the literature's fixation on defining social inclusion/exclusion, attempting to construct a universal definition is pointless. Instead, research should focus on the particular ways social inclusion/exclusion is discursively constructed within given contexts. This emphasises a central tenant of discourse analysis – that meaning is situated and only relevant within its context (Locke, 2004). Indeed, of the various discourses/understandings of social inclusion revealed by my data analysis, only one matches a discourse identified in the literature. This despite my review of the social inclusion/exclusion literature identifying six major discourses. This lack of similarity is highlighted by Table 9.1 below.

Discourses of social inclusion/exclusion derived from literature	Constructions of social inclusion/exclusion derived from data
Participation	Participation
Specialisation/Moral Underclass Discourse	Robust engagement
Monopoly/Redistributionist Discourse	Connections/relationships
Solidarity/Social Integrationist Discourse	Access/mainstreaming
Multi-dimensional discourse	Being valued and appreciated by the community
Post-modernist discourse	Human rights

Table 9.1 – Literature vs. data constructions of social inclusion/exclusion

Social inclusion as a concept/discourse is ambiguous enough that it can be constructed in virtually any way that a text producer desires. As discussed in this section, it can be constructed in a way that reinforces the status quo as with the Council's discourse, or in a way that challenges it to some extent as with the international students' understanding of social inclusion as being valued and appreciated by the community. Perhaps the key point to note is that regardless of how exactly social inclusion is constructed the 'work' it performs will reflect the social position and aspirations, the ideology, of the discourse author.

Therefore, despite how progressive it sounds, social inclusion discourse ultimately serves the needs of the discourse producer. It has no defined meaning in and of itself. If the discourse producer is a member of a dominant social group the discourse of social inclusion will very likely reinforce the status quo, unless the author has taken the time to be very reflexive. It is for this reason that the voice of marginalised groups must be included in any discourse of social inclusion is positive change is to occur.

Practical

The study also makes a practical contribution by critically analysing the well intentioned social policy of a progressive local government, Greenwood Council, and identifying the hidden effects which counteract the policy's intended outcomes. Greenwood Council has a

well-founded reputation as a socially progressive local government and I have no doubt that they created their social inclusion policy discourse with the intention of improving the welfare of international students and other marginalised groups living within Greenwood City. However, this intended goal is undermined by the way that the discourse constructs international students with little agency and social inclusion as participation in mainstream activities. Due to this, only those international students who are willing to participate in mainstream activities and possess the other resources necessary to do so will become included and no longer be marginalised. Such conditions will likely continue to exclude a significant portion of the international student population in Greenwood City because they do not find mainstream activities appealing. The study's findings should enable not only the specific Council which was the site of this research, but any organisation considering utilising a social inclusion discourse, to construct its social policy discourse in such a way that it does not inadvertently undermine the desired objectives.

The findings of the study contribute to current literature on international student participation in the Australian higher education sector. The focus of universities, their managers and international recruitment agents has been on the on-campus experience of international students (Marginson, 2011) and their needs have been constructed in terms of academic supports such as study and language skills (Forbes-Mewett & Nyland, 2008). This study demonstrates the broader issues international students face as a marginalised or potentially marginalised group in Australian society and that this marginal state pushes them to the periphery of society, placing them at risk of social and economic harm such as exploitation in the employment and rental markets and the dangers that arise from not having the resources to develop community support networks in the communities in which they live (Marginson, *et al.*, 2010). The findings suggest that future policy development by universities and local communities must reach out to international students and student groups to give voice to their needs and respond to them in developing university and community policy.

Limitations

As with all research, the Critical Discourse Analysis research approach, specifically Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach, adopted in this study has certain

limitations, mostly related to the assumptions underpinning CDA and its application. I will now discuss some of the most relevant to this study.

CDA as a research approach acknowledges the role of the researcher in the analysis. Therefore, what data is considered relevant to analyse, how the analysis is conducted, the discursive tools selected and the findings that result are all determined by the researcher. This makes the findings contestable as all such decisions will reflect my biases to at least some extent. That is, this research, as with all research, is situated in the particular context in which it was conducted, which includes the researcher conducting it (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999).

In pragmatic terms, the highly technical nature of using Fairclough's dialectical-relational approach to CDA, particularly in relation to analysing the semiotic aspect of texts, is extremely challenging. Especially for those, such as myself, who do not come from a linguistic background. In addition, the extremely rich nature of the data provided by most texts means that they can be analysed in almost infinite ways. While this provides a lot of options to researchers in terms of analytical categories (some might say too many!), it also opens the analysis to accusations of researcher selectivity with regard to the analytical categories chosen. This relates back to my earlier point about the inherent subjectivity of findings using CDA. While I cannot completely refute such accusations, indeed I acknowledge that my findings are subjective, I have attempted to minimise the influence of my biases by remaining reflexive throughout the research process.

A further related potential criticism is the open political agenda of CDA research (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). As Fairclough and Wodak (1997, p. 258) state, 'CDA sees itself not as dispassionate and objective social science, but as engaged and committed. It is a form of intervention in social practice and social relationships'. CDA, as all critical theories, has the purpose of producing and communicating knowledge which can emancipate people from domination (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). In this study I sought to analyse the effects of social inclusion discourses on international students' marginalisation and highlight the unequal power relationships it represented. It may be claimed that such a commitment to freeing

international students from (what is perceived to be) oppression has blinded me to countervailing evidence and consequently biased my study to the extent that it is no longer social research but a form of political argumentation. While I do not deny that I seek to intervene on behalf of international students, I have not let such sentiments overcome my academic integrity. Indeed, despite its emancipatory interests, CDA is still a social science with requirements for credible and robust analysis (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997) which I have done my best to adhere to.

A further limitation of this thesis is that, given the social constructionist epistemology it adopts, the findings are contextually bound and therefore not generalizable to any other context. The findings are specific to Greenwood City Council at the time I collected the data.

Areas for future research

A number of directions and opportunities for future research flow from the analysis undertaken in this research.

It would be fruitful to conduct detailed investigations into the processes of production, distribution and interpretation of the Council's social inclusion policy documents to explore the ways in which the discourses they produce are promoted and resisted by Council employees, elected members and the community (Fairclough, 1992). Indeed, it was mentioned by one of my interview participants that some members of the Greenwood community had raised objections to the discourse of social inclusion when it was first incorporated into public Council social policy discourse. It would be interesting to investigate further the discursive means by which such resistance was implemented.

Another interesting avenue for future research would be to conduct a critical discourse analysis of the Federal Government's social inclusion policy discourse, in particular as it is articulated within its formal social inclusion policy document *A stronger, fairer Australia* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009b). It was the adoption by the Federal Government of a

discourse of social inclusion that led to its widespread use in Australia (as discussed in Chapter 6). This policy discourse has been examined in numerous articles (see, for example, Buckmaster & Thomas, 2009; Long, 2010), however, it has not been analysed using CDA as similar discourses have in other countries (see, for example, Koller & Davidson, 2008). Doing so would likely provide new insights into the impact of this discourse on the marginalised groups it targeted, such as indigenous Australians. Analysis of such a high profile discourse may also be of greater interest to a wider array of people, and therefore prove more influential, than the examination of the discourse of a single local government focused on a single marginalised social group conducted in this thesis.

Finally, I agree with Marginson (2011) that there exists the need for significant research into the lives of international students off campus, that is, outside of their education providers. In particular, in the area of international students' accommodation. This has been frequently cited as a highly problematic field for international students to negotiate (Marginson, *et al.*, 2010), yet little is known about where international students live or what kind of accommodation they occupy.

International students lack support in the off-campus arena and as proposed by Paltridge and colleagues (2012) local government is a potential organisation that could at least partially fill this gap. Indeed, this study has examined the efforts of one local government to do just that. However, given my critique of Greenwood Council's efforts there exists scope for investigation into alternative policy solutions which may be more equitable for international students. At the time of writing, another local government Council in Melbourne, Melbourne City Council itself, is instituting social policy discourses specifically designed to address international students' issues. It thus presents an interesting potential case site.

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Appendix 1: Guiding principles of the Social Inclusion Policy document

- '**Social Justice** – Council recognises that some Darebin citizens, both individually and as communities, experience exclusion from economic, social, political and cultural benefits and opportunities because of discrimination and poverty. The social justice principle affirms and guides Council's commitment to actions which addresses and advocates for equitable access to local services. Council will strive to make its own services and programs more accessible and responsive to people who have been excluded through life circumstances and inaccessible and non-responsive systems. Furthermore Council places importance on systemic advocacy for more equitable opportunities. Council has a role to represent and advocate for its citizens.' (p. 10).

- '**Human rights** – Council recognises that human rights are universal and affirms the inherent right of all people to be treated with respect, equality and dignity. Equity and inclusion actions which recognise people's rights and builds on their strengths and capacities are important beginnings and ongoing priorities. The Victorian Charter for Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 has 20 rights which are an important starting point for people affected by exclusion.' (p. 10)

- '**Accountability** – Council is committed to fostering a culture of open and accountable governance. Accountability will be strengthened by increasingly enabling more communities to become involved in decision-making; advocating on important local issues and priorities; having effective and accessible information and communication and reporting of Council's actions; reflecting diversity throughout the organisation; and by building organisational competence in equity and inclusion practices.' (p. 10)

- '**Participation** – Council will ensure that the citizens and communities of Darebin, in particular the target groups identified in this policy will have the opportunity to participate in decisions that directly affect their lives. It is important that citizens, Council and other stakeholders involved and affected by Council decisions are able to be part of a process of participation together in dialogue and decision-making that is informed, active, free, meaningful and which establishes mutuality in relationships. Council will promote and support community initiatives that can facilitate and strengthen people's social, economic and intercultural participation.' (p. 10)

- **'Empowerment** – Council recognises that Darebin citizens are rights holders and that Council has a duty and responsibility to acknowledge and fulfil these rights. Council recognises that meaningful participation by citizens can only happen when Council's engagement process is supportive, builds on participants' experiences and strengths and when social, cultural and other barriers are addressed and removed. Social exclusion can deny people's capacity for self and mutual respect and dignity. Economic, social and cultural empowerment are interlinked and require integrated approaches. Council will strive to develop and support community initiatives that include integrated understanding and approaches.' (p. 11)

- **'Diversity –** Council recognises, welcomes and celebrates the diversity of Darebin citizens and communities. People are diverse in abilities, age, sexual orientation, cultural values and practices, religions and beliefs, gender, ideas, lifestyles, and experiences. Council recognises that diversity has been a basis for injustice and discrimination for many people and communities. Recognition of the contribution of diversity to the lives, experiences and resources of communities is an important starting point. Council will seek to adapt its processes for policy development and program and service implementation and evaluation in ways that can accommodate and reflect this diversity. Council will seek to advance diversity in ways that further enhance people's individual and collective human rights in the context of relationships of mutual respect and reciprocity.' (p. 11)

Appendix 2 – MUHREC Certificate of Ethics Approval

MONASH University

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Research Office

Human Ethics Certificate of Approval

Date:	**9 August 2011**
Project Number:	**CF11/1249 – 2011000695**
Title:	**Critical analysis of Australian social inclusion discourse and its effects on international students**
Chief Investigator:	**Dr Susan Mayson**
Approved:	**From: 9 August 2011** **To: 9 August 2016**

Terms of approval

1. The Chief investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained, if relevant, and a copy forwarded to MUHREC before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation. **Failure to provide permission letters to MUHREC before data collection commences is in breach of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.**
2. Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
3. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by MUHREC.
4. You should notify MUHREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must contain your project number.
6. **Amendments to the approved project (including changes in personnel):** Requires the submission of a Request for Amendment form to MUHREC and must not begin without written approval from MUHREC. Substantial variations may require a new application.
7. **Future correspondence:** Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence.
8. **Annual reports:** Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. This is determined by the date of your letter of approval.
9. **Final report:** A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. MUHREC should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
10. **Monitoring:** Projects may be subject to an audit or any form of monitoring by MUHREC at any time.
11. **Retention and storage of data:** The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.

Professor Ben Canny
Chair, MUHREC

cc: Dr Jan Schapper, Mr Toby Paltridge