Navigating Identity, Resistance, and Belonging: Exploring the Voices of South Sudanese Australian Adolescents in Educational Contexts

Annemarie Louise Agborchi

Thesis submitted for the fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Victoria University, Australia

Institute for Sustainable Industries & Liveable Cities

December 2024

Abstract

Within Australian education contexts, South Sudanese Australian adolescents, who are mostly recently arrived refugees or children of refugee parents, frequently experience discrimination, racism, and 'Othering', often fuelled by racial profiling and stereotypical portraits by the media and politicians. This negatively impacts the adolescents' mental health, future aspirations, feelings of belonging, and school performance and promotes feelings of social exclusion. These issues have persisted since South Sudanese refugees first arrived in Australia in the early 2000s. This uses a new lens - the lived experiences of South Sudanese Australian adolescents – to address these under-researched issues in the context of educational equity and inclusion, despite the growing presence of South Sudanese Australians in multicultural educational settings in Australia.

This research explores the lived experiences and Funds of Identity (FoI) of South Sudanese Australian adolescents and their utilisation of their experiences to provide counter-narratives to focus on their assets and improve their educational outcomes. The research participants (youth, community and school representatives) provided recommendations for educational stakeholders and advocated for culturally responsive structures and processes that transform the learning environments and outcomes and improve equity, inclusion and social justice for South Sudanese Australian adolescents.

Drawing from the FoI and community cultural wealth frameworks, this research is grounded in the transformative and critical theory paradigms. A qualitative methodology was employed that included interviews with six adult members of the South Sudanese Australian community in Victoria, as well as school leaders, teachers and South Sudanese Australian community liaison officers from two participating schools in the western suburbs of Melbourne. Central to the research were twelve Year 9 – 12 South Sudanese Australian students who participated in four focus group meetings, one-on-one interviews and arts-based activities, including the creation of visual and literary artefacts.

The young participants articulated a strong connection to South Sudan, even though several students had never been there. They revealed the complexities of navigating dual identities — balancing the expectations of South Sudanese cultural norms, particularly regarding gender roles, with their experiences of growing up in Australia. The adolescents expressed pride in their cultural heritage and used counter-narratives to resist deficit perspectives and negative societal stereotyping.

Based on the analyses, two new FoI sub-categories were suggested. Firstly, normative and expectational FoI, which is defined as the internalised and externally imposed norms and expectations. These can refer to cultural traditions, gender roles, and social behaviours that are deemed acceptable or desirable within a specific community. Secondly, resistant FoI, which refers to a critical

consciousness that challenges and critiques cultural norms, gender roles, stereotypical representations and deficit perspectives.

The findings contribute to the paucity of studies that explore the funds of the identity of South Sudanese Australian adolescents and extend the understanding of their identity development by addressing the tensions between cultural preservation and assimilation. Practical recommendations are also provided for educational stakeholders to foster more inclusive practices, such as employing culturally responsive teaching strategies, amplifying student voices, and engaging with counter-narratives that challenge stereotypes and deficit-based assumptions.

Student Declaration

Declaration of Authenticity

"I, Annemarie Agborchi, declare that the PhD thesis entitled Navigating Identity, Resistance, and Belonging: Exploring the Voices of South Sudanese Australian Adolescents in Educational Contexts is no more than 100,000 words in length, including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work".

"I have conducted my research in alignment with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and Victoria University's Higher Degree by Research Policy and Procedures.

Signature: Date: 12/12/2024

Ethics Declaration

"All research procedures reported in the thesis were approved by the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, approval number HRE21-016 and Victoria Department of Education, application number 2021_004472."

Signature: Date: 12/12/2024

Acknowledgements

Completing this PhD has been a transformative journey, and it would not have been possible without the support, guidance, and encouragement of many individuals.

I am deeply grateful to my supervisors, Dr Helen Widdop Quinton and Dr Sarah Tartakover for their unwavering support, insightful feedback, and encouragement throughout my PhD journey. Your expertise and guidance have been invaluable. I am also greatly indebted to the support and guidance of Dr William Abur (University of Melbourne), whose involvement and guidance from the very beginning have greatly enriched this research.

I would like to extend my gratitude to Victoria University for awarding me a scholarship and providing ongoing support throughout my PhD journey. I also thank the Victorian Department of Education for granting permission to conduct my research.

To my colleagues at Victoria University, particularly Professor Marcelle Cacciattolo and Dr Sara Gaul-McKee. Your encouragement and support have meant so much to me, and I deeply appreciate your kindness.

Most importantly, I am profoundly thankful to the members of the South Sudanese Australian community, particularly the adolescents, who generously shared their lived experiences and allowed me to amplify their voices in this research. I also express my gratitude to the (Assistant) Principals and staff, of the participating schools for welcoming me into their schools and providing support where possible.

A special thanks to professional editor Dr Emma Curtin, who edited my thesis in accordance with the *Australian Standards for Editing Practice.*

I am grateful to my friends Nancy and Jacqui for their encouragement and belief in me, as well as for sharing the joys and challenges of motherhood together.

Finally, I extend my deepest thanks to my loving parents, Hendrik-Jan and Lucyan, my sisters Roos and Thérèse, and brother Maarten (along with their families), as well as my friends Maritha and Janneke; your unwavering love, support and prayers, even from afar, have meant the world to me.

This thesis is dedicated to my family, my loving and supportive husband, George, and my precious children, Juliette, Luque, Ralph, and Milou. Thank you for your patience, love, and constant encouragement. You are my inspiration, and I love you so much.

Publication and External Presentations

Agborchi, A., Abur, W., Tartakover, S., & Widdop Quinton, H. (in press). "If you step in our shoes, then you would treat us differently": The struggle for equity and inclusion in education for the South Sudanese Australian community. In M. Cacciattolo & J. Burke (Eds.), *Equity, inclusion and agency: Theory, policy and practice in education*. Springer.

Agborchi, M. (2024). *Visualising identity: Arts-based research with South Sudanese Australian students.* Video presentation in the Victoria University 3MT Competition (Runner-up). https://vimeo.com/1001482460

Agborchi, A. (2023, November 30). Exploring the funds of identity of South Sudanese Australian adolescents using arts-based methods. Oral presentation at the *Australian Association for Research in Education 2023 Conference*. AARE.

Agborchi, A., Tartakover, S., Abur, W., & Widdop-Quinton, H. (2022, July 1). "If you step in our shoes, then you would treat us differently": The struggle for equity and inclusion in education for the South Sudanese Australian community. Oral presentation at the EIA Virtual Conventicle. Victoria University/Federation University.

Table of Contents

Abstract i
Student Declaration iii
Acknowledgements iv
Publication and External Presentations v
List of Figures xii
List of Tables xiv
List of Abbreviations xv
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Research 1
1.1 Introduction 1
1.2 Research Background and Context 2
1.3 Research Problem 5
1.4 Research Aims, Objectives and Research Questions 5
1.5 Theoretical Frameworks and Methodology 6
1.6 Significance of the Research 10
1.7 Motivation for this Research and Positionality 10
1.8 Thesis Structure 15
Chapter 2: Relevant Literature 17
2.1 Introduction 17
2.2 The South Sudanese and Their Continued Struggle for Peace and Justice 17
2.2.1. The Civil Wars and the Struggle for Independence: 1956 – 2011 18
2.2.2 Independent South Sudan: An End to the Struggles? 19
2.2.3 The Impact of the Civil Wars 21
2.2.4 The South Sudanese in the Diaspora 23
2.2.5 The South Sudanese Community in Australia 26
2.2.6 Historical Section Summary 29
2.3 Identity 31
2.3.1 Conceptualisations of Identity 31
2.3.1.1 Cultural and Ethnic Identity 37
2.3.1.1.1 Cultural Identity and Hegemony 37
2.3.1.1.2 Ethnic Identity and Acculturation 38
2.3.1.2 Gender Identity 39
2.3.1.3 Identity in the Third Space 42
2.3.2 The Identity of the South Sudanese 43
2.3.3 A Literature Portrait of the Identity of South Sudanese Australian Adolescents 45
2.3.4 Identity Section Summary 49
2.4 Inclusive Education in Australia 51
2.4.1 What is Inclusive Education? 51
2.4.2 How Inclusive are Schools in Australia for Students of Former Refugee Backgrounds? 52
2.4.3 Educational Inclusion and South Sudanese Australian Students 56
2.4.4 Pedagogies for Inclusive Education 59
2.4.4.1 Culturally Relevant Pedagogy 59
2.4.4.2 Culturally Responsive Teaching 61
2.4.4.3 Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy 62
2.4.4.4 Culturally Relevant Education: Synthesising the Three Asset-Based Pedagogies 63

2.4.5 Inclusive Education Section Summary 65
2.5 Chapter Summary 66
Chapter 3: Theoretical Frameworks 67
3.1 Introduction 67
3.2 Theoretical Framework: Funds of Identity 67
3.2.1 Introduction 67
3.2.2 Funds of Knowledge 67
3.2.3 From Funds of Knowledge to Funds of Identity to FoK/I 70
3.2.4 Funds of Identity 72
3.2.5 Additional Concepts of the Funds of Identity Framework 74
3.2.6 Explorations of the Fund of Identity Framework 78
3.2.7 Justification for Using Funds of Identity in the Research 79
3.3 Theoretical Framework: Community Cultural Wealth 80
3.3.1 Introduction 80
3.3.2 Critical Race Theory 80
3.3.3 Community Cultural Wealth Framework 81
3.3.4 Justification for Using Community Cultural Wealth in This Research 85
3.4 Combining the Theoretical Frameworks 85
3.5 Chapter Summary 86
Chapter 4: Methodology 88
4.1 Introduction 88
4.2 Research Design 88
4.2.1 Qualitative Research Approach 88
4.2.2 Research Paradigm 88
4.2.2.1 Transformative Paradigm 89
4.2.2.2 Critical Theory 91
4.2.2.2.1 Critical Theory as a Research Paradigm 91
4.2.2.2.2 Critical Theory as a Theoretical Framework 93
4.2.2.2.3 From Critical Theory to Critical Pedagogy 94
4.3 Research Methods 95
4.3.1 The Extended Multi-Method Autobiographical Approach 96
4.3.2 Portraiture 97
4.3.3 Arts-Based Research and Decolonising Research 101
4.4 Knowledge Collection Phases 104
4.4.1 Phase One: Interviews with South Sudanese Australian Community Members 106
4.4.2 Phase Two: Focus Group Meetings with the South Sudanese Australian Adolescents 108
4.4.2.1 Selecting the Students 108
4.4.2.2 Focus Group Meetings 110
4.4.3 Phase Three: Individual Interviews and Drawings with the South Sudanese Australian Adolescents 112
4.4.4 Phase Four: Interviews with School Leadership and Teachers 113
4.4.5 Phase Five: Interviews with South Sudanese Australian Community Liaison Officers 114
4.4.6 Phase Six: Arts-Based Activities with the South Sudanese Australian Adolescents 114
4.5 Analysis of the Gathered Knowledge 116
4.5.1 Analysis of the Interviews and Focus Group Discussions 116

4.5.2 Analysis of the Arts-Based Artefacts 119
4.5.3 Thematic Analyses and Writing the Narrative Portraits 121
4.6 Ethical Considerations and Trustworthiness of the Research 123
4.6.1 Ethical Considerations of the Research 123
4.6.2. Trustworthiness of the Research 125
4.7 Chapter Summary 127
Chapter 5: Introducing the Student Voices: Student Portraits 128
5.1 Introduction 128
5.2 Portrait of AD: “It’s Better to be Where you Belong, Where you Feel Comfortable” 129
5.3 Portrait of Abuk: “I’m South Sudanese ‘Cause I Relate to that Part of Myself More” 139
5.4 Portrait of Saint: “I’m not Gonna Change Myself When Someone Has an Opinion About Me” 146
5.5 Reflecting on the Portraits 155
5.6 Chapter Summary 156
Chapter 6: Student Perspectives: Exploring the Funds of Identity and Community Cultural Wealth Frameworks 157
6.1 Introduction 157
6.2 The Funds of Identity of the South Sudanese Australian Student 158
6.2.1 Exploring the Funds of Identity Expressed in the Focus Group Meetings and Interviews 159
6.2.1.1 Geographical Funds of Identity: “Because That's my own Country; I was Born There” 160
6.2.1.2 Practical Funds of Identity: “I Would Just be Blasting my Playlist, Like any Playlist I Feel Like That Day and Just Write” 161
6.2.1.3 Cultural Funds of Identity: “I Feel That's Something I'll Always Have; I Would Always Want Cultural Food” 162
6.2.1.4 Social Funds of Identity: “I Love my Mum; I go to School for her, 10% for Myself” .. 164
6.2.1.5 Institutional Funds of Identity: “I Love Going to School” 164
6.2.1.6 Digital Funds of Identity: “I Watch Netflix Movies, and I Watch Anime on Netflix and Online Websites” 166
6.2.1.7 Dark/Existential Funds of Identity: “Because Your Skin Colour is Black, They Punish you Differently” 167
6.2.1.8 Agency and Imagination: "That's What I Want to Change” 170
6.2.1.9 Invisible Funds of Identity: “Girls are Mostly Expected to Know how to Cook, Clean; Boys Don't do Cooking” 171
6.2.1.10 Visual Overview of Explored Funds of Identity 172
6.2.2 The Funds of Identity Expressed in the Identity Drawings 174
6.2.3 The Funds of Identity Expressed in the Geomaps 184
6.3 The Community Cultural Wealth of the South Sudanese Australian Knowledge Holders 194
6.3.1 Aspirational Capital: “Legal Studies Because I Want to do Law; I Want to be a Lawyer” . 194
6.3.2 Linguistic Capital: “We not Only Speak Dinka But We Can Also, Like, Speak Swahili and Arabic” 195
6.3.3 Familial Capital: “My Mom's Been Teaching Me All This Stuff” 196
6.3.4 Social Capital: “If I Need Something, I’ll Call Them” 197
6.3.5 Spiritual Capital: “My Family has the Qur’an, Like, in Five Places” 197

6.3.6 Navigational and Informational Capital: “I Only Need Units 1 and 2 for Maths so I can go into my Bachelor's in Nursing” 198
6.3.7 Resistant Capital: “It Shouldn't Be My Job to Look After Your Kids!” 199
6.3.8 Visual Overview of Explored Community Cultural Wealth 202
6.4 Additional Themes 203
6.5 Recommendations Suggested by the Student Knowledge Holders 204
6.6 Chapter Summary 207
Chapter 7: School Portraits 208
7.1 Introduction 208
7.2 Portrait of Western College: “How can we Improve the Lives of Every kid we got in the School?” 208
7.3 Portrait of Riverwalk College: “Our South Sudanese Kids, or African Kids, Have got That Personality; it's a Winning Personality!” 212
7.4 Chapter Summary 218
Chapter 8: Setting the Context: Interviews with Knowledge Holders from the South Sudanese Australian Community 220
8.1 Introduction 220
8.2 Identified Themes 221
8.2.1 Meta-Theme 1: The Identity of South Sudanese Australians 223
8.2.1.1 Identities Based on Ethnic Backgrounds 223
8.2.1.2 Identities Shaped by Lived Experiences of War 223
8.2.1.3 Identities Based on Cultural Values 224
8.2.2 Meta-Theme 2: Issues Experienced by the South Sudanese Australian Community 224
8.2.2.1 Issues with the Educational System 225
8.2.2.1.1 Differences in Parental Expectations Regarding the Teachers’ Role 225
8.2.2.1.2 Limited Parental Educational Involvement 226
8.2.2.1.3 Unrealistic Parental Expectations Regarding Their Children 227
8.2.2.1.4 Limited Parental Support at Home 227
8.2.2.1.5 Low Teacher Expectations of South Sudanese Australian Students 228
8.2.2.1.6 Limited Teacher Support for South Sudanese Australian Students 229
8.2.2.1.7 Racism and Discrimination Within the Schools 230
8.2.2.2 Intergenerational Conflicts 231
8.2.2.3 Issues with Adolescent Behaviour 232
8.2.2.4 Negative Media Portrayals and the Consequences 235
8.2.2.5 Issues with Finding Internships and Employment 236
8.2.3 Meta-Theme 3: Calls to Action 236
8.3 Observed Community Cultural Wealth 239
8.4 Chapter Summary 241
Chapter 9: Discussion of the Key Findings and Proposed Additions to the Funds of Identity Framework 243
9.1 Introduction 243
9.2 Key Findings and Proposed Framework Additions 244
9.2.1 Impacts of Dark/Existential FoI on the Student Knowledge Holders 245
9.2.1.1 Dark/Existential Funds of Identity at School: “Oh, So You’re One of the Good Ones?” 245

9.2.1.2 Dark/Existential Funds of Identity at Home and Within the South Sudanese Australian Community 248
9.2.1.2.1 Experiences With and/or Knowledge of Gangs and/or Gang-Related Violence: "One of my Older Cousins, he got Mixed up with it" 248
9.2.1.2.2 Experiences of Being Considered 'Whitewashed' by Family or Community Members: "When you Can't Speak our Language, They'll Call you Whitewashed" 249
9.2.1.2.3 Personal or Familial Experiences of War, Displacement and Trauma: "I Lived in Kakuma Refugee Camp" 250
9.2.1.2.4 Experiencing Mental Health Issues and Having to Grow up too Quickly due to Responsibilities at Home: "Not Being Seen as a Child all of my Life" 251
9.2.1.2.5 Experiences with Losing the Ability to Communicate in the Mother Tongue: "There's not Much Mother Tongue Anymore Because I've Been in Australia for, Like, ten Years" 253
9.2.1.3 Dark/Existential Funds of Identity in the Broader Australian Community: "They Assume Everyone Steals" 254
9.2.2 The Hybrid Identity of Young South Sudanese Australians and Their Navigation of Liminal Spaces 256
9.2.3 The Need for a Positive Presence and Visibility of the South Sudanese Australian Community in Schools: "We, as a Community, We've got to do Something for Ourselves" 261
9.2.4 Navigating and Balancing Cultural Expectations and Gender Norms: "The Only Freedom we Have is School, our Work, get Married, get Kids" 265
9.2.5 Resistance and Reframing in Response to Challenges: "I Wanna Show Them That Nothing is Stopping us; we Don't Have Limits" 270
9.2.6 Visual Overview of the Suggested Additions to the Funds of Identity Framework 272
9.3 Chapter Summary 276
Chapter 10: Conclusion 277
10.1 Introduction 277
10.2 Main Findings and Implications for Practice and Theory 278
10.3 Synthesising the Recommendations 282
10.4 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Studies 284
10.5 Concluding Statement: Self-Reflection and Transformations 286
References 289
Appendix A: Overview of South Sudan's History 325
Appendix B: Plain Language Statement for South Sudanese Australian Community Members 334
Appendix C: Consent Form for Participants Involved in the Research 336
Appendix D: Interview Questions for South Sudanese Australian Community Members 338
Appendix E: Plain Information Sheet for Students 339
Appendix F: Student and Parent/Caregiver Consent Form 342
Appendix G: Questions for Focus Group Meetings 345
Appendix H: Interview Questions and Arts-Based Activities for the South Sudanese Australian Students 347
Appendix I: Interview Questions for School Leadership 348
Appendix J: Interview Questions for (Homeroom) Teachers 349
Appendix K: Interview Questions for South Sudanese Australian CLOs 350
Appendix L: Overview of the Expressed Funds of Identity by the Student Knowledge Holders 351

Appendix M: Overview of the Expressed Community Cultural Wealth by the Student Knowledge Holders..... 361
Appendix N: Overview of the Responses from the Geomaps..... 370

List of Figures

Figure 1 *The Researcher's Adapted Overview of the Funds of Identity Framework and Suggested Additional Concepts* 78
Figure 2 *Adapted Overview of the Community Cultural Wealth Framework with Suggested Additional Concepts* 84
Figure 3 *Adapted Overview of the Combined Theoretical Frameworks* 86
Figure 4 *The Poem Drunk Thoughts by Febe Pepe, Included in AD's Collage* 133
Figure 5 *AD's Geomap* 134
Figure 6 *AD's Identity Drawing* 136
Figure 7 *Image from a Shop in AD's Photo Collage* 136
Figure 8 *Image of a Quote from Nicki Minaj included in AD's Photo Collage* 137
Figure 9 *Image of Summer Walker in AD's Photo Collage* 138
Figure 10 *Abuk's Identity Drawing* 140
Figure 11 *Image of Jhene Aiko included in Abuk's Photo Collage* 141
Figure 12 *Abuk's Geomap* 141
Figure 13 *Image of Abuk's Collection of Skin Care Included in her Photo Collage* 144
Figure 14 *Image of Abuk's Collection of Make-Up Included in her Photo Collage* 145
Figure 15 *Saint's Identity Drawing* 147
Figure 16 *Image from Saint's Photo Collage* 148
Figure 17 *Description of Family Traditions in Saint's Photo Collage* 149
Figure 18 *Images of Food in Saint's Photo Collage* 149
Figure 19 *Saint's Description of her Father in her Photo Collage* 150
Figure 20 *Saint's Reflection on the Importance of Family* 150
Figure 21 *Saint's Description of Her Siblings* 151
Figure 22 *Saint's Geomap* 152
Figure 23 *Overview of the Explored Funds of Identity Expressed in the Focus Group Meetings and Interviews* 173
Figure 24 *Amiot's Identity Drawing* 174
Figure 25 *Abul's Identity Drawing* 175
Figure 26 *Abraham's Identity Drawing* 176
Figure 27 *Chanel's Identity Drawing* 177
Figure 28 *Aluat's Identity Drawing* 178
Figure 29 *Aker's Identity Drawing* 179
Figure 30 *Moya's Identity Drawing* 180
Figure 31 *Aduk's Identity Drawing* 180
Figure 32 *MJ's Identity Drawing* 181
Figure 33 *Overview of the Elements Included in the Identity Drawings* 183
Figure 34 *Abraham's Geomap* 185
Figure 35 *Abul's Geomap* 186
Figure 36 *MJ's Geomap* 186
Figure 37 *Aduk's Geomap* 187
Figure 38 *Aker's Geomap* 188
Figure 39 *Aluat's Geomap* 189
Figure 40 *Amiot's Geomap* 190

Figure 41 *Chanel's Geomap* 190
Figure 42 *MJ's Geomap* 191
Figure 43 *Moya's Geomap* 191
Figure 44 *Overview of the Most Important Places Indicated on the Students' Geomaps* 193
Figure 45 *Visual Overview of the Explored Community Cultural Wealth* 203
Figure 46 *Overview of the Generated Themes* 222
Figure 47 *Overview of Contributing Factors to Low Educational Outcomes and Engagement Levels* 231
Figure 48 *Overview of Contributing Factors to Issues with South Sudanese Australian Adolescents* 234
Figure 49 *The Navigation Between Two Cultures and the Development of a Hybrid Identity*..... 260
Figure 50 *Visual Overview of an Interpretation of the Funds of Identity Framework with Suggested Additional Sub-Categories* 273
Figure 51 *Visual Overview of the Key Findings of This Research That Explore the Identity Development of South Sudanese Australian Adolescents*.....275

List of Tables

Table 1 *Overview of the Six Knowledge Collection Phases* 105
Table 2 *Background Information of the Six Knowledge Holders* 107
Table 3 *Overview of the Participating Students* 109
Table 4 *Overview of the Selected Arts-Based Activities* 115
Table 5 *Overview of the Six Phases of Reflexive Thematic Analysis* 116
Table 6 *Overview of the 18 Themes Generated from the Expressions of Dark/Existential Funds of Identity by the Student Knowledge Holders* 168

List of Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
APA	American Psychiatric Association
ARCSS	Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan
BSEM	Berry Street Education Model
CCW	Community Cultural Wealth
CLO	Community Liaison Officer
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CRT	Critical Race Theory
DE	Department of Education
DSM-5	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition
FoI	Funds of Identity
FoK	Funds of Knowledge
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
ITT	Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma
MEA	Multicultural Educational Aide
MEASP	Multicultural Educational Aide Support Program
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
RAP	Rights Advocacy Project
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
TGoNU	Transitional Government of National Unity
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
VCAA	Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority
VFST	Victoria Foundation for Survivors of Torture
VNAP	Virtual New Arrivals Program
WHO	World Health Organisation
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Research

1.1 Introduction

> *I feel that the young people that [they] are feeling lost within two cultures. Because if they go out, they see that the entire community, okay, the entire Australian community, have their own way of doing things. When they come home, we expect them to do things the way we do things culturally. They are confused. And, uhm, for a young person to be confused with no concrete idea, yes, they will come to understand that we are being raised in two different cultures. But that puts a strain on them because they don't know what to agree with and what they don't need to agree with.* (Atong, a South Sudanese Australian community member)

The unprecedented number of international conflicts has dramatically increased the number of forced displacements in the last decade, totalling 117.3 million globally at the end of 2023 (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2024a). Out of the 117.3 million displaced people, 37.4 million are refugees or in refugee-like situations. Just over 2.2 million refugees[1] come from South Sudan (UNHCR, 2024b). The majority of South Sudanese refugees are living in refugee camps in neighbouring countries, predominantly in Uganda and Sudan (UNHCR, 2024b), and a small portion has been resettled in third countries, including Australia.

In Australia, young people of South Sudanese backgrounds have either recently arrived as part of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) resettlement program or are so-called 'second-generation' South Sudanese Australians. Due to substantial differences in cultural backgrounds, customs and values between the South Sudanese Australian community and the broader Australian community, many young South Sudanese Australian adolescents are struggling, with one impact being the development of their identity. This is further exacerbated by the media and politicians' ongoing negative portrayals, which have tarnished the adolescents' reputation in the Australian community, including in educational contexts. In addition, frequently experienced educational deficit perspectives, racism and discrimination, and a lack of engagement and feelings of belonging to educational settings have adversely impacted the schooling performance and outcomes of South Sudanese Australian adolescents.

This research aims to explore the different elements that contribute to the development of the identity of South Sudanese Australian adolescents living in the western suburbs of Melbourne and utilise these explorations to provide counter-narratives that focus on the adolescents' assets, which can assist in improving their educational outcomes.

[1] Data from the UNHCR was last updated on 30 November 2024 (UNHCR, 2024b).

This chapter introduces the research by first discussing the background and context, followed by the research problem, aims, objectives, and research questions. The conceptual frameworks and methodology, the significance of the research, and finally, the motivation for the research and the researcher's position are then discussed.

1.2 Research Background and Context

South Sudan seceded from Sudan in 2011 after a six-year interim period preceded by a decades-long civil war. Since 1956, when Sudan became independent from British colonial rule, two civil wars (1962-1972 and 1983-2005) have brought widespread death and destruction (Johnson, 2016). During the Second Civil War (1983-2005), millions of southern Sudanese[2] escaped the excessive violence. They settled in surrounding countries, such as Ethiopia, Uganda, Egypt and Kenya (Gitau, 2018), or lived as internally displaced people (IDP) in Sudan (Johnson, 2016). After independence, peace was short-lived in the newest country in the world. In 2013, sudden fighting erupted for several reasons, primarily related to long-existing conflicts between several ethnic groups (Madut, 2017) and frictions within the ruling political party (Mamdani, 2014). In 2018, a Peace Agreement was signed, bringing relative peace and stability, although ongoing conflicts between ethnic communities involving violence, displacement and killing of civilians have been reported (UN Secretary-General, 2024). Currently, 2 million South Sudanese are living as IDP in South Sudan (UNHCR, n.d.), and 2.2 million are living as refugees[3] in neighbouring countries, mainly Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Sudan (UNHCR, 2024b).

Since the early 1990s, South Sudanese have been resettled as part of the UNHCR resettlement program (UNHCR, 2024c) to countries such as Australia. Most former South Sudanese refugees arrived in Australia in the mid-2000s (Losoncz, 2019). Despite the fact that Australia has resettled many South Sudanese and other people from African descent, Australia has always positioned itself as a white settler country and has a troubled history with Black[4] people (Mapedzahama & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017). This white legitimacy finds its provenance in the British colonists' claim of *terra nullius* that negated Indigenous occupation (Due, 2008). When Australia became a Federation in 1901, The Immigration Restriction Act, also referred to as the White Australia policy, was introduced (Udah, 2017). This act restricted the immigration of African and Asian people, except for white South Africans (Molla, 2024; Udah, 2017). The Displaced Person Scheme was introduced in 1947, which was aimed almost

[2] I will use the term 'southern Sudan' when referring to historical events before the Independence of South Sudan in 2011.

[3] The 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees defined a refugee as someone who, "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it" (UNHCR, 1951).

[4] I purposely capitalise the word Black to refer to a people sharing a history and culture while foregrounding my political standpoint regarding decentring whiteness (Howell et al., 2019). Similarly, Alabi (2005) states that Black is a "resistance term functioning in oppositional relationship to racist naming such as nigger" (p. 16).

exclusively at resettling European humanitarian immigrants (Molla, 2024). In 1966, due to amendments in the immigration policy, non-Europeans were allowed to migrate to Australia; however, the selection criteria prioritised skilled migrants (Molla, 2024). The White Australia Policy was abolished in 1973 by the Whitlam government; however, Udah and Singh (2018) noted that the legacy of the White Australia policy has ongoing implications due to the "reluctance to meaningfully acknowledge the black presence in Australia's early settlement, but also for the reception of visibly and culturally different immigrants to modern Australia" (p. 21). Similarly, Due (2008) referred to the ongoing normative conceptions of Australia being a white country. Within this socio-political context, Black people, and particularly those of African descent, are being racialised, marginalised and excluded (Udah, 2017), due to their cultural and physical distinctness (Mapedzahama & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017). Molla (2023) described this process of racial Othering of Black African people as "Afrophobia" whereby "an invisible wall of exclusion" is constructed between those deemed desirable and those regarded as undesirable (p. 4)

Within these political and racially charged contexts, the South Sudanese Australian community, particularly its young people, has received negative 'Othering'[5] publicity from politicians and the media based on false claims regarding alleged criminal behaviour (Macaulay & Deppeler, 2020; Nolan et al., 2016). The unfortunate death of a South Sudanese Australian boy, Liep Gony, in 2007 created a narrative of the presence of 'African gangs'[6] in Melbourne. This resulted in former Immigration Minister Kevin Andrews stating that "some groups don't seem to be settling and adjusting into the Australian way of life" and that it "makes sense [...] to slow down the rate of intake from countries such as Sudan" (Benier et al., 2018; Due, 2008; Faroque et al., 2007; Nolan et al., 2016). In 2016-2017, the 'African gangs' narrative gained renewed attention, culminating in former Minister for Home Affairs Peter Dutton claiming that people were scared to go to restaurants at night out of fear of the so-called 'Apex gang' (Majavu, 2020). These narratives of 'failed integration' and 'African gangs' are embedded in a racialised discourse that homogenises and criminalises South Sudanese Australian community members (Windle, 2008).

South Sudanese Australian young people are frequently homogenised by their racial identity as being 'Black' and, therefore, inherently different within the broader 'white' normative identity of Australian society, whereby their racial identity is transferred into racial profiling (Macaulay, 2023a). Moreover,

[5] Othering can be defined as a "set of dynamics, processes, and structures that engender marginality and persistent inequality across any of the full range of human differences based on group identities" (Powell & Menendian, 2016, p. 39).

[6] In line with Majavu (2020), I purposely place terms like 'African gang', 'Apex gang' and 'gang' in inverted commas to question the appropriateness of these labels. These labels stigmatise and criminalise African-background young people in Australia and promote negative stereotypes and racial profiling.

their racial identity is frequently framed in deficit terms and associated with being 'bad' or even 'criminal', which, consequently, fosters distorted perceptions, stereotyping, and fear in the broader Australian community (Majavu, 2020; Molla, 2019). According to Molla (2023), "Racializing violence and stigmatising the 'different' as dangerous […] sows fear and distrust in the community, further undermining societal wellbeing and cohesion" (p. 2). Racial profiling and the discourse on "whiteness as the normative mode of belonging in Australia" (Due, 2008, p. 1) have permeated educational settings, often resulting in marginalisation and disengagement of Black students (Molla, 2019). In addition, adolescents frequently experience deficit perspectives regarding their academic capabilities, bullying, racism and discrimination (often resulting directly from the negative media portrayal), limited teacher support and understanding of South Sudanese cultural norms (particularly regarding the role of girls at home), and receive disproportionate disciplinary actions. These compounding factors have adversely impacted student performance, engagement, retention, and feelings of belonging (Abur, 2018; Baak, 2019; Pittaway & Dantas, 2021; Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission, 2008).

Support and positive relationships between teachers and students of former refugee backgrounds improve feelings of belonging and well-being in school, which positively affect learning outcomes (Baak, 2016; Bešić et al., 2020). In addition to positive teacher-student relationships, Esteban-Guitart (2016, p. 28) asserted that 'contextualisation', which refers to creating a connection between the students' lives and school, facilitates learning. Contextualisation acknowledges that, through their lived experiences, all students bring prior knowledge, skills, interests and experiences to school that can be utilised and incorporated into the curriculum (Esteban-Guitart, 2016). Educational contextualisation can be achieved by exploring and acknowledging students' funds of identity (hereafter FoI), which can be described as tools that have been "historically accumulated and culturally developed, they are socially distributed and transmitted, and they are essential for constructing one's identity and defining and presenting oneself" (Esteban-Guitart, 2012, p. 177). FoI is an asset-based framework that can be utilised to promote social justice within educational settings (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a). The framework is founded on a Vygotskian socio-cultural conceptualisation of identity that considers the contributions of elements, such as significant people, places, activities and customs, to our identities (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a). Furthermore, identities are determined and influenced by our culturally lived experiences, forming the foundation for our FoI (Esteban-Guitart, 2016).

1.3 Research Problem

Nearly sixteen years have passed since former Immigration Minister Kevin Andrew claimed that South Sudanese community members were not adjusting and integrating into the Australian way of life (Nunn, 2010). Since then, years of predominantly negative media coverage, apart from a few articles that report on the sporting achievements of athletes, have, to date, maligned the South Sudanese Australian community. Ironically, the subsequent effects of these relentless negative portrayals often prevent the community from fully integrating and adjusting into Australian society, the very thing they were accused of, due to being criminalised, stigmatised, and racially profiled (Kaphle et al., 2024).

Such is the current climate and context in which South Sudanese Australian young people are growing up, affecting all aspects of their lives, including their educational journey. Though previous studies have sought to explore the identity development of South Sudanese Australian young people (e.g., Mude & Mwanri, 2020; Vaughan et al., 2021, 2023; S. Williams, 2022), it remains unclear which specific elements and lived experiences contribute to their identity, specifically their FoI, and how these can be utilised in educational contexts. In conclusion, despite the valuable insights from previously conducted research, no studies have explored the FoI of South Sudanese Australians to date. Therefore, this research has been conducted in the distinct research context of exploring the FoI of South Sudanese Australian adolescents growing up and being educated in the western suburbs of Melbourne.

1.4 Research Aims, Objectives and Research Questions

Given the lack of current studies on the FoI and lived experiences of South Sudanese Australian adolescents and the impact on their educational experiences, the main aims of this research were twofold. The first aim was to explore the FoI of South Sudanese Australian adolescents and utilise these to provide counter-narratives that focus on the adolescents' assets, which can assist in improving their educational outcomes. The second aim was to formulate recommendations for educational stakeholders regarding contextualising the curriculum and promoting a culturally responsive teaching pedagogy. These could then be used to transform the learning environments and outcomes and improve equity, inclusion and social justice for South Sudanese Australian adolescents.

In addition, this research sought to achieve two complementary aims. Firstly, to gain insights from adult South Sudanese Australian community members regarding the identity of young South Sudanese Australian people, current issues they are experiencing, particularly in education, and what schools can do to address them. Secondly, this research sought to gain insights from South Sudanese

Australian Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) working in schools regarding their experiences with the educational system and understanding of South Sudanese Australian community members.

Therefore, the research objectives were:

1. To explore the South Sudanese Australian adolescents' FoI.
2. To determine if and how the adolescents use their FoI in their educational journey.
3. To explore the lived experiences of South Sudanese Australian adolescents.
4. To determine how the South Sudanese Australian adolescents' lived experiences interact with their FoI.
5. To explore the current issues experienced by South Sudanese Australian adolescents in educational contexts.
6. To determine what changes need to be made to address these issues.

The following research question was developed to address the aims and objectives of this research:

- What FoI identity do South Sudanese Australian adolescents draw from in undertaking their education?

Three sub-questions complement this main research question:

1. How do the adolescents' lived experiences contribute to their FoI?
2. How do South Sudanese Australian adolescents' educational experiences interact with their FoI?
3. What change would need to occur to improve educational outcomes, engagement, and participation of South Sudanese Australian adolescents?

1.5 Theoretical Frameworks and Methodology

This research draws from and is embedded in two theoretical frameworks: FoI (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a) and community cultural wealth (hereafter CCW) (Yosso, 2005). The FoI framework has been described as "the historically accumulated, culturally developed, and socially distributed resources that are essential for a person's self-definition, self-expression, and self-understanding" (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a, p. 31). This framework is centred around identity construction and builds on the funds of knowledge (hereafter FoK) framework (Moll et al., 1992). The CCW approach draws from the critical race theory (hereafter CRT) (Yosso, 2005). The FoI and CCW theoretical frameworks are linked in their recognition and practical application of skills and resources to resist

cultural oppression and deficit thinking and improve equity and inclusion in education (Esteban-Guitart, 2023c; Rodriguez, 2013).

The FoI framework complements the FoK framework as described by Moll et al. (1992). The concept of FoK has evolved over the years and has been widely applied in educational settings, bridging cultural and knowledge gaps between schools and minority or marginalised communities. Initially described by Vélez-Ibáñez (1988), FoK referred to the skills and knowledge present in Mexican-American household clusters and how networks with other households and individuals could mobilise this knowledge. Vélez-Ibáñez and Greenberg (1992) expanded on the initial concept to challenge a deficit model in public schools, whereby educators, often lacking knowledge about the cultural identity of marginalised students, employed a deficit discourse in their teaching pedagogy. By acknowledging and utilising the "strategic and cultural resources" (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992, p. 313), which represent FoK in the classrooms, relationships between teachers, students and their families could be strengthened, leading to improved educational quality and equity. Central to the FoK approach is to challenge deficit thinking in education by questioning the assumption that low academic performance among children from underrepresented groups is solely due to deficits and deficiencies in the family environment (González et al., 2005).

Moll and colleagues (1992) further developed the initial concept of FoK, employing it as a qualitative research design in which teachers conducted ethnographic research in their students' households to determine parental and caregivers' knowledge and skills. Over the last decades, scholars and teachers have employed the FoK approach to address cultural and knowledge disparities, challenge deficit models, and foster a culturally relevant pedagogy to improve educational equity for marginalised students and their families.

Several limitations and concerns prompted Esteban-Guitart and colleagues (Esteban-Guitart, 2012; Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a; Saubich & Esteban-Guitart, 2011) to develop the concept of FoI that is embedded in the FoK approach. Inspired by identified limitations of the FoI approach (e.g., Hedges & Cooper, 2016; Hogg & Volman, 2020; Hviid & Villadsen, 2014), the concept was re-conceptualised by Esteban-Guitart (2021) to create "an ongoing, subjective, social and cultural, generative-directive process, grounded in our embodied experience of the world and in social interactions" resulting from imaginative and agentive processes (p. 169). Esteban-Guitart (2012, 2016) suggested five sub-categories of FoI: geographical, practical, cultural, social and institutional. In recent years, several additional concepts have been developed. Poole and Huang (2018) presented the concept of

'existential' FoI, which represent both positive and negative lived experiences that contribute to the FoI. Furthermore, Poole (2017a, 2017b) proposed ideological FoI, which can be political, cultural, or religious beliefs. Poole (2017a, 2017b, 2021) also introduced 'digital' FoI, which can be utilised as a FoI data collection technique whereby literary and visual artefacts can incorporate digital elements (e.g., an avatar[7]) that provide insights into the identities of young people. Charteris et al. (2018) proposed 'dark' FoI as an additional concept to the framework, drawing from the notion of dark FoK, which refers to the "difficult lifeworld knowledge" (Zipin, 2009, p. 323). Lastly, Esteban-Guitart (2023c) suggested adding 'invisible' FoI to the framework, describing this as the "hegemonic discourses and practices that are produced and distributed historically, culturally, and socially and which end up tacitly embedded in people's behaviors, thoughts, and practices" (p. 1457).

The FoI approach was selected as the overarching theoretical and methodological framework for this research. The reasons for doing so include the explorative nature of the approach, its emphasis on identity development, its attention to power and agency, and the inclusion of arts-based and multimodal data collection methods. These features make it particularly suitable for research with South Sudanese Australian young people who are navigating complex and, at times, challenging educational and social contexts. Thus, this research aims to contribute to and extend the existing FoI literature by deepening understandings of identity and identity development among South Sudanese Australian adolescents from refugee backgrounds, and those growing up in families with lived experiences of forced migration, who are living and schooling in the western suburbs of Melbourne.

The second theoretical framework used in this research draws from CCW, defined by Yosso (2005) as "knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color[8] to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression" (p.77). As noted above, CCW is an asset-based approach based on CRT, particularly CRT in education. This challenges racial stereotyping and deficit-based assumptions that are built on misguided beliefs that students of colour are to blame for their underachievement in education due to a lack of skills, cultural capital and parental apathy toward valuing and supporting education (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Yosso, 2005).

[7] Poole (2021) explained that an avatar refers to a representation of oneself in the virtual world.

[8] While the terms 'Communities of Colour' and 'People of Colour' are controversial (see, e.g., Kalunta-Crumpton, 2020), they are included in this thesis following Yosso (2005) and Yosso and Garcia (2007). However, I concur with Kalunta-Crumpton (2020), who stated that the term 'People of Colour' and sub-terms, such as women of colour, are historically racialised labels with origins in the 19th-century slave trade. Furthermore, the term promotes a racialised dichotomy between whites and non-whites (Kalunta-Crumpton, 2020).

This research employs a qualitative research strategy grounded in the transformative paradigm (Mertens, 1999) and critical theory (Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994), both of which emphasise challenging social inequalities and empowering marginalised communities such as South Sudanese Australians. The research incorporates elements of the extended multi-method autobiographical approach developed by Esteban-Guitart (2012). Furthermore, the phenomenological method of portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) is used as a recurrent style to present data through narrative portraits. These portraits weave together art and science (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005), capturing the participants' lived experiences and incorporating the researcher's perspectives and interpretations (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

This research was conducted in six phases, during which qualitative data, including arts-based artefacts, was collected. The first phase, which was initially planned as the sixth phase, involved interviews with six adult South Sudanese Australian community members. These interviews provided a comprehensive understanding of the broader context and issues experienced by the South Sudanese Australian community. Due to a nine-month delay in obtaining ethics approval from the Department of Education—caused by the ongoing COVID-19 lockdowns in Melbourne during 2021–2022—this phase was conducted first, with ethics approval granted by Victoria University. After ethics approval from the Department of Education was granted in April 2022, the remaining five phases commenced and involved two schools in Melbourne's western suburbs. In each school, four focus group discussions were organised with South Sudanese Australian students. These students also participated in interviews and created arts-based artefacts, including identity drawings, geo maps and photo collages. The data collection phases in school settings also included interviews with (assistant) principals, teachers, and South Sudanese Australian CLOs.

Using the FoI and CCW frameworks, the gathered data was analysed deductively while also employing inductive thematic analysis following the steps proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The gathered knowledge was explored to determine any expressions of FoI and CCW that were not included in these frameworks. The research is situated within a unique school context involving South Sudanese Australian students, educational stakeholders, South Sudanese Australian CLOs, and members of the South Sudanese Australian community in Melbourne. Therefore, it is crucial to acknowledge that their diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives cannot be generalised to represent all South Sudanese Australian adolescents, community members and educational staff.

1.6 Significance of the Research

When reflecting on the significance of this research, I am guided by the insights of Māori scholar Tuhiwai Smith (2021), who asserted in her book *Decolonizing Methodologies* that "research is not an innocent or distant academic exercise but an activity that has something at stake, and that occurs in a set of political and social conditions" (p. 5). This evoking statement served as a guiding principle for my research journey, impacting all elements of my research, including its aims and objectives, which underscore the significance of this research. While I refrain from asserting that I have 'decolonised' my research, I acknowledge the awareness instilled by this ethical perspective and necessity.

This research contributes to the body of knowledge concerning South Sudanese communities in the diaspora, specifically in Australia. There is a paucity of studies focussing on South Sudanese Australian adolescents born in Australia, growing up in families with potential trauma exposure and, possibly, intergenerational transmission of trauma (ITT). Furthermore, few studies have explored the experiences of second-generation South Sudanese Australians as they navigate adolescence in Australia. Do these young people identify as South Sudanese or Australian, and what elements of their parents' cultural heritage contribute to their developing identities? What are their parents' expectations regarding upholding certain cultural values and norms whilst trying to 'do' school and blend into the broader Australian community? These are some of the salient questions that frame my research. Additionally, the current research context – particularly regarding exposure to racism, discrimination, educational inequalities, and issues with participation and engagement for South Sudanese Australian adolescents – has been long-existing and seemingly unimproved over the past two decades (see for example Cassity & Gow, 2005; Harris & Nyuon, 2010). Hence, this research is vital for the South Sudanese Australian community, bringing renewed urgency to addressing the educational challenges and inequities experienced by this community, frequently caused and exacerbated by negative stereotypical media portraits.

1.7 Motivation for this Research and Positionality

Several factors contributed to the selection of the topic of this research. First, during preparations to relocate from Aotearoa (New Zealand) to Australia in 2018, while determining which suburb was most suitable for renting a property and schooling, my husband and I encountered online statements that mentioned phrases like 'African gangs', 'avoid any suburb to the south of Williamstown', and 'schools overrun by African gangs in Werribee'. These statements immediately intrigued my husband, who is of African heritage, as he had not encountered such openly expressed discontent towards individuals of African backgrounds until then. Our arrival in Australia coincided with the period when the South

Sudanese Australian community garnered negative attention in the media, with damaging stereotypical portraits linking its youth to gang membership. As newcomers, it was disconcerting to witness the prevailing public opinion regarding specific ethnic communities in Melbourne. Contrary to our expectations of feeling more at home due to Melbourne's multicultural character, we were confronted with the apparent misrepresentation of people with African heritage, which particularly affected my husband. This initial encounter with Australia's politically charged stance pertaining to people with African backgrounds evoked a personal curiosity to examine this further.

Furthermore, while working on my minor thesis for the Master of Teaching at Victoria University, which focused on students with former refugee backgrounds, I encountered various articles related to South Sudanese Australians, including scholarly work by Dr William Abur, who is of South Sudanese origin. These articles provided valuable insights into the struggles of the South Sudanese Australian community, which mainly resulted from negative media representations and associations with gang membership. I became intrigued as the plight of this community deeply resonated with me. My research also led me to explore topics such as inclusive teaching pedagogies, the crucial role of schools in supporting students from refugee backgrounds, and the detrimental impact of stereotypical portrayals on communities such as South Sudanese Australian. Upon completing my master's degree, I applied for a PhD position at Victoria University. I decided to centre my proposed research around the South Sudanese Australian community and reached out to Dr Abur. During our initial conversation, we discussed the current situation, my proposed research topic, research questions and theoretical framework. Dr Abur affirmed the need for more research benefiting the South Sudanese community, particularly pertaining to education and counter-narratives amidst his community's ongoing negative media attention. I was encouraged by this response and his offer to assist me when required. Thus began my PhD journey, with a commitment to challenging majoritarian stories and deficit perspectives, guided by Darder's (2019) counsel to let my research "function in the interest of deconstructing and reimagining conditions for transformative practice and community sovereignty and empowerment" (p. 11).

The commitment to ensuring this research served the interests of transformative practice, community empowerment, and community representation (Darder, 2019; Tuhiwai Smith, 2021) impacted every stage of the research process, from formulating the proposal to writing the thesis. Furthermore, the research process is shaped by personal perspectives, convictions, biases, assumptions and presuppositions (Van Manen, 1990). Reflexive analysis is required throughout the research process to assess and determine the researcher's positionality (Finlay, 2002; Holmes, 2020; Soedirgo & Glas,

2020). Madison (2005 cited in Leavy, 2014, p. 5) stated, "Reflexivity is about the politics of positionality and acknowledgement of researchers' own power, privileges and biases in all phases of the research process." Positionality is informed by epistemological and ontological assumptions[9] (Soedirgo & Glas, 2020). Epistemology refers to the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the researcher and research participants (Crotty, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1994), and ontology refers to the "nature of existence" (Crotty, 1998, p. 10). Personal epistemological and ontological assumptions are informed by ethnic and demographic characteristics (e.g., ethnic background, age and gender) and aspects such as lived experiences, religious beliefs and political stance (Soedirgo & Glas, 2020). Furthermore, epistemological and ontological assumptions that inform positionality are contextual and can change over time (Holmes, 2020) and are informed by the notion of the insider/outsider perspective (Delagado-Gaitan, 1993). Through a gradual process of sharing time and space, a researcher can become accepted as an insider of a community (Delgado-Gaitan, 1993; Holmes, 2020). Consequently, "as researchers, we can be insiders and outsiders to a particular community of research participants at many different levels and at different times" (Delagado-Gaitan, 1993, p.722).

The insider/outsider perspective is an important element in this research. Firstly, my position as an outsider is informed and visible by my racial identity as a white female. Furthermore, the outsider perspective is shaped by my Dutch cultural heritage, with a settler-immigrant background and distinctly different lived experiences compared to those of South Sudanese Australian community members. However, my positionality and outsider perspective should not be readily assumed, as lived experiences also impact epistemological and ontological perspectives (Soedirgo & Glas, 2020). While researching and working as a primary healthcare worker at a medical institution in Cameroon, Africa, I met my husband, and, to a certain extent, I have integrated into his family and community. This integration afforded me valuable observations and insights into the challenges, assumptions and prejudices Black people frequently face in various contexts. For example, as a mother of four children of mixed-ethnicity backgrounds, I have observed firsthand the differential treatment often experienced by my children in educational settings. Consequently, I am fully aware of the parental involvement requirement to ensure my children receive the same quality education as their peers. In this context, I possess certain cultural understandings concerning specific challenges South Sudanese Australians might also encounter. However, assuming these lived experiences automatically warrant an insider perspective would overlook the diversity within African communities and imply homogenous and generalised lived experiences applicable to all African community members.

[9] Lee-Johnson et al. (2023) asserted that reflexivity regarding the epistemological and ontological is also required whereby the researcher asks questions such as "Who owns knowledge? Is there a universal worldview? Why is worldview and knowledge defined and perpetuated mostly by White Europeans? Whom do we cite when it comes to ontology and epistemology?" (p. 44).

The insider/outsider perspective can also be examined in the ontological positions they represent. An insider perspective, also called an emic perspective, considers behaviour's subjective, socio-cultural contexts and incorporates participants' voices verbatim (Holmes, 2020). While I refrain from identifying as an insider, I have adopted an emic perspective by incorporating the voices of those who graciously shared their knowledge and insights. I have done so without editing to ensure their authenticity. However, even with possessing certain cultural insights and employing an emic perspective, the extent of information shared by South Sudanese Australian community members is ultimately determined by their perceptions of whether I shared a valued social identity with them or enhanced that identity through my research (Harrington, 2003).

In order to gather knowledge from the South Sudanese Australian adults and students, particularly in relation to creating the narrative portraits, I was guided by the words of Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997), who stated that "portraits are constructed, shaped, and drawn through the development of relationships", which are based on authenticity and trust (p. 135). Consequently, in my positioning as a researcher, I was purposeful in attempting to create relationships with the adult and student community members in the following ways. Firstly, I disclosed personal information about my background and experiences, including the challenges I faced as a recent immigrant navigating the educational system while advocating for my mixed-race children. I also shared my experiences with prejudices regarding Black people while being in places such as airports and banks. Additionally, I acknowledged the detrimental impact of the stereotypical portrayals on young people, particularly the prejudice they face in educational settings due to unfounded assumptions perpetuated by these portrayals. By purposively employing this approach of sharing personal information and experiences, I endeavoured to establish rapport (Birks et al., 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I also sought to foster a sense of shared social identity with the community members, hoping they would recognise a certain value in our connection. Furthermore, I presented and positioned myself as an ally, or, rather, a social justice ally (Broido, 2000; K. E. Edwards, 2006), which is described as "a member of a dominant group [...] who works to end the system of oppression that gives them greater privilege and power based upon their social group membership" (Broido, 2000, p. 3). In this context of allyship, I attempted to create a third space (Bhabha, 2005) where I could be a "transient insider" (Roberts, 2018, p. 116) and work *with* the community members (K. E. Edwards, 2006). In this third space, ongoing critical reflexivity regarding my privilege[10], power (K. E. Edwards, 2006) and allyship performativity (Hesford, 2021) was essential. A transient insider with a fluid and flexible inside/outside position that is continuously constructed and co-constructed allowed me to determine where I stood in relation to

[10] Considering oneself an ally inherently implies privilege (Bridges & Mather, 2015).

the Other, the South Sudanese Australians (Merriam et al., 2001). The profoundly personal responses from the community members, especially the adolescents, gave me hope that I was considered, to a certain extent, an ally and entrusted to represent their lived experiences and counter-narratives truthfully. However, positioning myself as an ally requires a commitment to continuous learning, action and accountability (Lovell & Scott-McLaughlin, 2022).

I conclude this section with a reflection on the title of this thesis: *Navigating identity, resistance, and belonging: Exploring the voices of South Sudanese Australian adolescents in educational contexts*. The notion of 'voice' is multifaceted and has several applications, some of which have been considered as being problematic. For example, Ashby (2011), writing in the context of research involving students with disabilities, problematised the notion of 'giving voice' to participants in qualitative research. Ashby (2011) reflected on questions such as: Is the researcher truly 'giving' voice? Who benefits from this? Do participants inherently lack a voice? And most importantly, why is the researcher positioned as the one who grants voice in the first place? Similarly, Lenette (2022) considered that within western scholarship, the colonial claim of 'giving voice' is a "misguided belief that voice is ours to give or take, like a gift or commodity" (p. 47). Jackson and Mazzei (2009) examined the ethics of voice, and argued that while researchers often frame voice, or the participants' words, as a commitment to transparency and authenticity, power differences impact decisions regarding which voices are included, how they are included and in what context, can potentially distort meaning. Within the context of decolonising interpretative research, Darder (2019) referred to the "politics of the subaltern voice" and asserted, "The use of voice is a political act, in that it can serve in the interest of the oppressed and/or act as a weaponized form of control" (p. 43). Similarly, Tuhiwai Smith (2021) stated that, within cross-cultural research contexts, despite the researcher's intention to share Indigenous lived experiences and voices, the participants may be portrayed as powerless and their knowledge overlooked or distorted.

Given the ethical complexities surrounding the notion of voice, it is essential to position this research with members of the South Sudanese Australian community within a decolonial approach that seeks to serve their interests (Darder, 2019). Within this approach, voice is understood not as something bestowed by the researcher, but as the outcome of

> Implicitly linked practices of speaking and listening, based in a practice of mutual recognition […] recognizing our claims on each other as reflexive human agents, each with an account to give, an account of our lives that needs to be registered and heard. (Couldry, 2009, p. 580)

Rather than attempting to ‘give’ voice, which implies hierarchical power dynamics and control, this research is committed to voicing the participants’ lived experiences (Nasser-Eddin & Abu-Assab, 2020), hereby acknowledging and respecting their agency and knowledge.

1.8 Thesis Structure

- **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This chapter has introduced the topic, background, and context for the research. It has outlined the research problem, aims, objectives, and questions. Additionally, it has presented the theoretical frameworks and methodology employed in the research. The chapter has also provided a discussion of the significance of the research, along with an overview of the researcher's motivation and positionality. Lastly, an overview of the structure of the thesis was provided.

- **Chapter 2: Relevant Literature**

This chapter presents and reviews the relevant literature essential for exploring the FoI and educational experiences of South Sudanese Australian adolescents. It determines the extent of existing research in three key focus areas: understanding the history of South Sudanese communities and their ongoing struggle for peace and justice, examining the notion of identity and the identity formation of South Sudanese Australian adolescents, and exploring inclusive education in Australia, particularly regarding educational inclusion for South Sudanese Australian adolescents.

- **Chapter 3: Theoretical Frameworks**

This chapter introduces and justifies employing the two theoretical frameworks underpinning this research. The FoI framework (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a) focuses on identity development and builds on the FoK framework (Moll et al., 1992). The CCW framework (Yosso, 2005) draws from CRT in education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). This chapter concludes with a visual representation of the theoretical frameworks, illustrating their interconnectedness and justification for employing them in this research.

- **Chapter 4: Methodology**

This chapter details the methodology and includes the selected research paradigms and methods. Furthermore, it outlines the six phases of the research and describes how the analysis was conducted. It concludes with an overview of the analysis of the gathered knowledge, addresses ethical considerations, and discusses the notion of trustworthiness in this research.

- **Chapter 5: Student Portraits**

This chapter presents the narrative portraits of three female Year 12 students from Western College. These portraits interweave the student-created artefacts with the themes identified from the analysis.

- **Chapter 6: Student Perspectives: Exploring the Funds of Identity and Community Cultural Wealth Frameworks**

This chapter presents the outcomes of the inductive and deductive analysis of the knowledge collected from all twelve student Knowledge Holders' activities, which included focus group meetings, interviews, and the creation of identity artefacts. The first part of this chapter explores the students' expression of FoI, followed by explorations of the students' CCW. The last part of this chapter presents recommendations suggested by the students.

- **Chapter 7: School Portraits**

This chapter presents the narrative portraits of the two participating schools, incorporating the interviews with (Assistant) Principals, teachers and three South Sudanese Australian community liaison officers.

- **Chapter 8: Setting the Context: Interviews with Knowledge Holders from the South Sudanese Australian Community**

This chapter presents the outcomes of the interviews conducted with six adult members of the South Sudanese Australian Community. These outcomes are instrumental in addressing the research sub-question focused on the necessary changes to improve South Sudanese Australian adolescents' educational outcomes, engagement, and participation.

- **Chapter 9: Discussion of Key Findings and Proposed Additions to the Funds of Identity Framework**

This chapter discusses the five key significant findings that were identified from the inductive and deductive analysis. It also proposes two additions to the FoI framework, namely normative and expectational FoI, and resistance FoI.

- **Chapter 10: Conclusion**

The final chapter of this thesis presents the main implications of this research and discusses their contributions to knowledge and theory. It also addresses the limitations and provides suggestions for further research. The chapter concludes with personal reflections on the transformative element of this thesis.

Chapter 2: Relevant Literature

2.1 Introduction

In preparation for answering the research questions (see Section 1.4), this chapter presents and reviews relevant literature essential to exploring South Sudanese Australian adolescents' FoI and educational experiences. This establishes what research has been conducted in the following three focus areas and identifies the gaps this research sought to address*:*

- The first section of this chapter (Section 2.2) reviews relevant literature to comprehend how South Sudan's complex history and the lived experiences of the resettled South Sudanese in Australia impact and contribute to the current-day struggles, identities, and educational experiences of those living in the diaspora.
- The second section (Section 2.3) reviews relevant literature pertaining to the notion of identity and, specifically, the identity of South Sudanese Australian adolescents. This section presents conceptualisations of identity, including cultural, ethnic and gender identity and reviews the literature exploring the identity of South Sudanese Australian adolescents.
- The third section (Section 2.4) presents the concept of inclusive education and explores the current situation regarding inclusive educational practices for and inclusive educational experiences of South Sudanese Australian adolescents.

Relevant studies from recent and older publications have been consulted, utilising the EBSCO database from Victoria University, Google Scholar, and multiple Google searches to find 'grey literature' pertaining to policies, current data, statistics, and news articles.

2.2 The South Sudanese and Their Continued Struggle for Peace and Justice

Understanding the historical circumstances that led to the South Sudanese diaspora[11] and the resettlement in countries such as Australia is essential for contextualising the challenges currently experienced by South Sudanese Australians. While the history of South Sudan is complex and a comprehensive account falls outside the scope of this thesis, an overview of several contributing factors, namely the enslavement of Southern Sudanese peoples from the 12th century onward, periods of foreign and colonial occupation, the processes of Arabisation and Islamisation, as well as experiences of ethnic marginalisation and interethnic conflicts, is provided in Appendix A.

[11] Cohen (2022) described people living in the diaspora as having the following features: "Members of a defined group have been dispersed to many destinations; they construct a shared identity; they still somewhat orient themselves to an original 'home'; and they demonstrate an affinity with other members of the group dispersed to other places" (p. 1).

This first section provides an overview of the Civil Wars, South Sudan's independence, and the impact of the Civil Wars on the convoluted and continued struggle for peace. After that, insights from the literature pertaining to South Sudanese living in the diaspora are presented to further explore the consequences and impact of the forced migration of thousands of South Sudanese that are still felt today. This section concludes with an overview of the literature that examines the South Sudanese community in Australia.

2.2.1. The Civil Wars and the Struggle for Independence: 1956 – 2011

One of the contributing factors to the continued struggle of the South Sudanese are the two civil wars that occurred in the time between Sudanese independence on 1 January 1956 and the independence of South Sudan in 2011 (Leonardi, 2013). The First Civil War ended in 1972 when the Addis Ababa Agreement was signed, and southern Sudan obtained regional autonomy with a Southern Regional Government (Johnson, 2013). However, this Agreement was dissolved in 1983, when former President Nimeiri imposed the *shari'a* (Islamic Law) and abrogated the newly installed Southern Sudanese autonomy, thus triggering the outbreak of the Second Civil War (Fluehr-Lobban, 1990; Okeke et al., 2021).

In response to the outbreak of yet another civil war, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), convened into the SPLM/A under the leadership of Dr John Garang (Beswick, 2001; Young, 2006). Its main purpose was to unite the several political parties and movements in southern Sudan and stand for an overall united 'New Sudan' with freedom of religion (Young, 2005). Although the southern Sudanese were initially united in their efforts to bring peace to Sudan, internal conflicts, ethnic rivalries and a different vision (a united New Sudan vs. an independent South Sudan) ended up fracturing the SPLM/A in 1991.[12] This initiated intense fighting, predominantly among the Dinka and the Nuer ethnic groups, with an estimated 300,000 deaths (Kebbede, 1997; Young, 2003).

Although the literature pertaining to the Second Civil War often focuses on the war crimes committed by the northern Sudanese, the SPLM/A also committed gross injustices among the southern Sudanese, including, among others, attacking ethnic communities, abductions, tor

[12] Prior to the fragmentation, there had been a coup attempt to remove John Garang from his leadership as many considered him too authoritarian in his conviction for a united Sudan, and he was wary of establishing local governance structures and judicial systems (Nyadera et al., 2023; Young, 2003; 2005). In addition, there came calls from southerners, such as Dr Riek Machar, who wanted to secede from northern Sudan instead of aiming for a 'New Sudan' (Nyadera et al., 2023; Young, 2005). The SPLM/A split into two, with most of the Dinka staying with John Garang in the SPLM/A-Mainstream and most Nuer forming the SPLM/A-United (Young, 2006). In 1996, Dr Riek Machar left the SPLM/A-United and formed the South Sudan Independence Movement/Army (SSIM/A) (Young, 2006).

torture, and the use of child soldiers (Human Rights Watch, 1995; Kebbede, 1997; Leonardi, 2013; ReliefWeb, 1999).[13] During the Second Civil War, the Sudanese government itself committed awful human violations in addition to the previously mentioned slave raids (see Appendix A), including, but not limited to, bombing villages and hospitals, planting mines (ReliefWeb, 1999), beatings and whippings, rape, amputations and maiming, and forced confession obtained during torture (Amnesty International, 1995).[14]

Estimations regarding the lives lost, and those taken into bondage and fleeing to neighbouring countries vary. Some sources estimated that 2 million lives were lost, 1.4 million were internally displaced, 500,000 sought refuge in neighbouring countries, and 40,000 were taken during slave raids (Gitau, 2018; Kebbede, 1997). In addition, the southern economy was significantly impacted, including the absence of local markets, loss of livestock and agriculture and, consequently, lack of food supplies, as well as the destruction of infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, and roads (Kebbede, 1997).

2.2.2 Independent South Sudan: An End to the Struggles?

In January 2005, the SPLM/A and the National Congress Party signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which marked the end of the Second Civil War (Curless & Peen Rodt, 2013; Johnson, 2013). This comprised six documents containing agreements and protocols aimed at terminating the 22 years of civil war and culminated in a referendum that was to be held in 2011, during which the southern Sudanese people could decide for or against seceding Sudan (Belloni, 2011). The aim of the CPA was ultimately to unify Sudan during the six years interim period; however, during the referendum on 11 January 2011, 98.83% of the nearly four million southern Sudanese who cast their ballots voted in favour of an independent state of South Sudan (Belloni, 2011; Nyaba, 2019). Thus, on 9 July 2011, after nearly two centuries of being subjected to slave raids, colonial and foreign occupation, Arabisation, Islamisation and ethnic marginalisation (See Appendix A), South Sudan officially became an independent sovereign state (Belloni, 2011; Madut, 2017). However, South Sudan lacked social, economic and educational infrastructures (Nyadera, 2018), and the newly gained independence was not the beginning of peace and stability in the youngest country in the world. Johnson (2016) reported on the impact on social structures, with many men killed during the war. Moreover, young boys 'recruited' to fight as child soldiers, upon their return, increasingly caused conflicts with young men from other communities as they had become so familiar with responding to conflicts with violence.

[13] See also this report from Amnesty International that reports on https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AFR54/002/1995/en/[14] In 2008 and 2010, the International Criminal Court (ICC) charged Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir with charges of genocide, crimes against humanity and murder and called for his arrest (El-Masri, 2011).

[14] In 2008 and 2010, the International Criminal Court (ICC) charged Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir with charges of genocide, crimes against humanity and murder and called for his arrest (El-Masri, 2011).

These conflicts between ethnic communities involving youth continue to this day (UN Secretary-General, 2024). It is important to emphasise the impact of 22 years of civil war on the education of millions of South Sudanese who missed out on attending school whilst internally displaced, in refugee camps, enslaved or unable to attend due to the loss of schools and the absence of teachers in the villages. A report from the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (2011) estimated that, in 2011, more than 1.3 million children were not attending primary school, with girls least likely to get enrolled and finish secondary school.[15] In addition, most adults at this time were illiterate, and there was a chronic shortage of qualified teachers (UNESCO, 2011). These aspects of illiteracy and limited, or no, prior schooling experience are particularly important when South Sudanese resettle overseas in countries such as Australia, as it can be a deciding factor in the level of educational engagement and involvement of South Sudanese Australian parents and caregivers (see Section 2.2.5).

In his inauguration address, the first president of the Republic of South Sudan, Salva Kiir, urged for unity among the ethnically and culturally diverse citizens, stating, "You may be a Zande, Kakwa, Lutugo, Nuer, Dinka or Shiluk, but first remember yourself as a South Sudanese" (Sudan Tribune, 2011). However, despite the call for unity and relinquishment of tribalism that could potentially ignite internal conflicts, fighting broke out between the presidential guards in December 2013, resulting in the killings of ethnic Nuer civilians (Nyadera, 2018). There are multiple triggers and reasons for the sudden eruption of violence, among which are long-existing conflicts between ethnic groups (Madut, 2020), an ethnocentric approach to governance (Madut, 2017), and frictions within the SPLM that existed prior to independence (Mamdani, 2014; Nyadera, 2018). The conflict lasted until 2015 when the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS) was signed (Kuol, 2020). In April 2015, a Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) was created with Salva Kiir and Dr Riek Machar as president and vice president, respectively (Kuol, 2020). However, Madut (2015, p. 4) stated that this Government was still hiring based on "ethnic and tribal allegiances", whereby the Dinka and Nuer dominated both politically and militarily even though neither are the major ethnic group. Consequently, the "politics of identity and tribalism" (Madut, 2015, p. 4) caused conflicts and fighting between July 2016 and June 2018, resulting in vast numbers of South Sudanese being internally displaced or fleeing the country.[16]

[15] A UNESCO (2011) report stated: "Today, a young girl in South Sudan is three times more likely to die in pregnancy or childbirth than to reach grade 8" (p. 1).

[16] See the Amnesty International (2016) report *South Sudan: "Our hearts have gone dark": The mental health impact of South Sudan's conflict*, which reports on the narratives of survivors from the Civil War that erupted in 2013. [17] There are some local initiatives to assist people in their healing processes, such as workshops organised by the Viable Support to Transition and Stability (VISTA) from USAID, to assist people in their healing processes. See, for example, https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2018/11/26/healing-trauma-in-south-sudan-through-mental-health-programmes/ and https://borgenproject.org/mental-health-in-south-sudan/

Despite a renewed peace agreement in 2018 (Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) and efforts to unify South Sudan, the UNMISS continues to report on conflicts between armed groups, youths, and national armed forces, (inter) communal conflicts and violence, cattle raids, displacement and killing of civilians, and (sexual) violence against women (UN Secretary-General, 2024). Furthermore, UNMISS has recently reported on violations against children, among which are the recruitment and use of children, the killing and maiming of children, rape and other forms of sexual violence against children, attacks on schools and hospitals and the abduction of children (UN Secretary-General, 2023a, 2024). In addition, the current crisis in Sudan to the north, where since April 2023, fighting has erupted between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, has forced many former South Sudanese refugees to flee to South Sudan (UNHCR, 2023). The arrival of thousands of refugees from Sudan and returnees is threatening the restoration of South Sudan, the preparations for the upcoming elections, the economic stability and food security (UN News, 2023).

2.2.3 The Impact of the Civil Wars

Several studies and reports have shared the harrowing experiences of survivors of the civil wars in South Sudan, including those enslaved in the Second Civil War and from child soldiers (e.g., Jok, 2001; Pritchard, 2013). However, studies reporting on the psychological impact of the civil wars in South Sudan are limited, though some insightful studies have been conducted in the last fifteen years (e.g., Amnesty International, 2016; Ayazi et al., 2012; Ayazi, Lien, Eide, Joseph et al., 2014; Ayazi, Lien, Eide, Swartz et al., 2014; Ng et al., 2017; Roberts et al., 2009).

The findings of an extensive qualitative study by Amnesty International (2016) described the following symptoms experienced by South Sudanese refugees:

> Having nightmares, getting angry easily, feeling unable to concentrate, and considering suicide. Many spoke of headaches, stomach pains, backaches, and heart palpitations — common physical manifestations of psychological stress. They also told of feeling unable to work, study, carry out basic daily tasks, care for children, or maintain relationships with friends and family. They attributed these mental, physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual impacts to their experiences as victims of, or witnesses to, torture, arbitrary detention, sexual violence, killing, and forced displacement. (Amnesty International, 2016, p. 7)

Quantitative studies have reported high levels of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression among South Sudanese people (Ayazi et al., 2012; Ayazi, Lien, Eide, Joseph et al., 2014; Roberts et al., 2009; Sharma et al., 2022). Unfortunately, South Sudanese mental health support services are largely

absent[17] – the so-called mental health treatment gap – and limited to the prescription of sedatives (Ayazi, Lien, Eide, Swartz et al., 2014; Mogga, 2019; Roberts et al., 2009).[18] In addition, sharing traumatic events[19] is not common, particularly trauma related to sexual violence, and seeking professional help is mostly avoided for fear of being labelled, rejected or excluded, even in countries of resettlement (Amnesty International, 2016; Tankink, 2013). Stigmatising mentally ill people is very common among South Sudanese and often results from beliefs that people with mental illness are dangerous and might be possessed (Ayazi, Lien, Eide, Swartz et al., 2014).

Wagner et al. (2014, p. 419) stated the importance of considering "conceptual ethnocentrism" when conducting quantitative studies that employ scales. For example, the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire (Sharma et al., 2022), which is based on 'western'[20] measures of trauma, might be unsuitable when involving non-western people[21] (Tempany, 2009). The notion of research in itself might be unfamiliar for certain cohorts of participants, such as refugees, who might be illiterate or not fluent in the language of the researcher and therefore depend on translators (with the potential for item bias or translation bias) or ascribe different meanings to concepts or constructs (with the potential for construct bias or conceptual bias) (Wagner et al., 2014).

Despite possible conceptual ethnocentrism in studies involving South Sudanese refugees, it is imperative to acknowledge that the current generation of South Sudanese carries a history of collective trauma, which "becomes woven into the social fabric of the whole group" (Gitau, 2018, pp. 30-31). The lack of mental health care services that consequently leads to trauma not being addressed "may lead to the destruction of the social cohesion and social functioning of individuals and communities, decreased participation in peacebuilding activities, and psychological wounds being played out in further violence" (Gitau, 2018, p. 20). Besides trauma affecting the South Sudanese people, ITT must also be considered. ITT refers to how trauma experienced within families can directly or indirectly be transmitted across generations, adversely impacting children's health and well-being (Isobel et al., 2019). The impacts on child well-being are "insecure attachment, maladaptive parenting

[17] There are some local initiatives to assist people in their healing processes, such as workshops organised by the Viable Support to Transition and Stability (VISTA) from USAID, to assist people in their healing processes. See, for example, https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2018/11/26/healing-trauma-in-south-sudan-through-mental-health-programmes/ and https://borgenproject.org/mental-health-in-south-sudan/

[18] Recently published articles in the *South Sudan Medical Journal* by Mogga (2019) and Majok (2018) highlight the need for mental health care and urge the Ministry of Health to take action to close the mental health treatment gap.

[19] A trauma event as described in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, fifth edition (DSM-5) is exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violation; it 1) is experienced directly, 2) is experienced by the witness in person, 3) has occurred to a close family member/friend, and 4) is experienced firsthand through repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013).

[20] I concur with Lenette (2022b) who intentionally uses a lowercase 'w' in 'western' to "de-center colonialist linguistic dominance and white discourses" (p.10).

[21] Gitau (2018) reported that whilst participating in training on trauma in Kakuma Refugee Camp, she was asked, "What is all this talk about trauma? What is trauma anyway? [There is no term that directly translates to trauma in her African mother tongue or mine]" (p. 25).

styles, diminished parental emotional availability, decreased family functioning, accumulation of family stressors, dysfunctional intra-family communication styles and severity of parental trauma and symptomatology" (Flanagan et al., 2020, p. 10).

A limited number of studies have examined the effects of the civil wars on southern Sudanese children's mental health, particularly orphans and those freed from enslavement and the military. An early study by Paardekoper et al. (1999) on the psychological impact on Southern Sudanese children found symptoms indicating PTSD and depression resulting from previous exposure to multiple traumatic events, including the loss of a family member, lack of food and water, torture, being lost or kidnapped, as well as current exposure to issues in the transition camps, such as lack of clothing, poor sanitation, nightmares, and absence of medical care. A more recent study involving orphaned South Sudanese children reported high levels of trauma, feelings of survivor's guilt, vulnerability, and fear of abusive people such as community workers and family members in charge of their care (Muller et al., 2017).

In addition to mental health issues resulting from trauma, lived experiences of war and displacement profoundly impact the social structures within ethnic groups. Gitau (2018) conducted an extensive study among South Sudanese refugees in Kakuma Refugee Camp and concluded that "the experience of war and the resultant displacement into the camp translates into destroying the survivor's social capital: their capacities, networks, resources and relationships that previously worked for them" (p. 66). Also, a study among Dinka refugees in Cairo found a loss of ethnic identity, language, and cultural traditions, such as ceremonies and dance (Daughtry, 2006). Even in the case of resettlement, it is assumed that this destruction of social capital will not be restored immediately, if at all.

The impact of the civil wars, as described above, is relevant to the lives of the South Sudanese in the diaspora, including those participating in this research. The interviewed members of the South Sudanese Australian community shared lived experiences of the wars, displacement, time spent in refugee camps and as urban refugees in Cairo, and how trauma, and the ITT, affects nearly all those resettled in Australia (see Chapter 8). Therefore, knowledge of the complex histories and life journeys is imperative, particularly in relation to examining and addressing issues caused by certain young people from the South Sudanese Australian community.

2.2.4 The South Sudanese in the Diaspora

The slave raids and slave trade during the centuries before the Turco-Egyptian invasion in 1820-21 (see Appendix A) can be considered the start of the diaspora of the South Sudanese people (Johnson,

2016). Without many accurate literature sources indicating where the enslaved southern Sudanese were transported to, it is believed that many ended up working in the Egyptian army and were transported to Constantinople (current-day Istanbul) or other cities in the Ottoman Empire. After the defeat of the Mahdi in 1899 (see Appendix A), many discharged southern Sudanese slave soldiers settled in Kenya and Uganda (Johnson, 2016). After the abolition of slavery in the 1880s, some formerly enslaved people travelled to England along with missionaries,[22] while others, mostly young girls, were brought to Italy for missionary training in the Catholic Church (Troutt Powell, 2014).

The diaspora of the southern Sudanese took a turn in 1955 when thousands fled the violence during the Torit mutiny[23] and continued during the First Civil War (1963-1972) (Poggo, 2009; Wanga-Odhiambo, 2013). The diaspora was at a peak during the Second Civil War (1983-2005), when millions left the current geographical location of South Sudan, with the majority fleeing to Ethiopia (Tutlam et al., 2020). Furthermore, thousands of southern Sudanese who were living in northern Sudan became IDPs, predominantly in camps around Khartoum (Johnson, 2016). Some escaped to Egypt, where they lived in the diaspora as refugees in Cairo or Alexandria, with the majority still living there (UNHCR, 2024d).[24] In 2013, the South Sudanese Civil War started, resulting in millions of people fleeing, and it continues to this day due to, among others, protracted ethnic conflicts. Currently, 2 million South Sudanese are living as IDPs in South Sudan (UNHCR, n.d.), and 2.2 million are living in neighbouring countries, including Uganda (42.6%), Sudan (27.7%), Ethiopia (18.9%), Kenya[25] (8.4%) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2.2%) (UNHCR, 2024b).

Those living in refugee camps have been able to escape the violence in South Sudan; however, several studies report on the challenging situations in these camps. For example, in Kakuma Refugee Camp, refugees are frequently subjected to sexual and gender-based discrimination, exploitation and violence (Bartolomei et al., 2003; Beswick, 2001; Losoncz, 2019), and inter-ethnic conflicts (Muluka, 2021). Refugees in Rhino Camp, Uganda, reported tensions between different ethnic groups, mental health concerns, and displacement-related stressors that adversely impact their mental health (Adaku

[22] Former slave, Salim C. Wilson published several books on his life as a slave, including the book *I was a slave,* in which he retells many details of his life from when he was abducted as a teenager and how he was freed and travelled with the Wilson family to England where he settled (Johnson, 1991; Trout Powell, 2014).

[23] Increased tensions and hostility between northern and southern Sudanese led to a mutiny by the Equatorial Corps stationed in Torit on 18 August 1955, considered the first attempt to gain independence from northern Sudan (Poggo, 2009).

[24] In September 2024, more than 789,000 registered refugees lived in urban settings in Egypt, mainly Cairo, out of which 46,000 were South Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers (UNHCR, 2024d).

[25] Kakuma Refugee Camp is probably one of the more well-known camps, mostly due to publications of books from former refugees who lived there. It is located in North-Western Kenya, in Turkana County, and was established by the UNHCR in 1992 after the arrival of about 30,000 southern Sudanese. This included about 20,000 unaccompanied minors, also known as 'The Lost Boys', who tracked from Ethiopia after the fall of Ethiopian leader Mengistu Haile Mariam to find shelter in the area around Kakuma (Gitau, 2018). On 31 May 2024, 228,206 registered refugees and asylum-seekers from South Sudan stayed in Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement combined (UNHCR, 2024e).

et al., 2016). Despite this, many South Sudanese are reluctant to return to South Sudan for reasons such as recurrent violent conflicts, loss of connection to family, fear of retaliation, loss of livestock and land, and the hope to be eventually resettled overseas (Muluka, 2021).

Similarly, studies report that South Sudanese who fled to Egypt, where they live in transit as urban refugees, are subjected to racism, harassment, and illegal organ harvesting (Columb, 2017; Miranda, 2018). Refugees are legally not allowed to work; however, children are allowed to enrol in schools, though they mostly attend community schools organised by fellow refugees due to rampant bullying and discrimination in Egyptian schools (Miranda, 2018). There are currently limited studies exploring the lives of second-generation South Sudanese refugees living in refugee camps or as urban refugees in Egypt.

When the South Sudanese arrive in refugee camps or urban settings, such as Cairo, Egypt, they seek registration with the UNHCR. The UNHCR has three durable solutions for refugees: voluntary repatriation, local integration, and resettlement (UNHCR, 2024c). Resettlement involves "the selection and transfer of refugees from a State in which they have sought protection to a third State which has agreed to admit them – as refugees – with permanent residence status" (UNHCR, 2024c). Since the 1990s, the UNHCR has resettled South Sudanese (then still referred to as southern Sudanese) in countries such as the United States (US) (Ensor, 2016; Tutlam et al., 2022), the Netherlands (Tankink, 2013), United Kingdom (UK) (Ayrton, 2019), New Zealand (Marlowe, 2011), and Australia (see Section 2.2.4).

Within the context of South Sudanese in diaspora, community members face numerous challenges and barriers related to language acquisition, education, employment, housing, marital life, parenting and (mental) health. Furthermore, shifts in culturally defined gender roles, responsibilities and social expectations for males, females, children and adults create tensions and ambiguity that require adjustments (Ensor, 2016). Ensor (2016) reported that the first generation South Sudanese considered that "the very definitions of childhood and adulthood — manhood and womanhood — are now surrounded by uncertainty, no longer clearly marked by rites of passage and initiation ceremonies" (p. 68). This observed element of shifts in defined gender roles is relevant to this research and will be addressed in the discussion (see Chapter 9, Section 9.2.4).

Literature involving South Sudanese people living in the diaspora, particularly studies related to South Sudanese adolescents born in resettled countries, the so-called second generation, is limited. A recent

quantitative study in the US exploring emotional and behavioural challenges found relatively high levels of aggressive behaviour, antisocial behaviour, anxiety, depression and PTSD and identified risk factors, such as the number of siblings, maternal marital status, level of education and exposure to traumatic events (e.g., gang-related violence) (Tutlam et al., 2022). This study also identified the possible impact on the parents' mental health resulting from the continued conflicts in South Sudan and the issues related to growing up in a country whose culture differs immensely from their parents. Tutlam et al.'s (2022) study is significant as it can assist in comprehending some of the issues currently experienced by second-generation South Sudanese Australian adolescents. However, qualitative studies with second-generation South Sudanese adolescents are scarce. Such qualitative studies could allow for the voices of these adolescents to be heard and provide a better understanding of the complexities and issues experienced by the South Sudanese communities in the diaspora.

2.2.5 The South Sudanese Community in Australia

South Sudanese background people[26] have resettled in Australia since late 1990 as part of Australia's offshore Humanitarian Program, with peak arrivals between 2002 and 2008, predominantly from East African refugee camps and Egypt (Abur & Mphande, 2020; Abur & Spaaij, 2016; Losoncz, 2019). Those granted a humanitarian visa are given permanent residency upon arrival in Australia and are eligible for onshore family reunification (Gatt, 2011). According to the 2021 census, 8,255 people indicated South Sudan as their country of birth (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2021), while 14,273 claimed South Sudanese, 185 Nuer and 1,840 Dinka ancestry (ABS, 2022), totalling 16,298. However, Lucas et al. (2013) estimated the South Sudanese Australian population to be around 30,000, suggesting that many South Sudanese Australians likely indicated Australia as their country of birth, or countries such as Egypt, Kenya and Uganda. Therefore, the abovementioned census figures may not fully represent the actual size of the South Sudanese Australian community. Lastly, Losconcz (2019) noted that the majority (52%) of South Sudanese Australian community[27] members are under the age of 25 years.

The collectivist South Sudanese culture has many characteristics, one of them being the importance of the role of the extended family, whereby the elements of pride, shame, respect and disrespect are

[26] South Sudan only became a country in 2011. Therefore, the reference to 'South Sudanese' people should include Sudan-born people who might have been born in current Sudan but have South Sudanese ethnic backgrounds or ancestries. This includes children born in countries of first asylum, such as Kenya and Egypt, from South Sudanese parents (See, for example, Robinson, 2013).

[27] I concur with Phillips (2011) and Ndhlovu (2009), who stated that referring to South Sudanese Australians as 'African-Australians' homogenises and generalises their unique pre-settlement experiences. When using the term 'South Sudanese Australian' to refer to people originating from South Sudan (or Sudan-born), one can, of course, dispute the use of this term altogether as it categorises and labels this group of people. I do not intend to label or marginalise this community and contribute to the often-existing "contingent identity" (Nunn, 2010, p. 186) regarding their Australianness. However, South Sudanese Australian academics use this term to refer to their community members; therefore, I consider it culturally responsible to follow suit.

central (Losoncz, 2019). Marriage and having children are central to the South Sudanese culture and continue to be so for those living in the diaspora, with these elements considered evidence of 'successful' settlement (Jaysane-Darr, 2022). Furthermore, within the patrilineal system of South Sudanese families, the patriarch is in charge of maintaining social balance within the family, the continuation of the genealogy, and the attribution of wealth, which can be obtained by work and through marriage (i.e., dowry) (Losoncz, 2019). Upon resettlement, this central role of the patriarch is frequently challenged within the Australian cultural context (Khawaja & Milner, 2012). This is one of the contributing factors to existing issues within the South Sudanese Australian community, which was also identified by some of the South Sudanese Australian community members interviewed for my research (see also Chapter 8).

Literature pertaining to South Sudanese resettlement in Australia in the last two decades has predominantly focused on issues experienced with or related to resettlement (Abur, 2019; Kaphle et al., 2024; Losoncz, 2019; Palmer et al., 2020; Perugia, 2019), employment (Abur & Spaaij, 2016; Losoncz, 2019), parenting (Abur & Mphande, 2020; S. A. Deng, 2016a; Hatoss, 2022; Losoncz, 2019), intergenerational conflicts (Pittaway et al., 2023; Losoncz, 2019; Poppit & Frey, 2007), ITT and (mental) health (Abur & Mphande, 2020; Bruck et al., 2021; Gitau et al., 2023; Kasherwa et al., 2024; Pittaway & Dantas, 2022; Savic et al., 2013; Schweitzer et al., 2006), racism and discrimination (Baak, 2011, 2019; Benier et al., 2018; Kaphle et al., 204; Pittaway & Dantas, 2021; Weber et al., 2021), identity and belonging (Macaulay & Deppeler, 2020), identity development (Vaughan et al., 2021, S. Williams, 2022), education and educational experiences (Baak, 2019; Harris et al., 2015; Macaulay, 2023b), and negative media portrayals (Baak, 2011; Benier et al., 2018; Kaphle et al., 2024; Macaulay & Deppeler, 2020; Palmer et al., 2020; Weber et al., 2021). A limited number of studies have reported on the positive dimensions of South Sudanese Australian resettlement of strength, resilience and coping methods (e.g., Pearce et al., 2017; Pittaway & Dantas, 2022; Shakespeare-Finch & Wickham, 2010).

Lastly, two recent studies have examined the effects of the ongoing conflicts in South Sudan on the diaspora in Australia. Maher et al. (2022) found that the outbreak of violence in South Sudan in 2013 resulted in the creation of "hyper-politicised ethnic identities," which intensified divisions and fragmented the community in Australia (p. 163). Similarly, South Sudanese scholar Atem and colleagues (2022) observed that the divisions within South Sudanese Australian communities reflected the local tensions in South Sudan. These divisions extended not only across different ethnic groups but also within them, manifesting along generational, age-related, and migration-related lines. The authors noted that due to the different pre-settlement experiences there were “different versions of

history and identity within the diaspora," which can further contribute to tensions in the South Sudanese Australian community (Atem et al., 2022, p. 144). These insights are crucial and should be considered before implementing initiatives or programs to avoid exacerbating existing tensions.

Several scholarly works have explored the mental health of resettled South Sudanese Australians (see, for example, Abur & Mphande, 2020; Anyieth & Abur, 2022; Bruck et al., 2021; Gitau et al., 2023; Kasherwa et al., 2024; Pittaway & Dantas, 2021, 2022; Savic et al., 2013, 2016; Schweitzer et al., 2006), though longitudinal studies are largely absent. The first study conducted in Australia involving resettled South Sudanese in the early 2000s reported high scores of PTSD symptoms such as memories of traumatic events, nightmares, trouble sleeping and avoidance (Schweitzer et al., 2006). In addition, this study reported that the most common post-settlement difficulties are worrying about family members who are left behind, obtaining employment, and difficulties with the acculturation process, all of which increase the likelihood of developing anxiety and depression (Schweitzer et al., 2006). A more recent study including South Sudanese Australians who have lived on average for nine years in Australia and New Zealand found that the rate of participants experiencing sleep disturbances related to PTSD symptoms had slightly improved but was still relatively high, particularly for men, compared to Australian-born participants (Bruck et al., 2021). This indicates that pre-settlement exposure to trauma-inducing events affects South Sudanese with refugee experiences nearly a decade after arriving in Australia. Therefore, it is imperative that lingering trauma and PTSD symptoms are recognised and treated, even when the community members are not willing to discuss it or seek help (Abur & Mphande, 2020; Anyieth & Abur, 2022). The rise in suicide rates among South Sudanese Australian young people has been reported by Kasherwa et al. (2024). This recent study highlighted the absence of communication about suicide in the South Sudanese Australian community, which was caused by barriers such as intergenerational cultural tensions and trauma experienced by the older generation (Kasherwa et al., 2024). Furthermore, the study pointed to parental neglect of children and the lack of adequate support systems, such as community-based initiatives to assist young people (Kasherwa et al., 2024). Further research is needed to explore how the community can effectively address these growing mental health issues and the contributing factors.

Furthermore, despite evidence from studies determining the existence of trauma and PTSD among South Sudanese Australian community members, there is a scarcity of studies exploring the potential impact on the lives of those affected and whether there is a connection with some of the issues experienced within the community (e.g., educational engagement and retention and adolescents' behaviour and involvement with the justice system). Although Pittaway and Dantas' (2021) study did

not report a direct link between 'gang' membership of male adolescents and mental health issues, their study found widespread issues such as depression and anxiety resulting from experiences with racism and the police. These mental health issues are often considered to be caused by an external force (e.g., through a family curse or inflicted by the police) (Pittaway & Dantas, 2021). Consequently, health-seeking behaviour is very limited, further impacting the mental health of these adolescents (Pittaway & Dantas, 2021).

Based on the emerging themes in the literature, it is evident that, despite their strength and resilience, the South Sudanese Australian community has struggled, and often still is struggling with resettlement, most often due to reasons beyond their control. Therefore, recognition and understanding of the multiple contextual factors impacting the lives, aspirations and opportunities must be considered when interacting with South Sudanese Australian community members. Furthermore, without making trauma the defining feature or reducing one's resilience and determination, there must be recognition and understanding of the fact that nearly, if not all, first-generation South Sudanese Australians have a refugee background and are, therefore, at risk for lingering trauma and potentially ITT, which can affect community members in several ways. This can assist the broader Australian community in understanding the challenges and barriers that young South Sudanese Australians experience in, among others, educational settings.

In concluding this section, it is important to include Australia's socio-political context and historical positioning as a white settler state, with roots in the White Australia Policy (see Chapter 1, Section 1.2). Within this context, the visibly different South Sudanese Australians are often constructed as the Other and positioned as inferior (Udah, 2017). As Molla (2024) explained, Othering is a "discursive instrument of power; it creates and essentialises the Other who does not fit in" (p. 33). As a result, despite a strong desire among South Sudanese people to establish a sense of belonging in Australia, their position as the racialised Other significantly complicates their integration and settlement experiences (Molla, 2024; Udah, 2017).

2.2.6 Historical Section Summary

The aim of this first part of the relevant literature review is to locate and understand how South Sudan's complex history and the lived experiences of resettled South Sudanese impact and shape the current struggles, identities, and educational experiences of South Sudanese individuals in the diaspora, particularly those resettled in Australia. The main points of this first section are:

- The history of South Sudan is complex and the struggle for peace is ongoing.

- The Second Civil War (1983-2005) and the South Sudanese Civil War (2013-2018) initiated the displacement of millions of South Sudanese to neighbouring countries where they live as IDPs, urban refugees or in refugee camps.
- The current generation of South Sudanese adults has possibly been exposed to traumatic events that can result in PTSD and other mental health issues resulting from the atrocities of the Second Civil War and the South Sudanese Civil War.
- South Sudan has minimal mental health services, which exacerbates the cultural taboos and stigma surrounding mental health issues.
- A small fraction of the South Sudanese has been able to resettle under the UNHCR Humanitarian Program in Australia since the late 1990s, with the majority arriving in the mid-2000s.
- The South Sudanese Australian community experiences settlement issues relating to securing employment and housing. Limited pre-settlement schooling experiences and comprehension of English further exacerbate the settlement. The community is frequently subjected to racism and discrimination.
- Mental health issues such as PTSD-related symptoms, anxiety and depression are common among the South Sudanese Australian community members, even for adolescents and those who have lived in Australia for a decade or longer. Recently, there has been an increase in suicide among young people. South Sudanese Australian community members are generally not used to openly discussing mental health issues, and mental health-seeking behaviour is very limited.

Identified gaps in the current literature:

- A paucity of culturally responsive studies in Australia exploring the lived experiences of second-generation South Sudanese young people.
- A paucity of research exploring the second generation of South Sudanese Australians, with a particular focus on the transmission of ITT.
- A paucity of research exploring the impact of trauma on parenting and the educational involvement of South Sudanese Australian parents and caregivers.

This research sought to address the identified gaps by exploring the lived experiences of (second-generation) South Sudanese Australian adolescents, which includes exploring if PTSD and ITT are affecting educational experiences and the development of adolescents' identities.

2.3 Identity

A person's identity is "always mediated, distributed among people, artefacts, activities and contexts" (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014b, p. 70). As mentioned in Chapter 1, this research is situated within the theoretical framework of FoI (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a; 2014b). The premise of FoI is centred around the construction of identity; therefore, the second section of this chapter aims to establish the literature's insights on identity and locate this research within existing scholarly work. This section starts with conceptualisations and definitions of identity. After this, a general overview provides insights into the identity of South Sudanese people as described in the literature. This section concludes with a portrait of the identity of South Sudanese Australian adolescents, the focus participants in this research. This section of the literature review provides a foundation for Chapter 3, which presents the core theoretical framework, FoI, and establishes the gaps that this research sought to fill pertaining to the FoI of South Sudanese Australian adolescents.

2.3.1 Conceptualisations of Identity

The notion of identity is an equivocal concept, and a plethora of scholars have attempted to define and construct its meaning according to preferred philosophical foundations and theoretical frameworks. Therefore, it is imperative to consider identity a problematic and dynamic concept[28]. I concur with Ndhlovu (2009), who asserted that "identities are produced and reproduced in discursive interactions that involve the placing of self and other into particular positions, which can either facilitate or hinder effective participation in all spheres of public life" (p. 18). These discursive interactions occur within various social, political and cultural contexts wherein power and privilege play a central role in either affirming or marginalising individuals and groups. The following sections employ a critically informed approach to the literature, with attention to discursive processes through which identities are constructed and negotiated, and, at times, marginalised or rendered invisible.

The notion of identity and its related theoretical constructs have been predominantly developed by white scholars operating within Eurocentric frameworks. This has inevitably shaped the philosophical underpinnings of identity scholarship. In contrast, Black scholarship on identity remains comparatively underrepresented in academic literature. However, this absence should not be misconstrued as a lack of interest or understanding. Rather, it reflects a broader systematic exclusion and marginalisation of Indigenous knowledge. Tuhiwai Smith (2019) contents that Indigenous knowledge has often been labelled as newly discovered knowledge belonging to western science, emphasising their positional

[28] From a linguistic perspective, Mama (2001) noted that many African languages do not have an equivalent word for the term 'identity' and that it were "distasteful colonial impositions that *told* us who we were: a race of kaffirs, natives, negroes and negresses" (p, 63).

superiority. Similarly, South African scholar Motsa (2017) asserted that the colonial, Eurocentric epistemologies have historically perceived "the knowledge systems of the global South […] as pagan, mystic, non-scientific, incompetent, irrelevant and downright non-existent" (p. 30). This delegitimising, disqualifying and invisibilising of alternative knowledge systems (Darder, 2019) is what Santos (2014) referred to as "epistemicide", or the destruction and murder of Indigenous epistemologies (p. 92).

In response to this historical marginalisation of Indigenous knowledge, within an African-centred framework, the notion of *ubuntu*[29] can be used as an alternative lens through which identity can be explored and understood (Anofuechi & Klaasen, 2024; Mupedziswa et al., 2019; Murove, 2012). There are various descriptions and meanings ascribed to *ubuntu* (Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2005; Mupedziswa et al., 2019)[30]. For example, Mugumbate and Chereni (2020) considered *ubuntu* as a collection of values and practices whereby a person is positioned as being "part of a larger and more significant relational, communal, societal, environmental and spiritual world" (p. vi). Similarly, Tamale (2020) emphasised the importance of interdependency and mutual benefits and described *ubuntu* as the "index of the African cultural fingerprint" (p. 12).

Murove (2012) argued that colonialism, and by extension colonial scholarship, was threatened by the notion of *ubuntu*, and consequently denigrated it to "a phenomenon of human primitivity, as an expression of infantile behaviour, and equally a manifestation of an infliction of dependency complex syndrome" (p. 38). Nevertheless, in recent years, *ubuntu* has been applied in decolonising scholarship across multiple fields, including psychology (Mkabela, 2015), social work (Abur & Mugumbate, 2022; Mugumbate & Chereni, 2020; Mupedziswa et al., 2019), gender (Shumbamhini & Chirongoma, 2025) education (Motsa, 2017), and identity (Anofuechi & Klaasen, 2024; Murove, 2012).

One of the contemporary interpretations of *ubuntu* considers it a world view or paradigm drawing on its literal translation of 'human being', 'person' or 'humanness' (Gade, 2011; Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2005). Furthermore, *ubuntu* is described as an African philosophy based on the Zulu proverb *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu,* which has been translated as "a person is a person because of other persons" (Murove, 2012, p. 37), or "one is a person through others" (Mkabela, 2015, p. 287). This world view

[29] While the word *ubuntu* is considered to have roots in the oral traditions of South African languages such as IsiNguni and Sesotho (Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2005), the concept has been identified under different names in many other Sub-Saharan communities (Mugumbate & Chereni, 2020).

[30] Gade (2011) explored the origins and meaning of *ubuntu* and identified the first text that mentions *ubuntu* in 1846. Gade (2011) identified five time periods during which *ubuntu* was defined as a human quality (1846-1962), a philosophy or an ethic (1962-1975), African humanism (1975-1990s), worldview (1990s-2000), and connected to the Zulu proverb 'umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu' (1990s-2010).

encompasses ethical and moral principals such as harmony, loyalty, hospitality, dignity, respect and moral accountability to others (Murove, 2012; Taye, 2020).

Drawing on this philosophy, *ubuntu* offers valuable insights into identity development within communal African contexts. The *ubuntu* philosophy considers identity formation as a social and relational process (Munthali & Kitinya Kirina, 2024). *Ubuntu* underscores the central role of communities in shaping children's identities, whereby "each individual is abetted by the community and is expected to collaborate with the identity formation of others" (Anofuechi & Klaasen, 2024, p. 3). This communal approach to identity development foregrounds the importance of belonging (Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2005). Importantly, the communal or collective approach does not negate the development of an individual identity. Rather, the development of a personal identity occurs within the context of a community and is an interdependent process. As Mbiti (1969) stated, "I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am" (p. 108). This community, interdependence foundation for identity contrasts markedly with wester interpretations of identity that centres on the individual (Murove, 2012; Tamale, 2020).

Appiah, a well-known Ghanaian British philosopher, conceptualised identity as a socially mediated process drawing from both African and western scholarship. According to Appiah (2006), people have several identities, and within each identity group, there is no homogeneity. Appiah (2005) considered a personal and collective dimension of identity, which are linked to elements such as race, gender, class, ethnic group, but also social categories based on occupation, religion and immigration station. Appiah (2018) described three features of identities. First, "identities come with labels and ideas about why and to whom they should be applied" (Appiah, 2024, p. 2237). This feature concerns rules that are employed in ascribing these labels to people; however, there are no set guidelines regarding these rules (Appiah, 2018). This "criteria of ascription" (Appiah, 2024, p. 2236) can involve stereotypes and be based on subjective and normative assumptions (Appiah, 2005).

The second feature of identity informed by Black philosophy, according to Appiah (2018), involves the norms linked to these labels. Appiah (2024) explained that our identity "shapes *your* thoughts about how you should behave and affects the way other people treat you" (p. 2237). At times, one is not aware of the way their behaviour and thoughts are impacted by the labels (Appiah, 2018). The third feature central to identity is that it "gives other people reasons to do things *to* you" (Appiah, 2024, p. 2237), such as contesting your identity (Appiah, 2018). At times, other people might treat you well due to a shared identity; however, identities are also used to create hierarchies in which certain groups

group (particularly ethnic or racial ones) consider themselves superior to others (Appiah, 2018). Within this context, Appiah (2024) introduced the concept of "negative racialism" (p. 2237), which refers to when individuals perceive themselves as inherently superior to others based on racial categorisations. Negative racialism can be manifested through stereotyping and often leads to undeserved and unjust treatment of those deemed inferior (Appiah, 2024). Both the concept of negative racialism and its manifestations are relevant to this research, as they highlight the mechanisms through which identity and identity development can reinforce racial hierarchies and perpetuate experiences of marginalisation and discrimination.

Within the extensive western identity scholarship, which is mostly underpinned by Eurocentric perspectives, Erikson's work (1968) is often regarded as foundational in the literature of identity development. Erikson (1968) described identity as "a fundamental organizing principle which develops constantly throughout the lifespan. Identity provides a sense of continuity within the self and in interaction with others" (Erikson, 1968, cited in Rageliene, 2016, p. 98). Hall (1997) also stated that identity and identity development are ever-changing, "identities are never completed, never finished; that they are always as subjectivity itself is, in process" (p. 47). Identity formation often occurs in connection to others and can be considered a "collective awareness" (Elcheroth & Reicher, 2017, p. 80).

Erikson (1968) proposed eight stages of identity development: infancy, early childhood, childhood, puberty, adolescence, early adulthood, middle adulthood, and late adulthood. Erikson (1968) introduced the term 'identity crisis', which should not be considered an "impending catastrophe" but rather "a necessary turning point, a crucial moment, when development must move one way or another, marshalling resources of growth, recovery, and further differentiation" (p. 16). In other words, a crisis provides an opportunity for growth and should be considered a positive aspect of identity development; however, it can adversely impact when a crisis is not resolved positively (Côté, 2018). Côté (2018) asserted that for young people,

> Erikson designated the identity crisis as a period during which an individual's previous identifications are no longer experienced as suitable—they are misaligned with the person's new social context—but an integrated adult identity is not yet established, the result of which can be a sense of identity confusion. (p. 252) [31]

[31] I am cognisant of the fact that the theories pertaining to identity and identity development originate from western concepts of identity and are predominantly based on research including only white participants, which excludes, for example, the notion of ethnic identity (Schwartz, 2005). Therefore, these mainstream theories and frameworks might not be applicable to culturally diverse contexts. Further research is warranted to examine the applicability of models, such as Erikson's (1968) eight stages of development model.

While adolescence is a universally recognised developmental phase, Ngwenya et al. (2023) asserted that it is a western notion and "consequence of colonialism" and "attributes gender and social roles as accepted in the Global North" (p. 1). Therefore, it is imperative to frame adolescence and the transition to adulthood within the cultural contexts and be cognisant of cultural values and expectations (Ngwenya et al., 2023).

A longitudinal study by Schwartz et al. (2009) involving Hispanic adolescents and their families concluded that a reduction in identity confusion was associated with an increase in adolescent-reported family functioning. Conversely, a decrease in family functioning corresponded with an increase in identity confusion (Schwartz et al., 2009). Hence, the relationship between parents and children is instrumental in adolescent identity development, whereby "both parental warmth and parental knowledge of adolescent activities influence adolescents' overall psychological adjustment" (Dmitrieva et al., 2004, p. 426). A cross-cultural quantitative study relevant to the current research with South Sudanese Australian adolescents concluded that adolescent misconduct linked to family-related life events (e.g., divorce, conflicts, financial stress) was mediated by perceived parental involvement, parent-adolescent conflict and perceived sanctions of parents in cases of misconduct (Dmitrieva et al., 2004). This finding stresses the importance of parental involvement and positive parent-child relationships.

Identity development occurs in socio-cultural contexts, and for adolescents, school sites are instrumental in this process (Kia-Keating & Ellis, 2007). Students bring their developing identities into school and are exposed to various influences, among which are peers and teachers, whereby the intersectionality of determinants and contributing factors to identity (e.g., race, ethnicity and gender) impact the educational experiences of adolescents (Hudley, 2015). For refugees and those with refugee experiences, identity development is even more challenging, mainly due to the disruptions in socio-cultural contexts. Schools are essential physical places for settlement and often the first socio-cultural context in which young people interact with peers (Due et al., 2016; Matthews, 2008). However, within educational settings, racism and Othering are frequently experienced, particularly by young people of refugee backgrounds who are not considered part of the 'white' hegemonic majority (Baak, 2019), which adversely impacts feelings of belonging. Identity and identity development are closely linked to the notion of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2010), which is a salient aspect in the identity development of refugee-background adolescents (Kia-Keating & Ellis, 2007; Ziaian et al., 2021). Kia-Keating and Ellis (2007) concluded that higher levels of school belonging among refugee-background adolescents reduce feelings of depression and increase levels of self-efficacy. Within this context of

identity development and belonging in school settings, it is crucial to consider the notions of power and politics, referred to by Yuval-Davis (2010) as "identity politics." In educational settings, these notions of power and politics, which align with Freire's (2005) standpoint of education being a political practice (see also Sections 2.4.4 and 4.2.1.2.2), are relevant for this research and need to be considered when exploring the identities of South Sudanese Australian adolescents. Furthermore, it is crucial to examine the students' experiences with racism and Othering in educational settings using the lens of CRT in education (Solórzano, 1998). This theoretical framework challenges deficit-based assumptions that attribute students of colour's struggles to their supposed lack of skills and cultural capital in addressing issues (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001) (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.2).

According to Burnett (2013), identity re-formulation is common among forced migrants and takes place in three stages. The first stage is during the journey to seek freedom. The second stage takes place while waiting for their resettlement, which is most likely in a refugee camp or detention centre. The third stage of identity re-formulation occurs upon settling in the new host country (Burnett, 2013). Upon resettling, the refugee 'label' ceases to be relevant (Baak, 2021); however, the associated stigma of the word refugee often becomes part of an identity. Harris and Nyuon (2013, p. 95) referred to this as "refugeity", whereby the "refugee experience has become the defining characteristic of a whole person, and your identity isn't allowed to move beyond this." Consequently, refugeity impacts how one is perceived and expected to behave based on certain people's assumptions concerning refugees (Harris & Nyuon, 2013). Baak (2021) concluded that, although using the word 'refugee' after resettlement is problematic due to their acquired permanent residence status, the real issue is the Othering resulting from using the word refugee. In other words, the label of 'refugee' frequently evokes a certain reaction that is constructed based on assumptions and, often, incorrect media representations (Baak, 2021). In a similar vein, Ludwig (2016) stated that the refugee label promotes stigmatisation and ignores the fact that refugee status is only temporary (i.e., not a fixed identity trait). As already noted, this research is embedded in the FoI framework (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a). Therefore, the concept of identity is situated within Vygotsky's theoretical concept of *perezhivanie* – or lived experience (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014b). Within this theoretical concept, identity – or self-lived experience – can be defined as a "dynamic organization of various resources, socially, historically, and culturally created'' (Esteban & Moll, 2014a, p. 37). This definition of identity evolves into the concept of FoI, which are resources "that have been historically accumulated and culturally developed; they are socially distributed and transmitted; and they are essential for constructing one's identity and defining and presenting oneself" (Esteban-Guitart, 2012, p. 117) (see Chapter 3, Sections 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 for the FoI framework elaborations).

Although I consider the description of identity by Esteban and Moll (2014a) suitable for the purpose of situating this research within the FoI framework, there are several additional concepts that are relevant as they also relate to the forms of identity that emerged during the conversations with the participating adolescents. These additional dimensions of identity are considered in the following sections.

2.3.1.1 Cultural and Ethnic Identity

The notions of cultural and ethnic identity are relevant to the context of this research. While these concepts are, at times, used interchangeably, they are distinctly different from each other. Similarly, as with identity development, the processes of cultural and ethnic identity development occur in socio-cultural contexts, whereby school sites, and in particular, the attitudes of peers and teachers, are instrumental.

2.3.1.1.1 Cultural Identity and Hegemony

Cultural identity can be considered membership or identification with certain categories such as social, economic, geopolitical, gender, religion, ability/disability, language and professions (Voicu, 2013). Furthermore, Hall's seminal essay, *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* (1990/2021) stated that the notion of cultural identity is situated within the context of the African diaspora that resulted from colonialism and slavery. Hall (1990/2021) envisioned one's cultural identity set within historical and cultural contexts that constantly change and should, therefore, not be considered grounded in a singular, collective culture, which assumes that those with a shared historical background possess a common identity that is stable and unchanging.

Within the context of diaspora, which is relevant to research, the notion of "identity politics", as discussed by Yuval-Davis (2010, p. 266), assumes the positioning of the Other, a term employed to describe "the marginal, the underdeveloped, the periphery" (Hall, 1990/2021, p. 228). This positioning of the Other can be situated within Gramsci's (1971) notion of cultural hegemony. Going beyond Marx's view on the power (force) of the ruling class over the proletariat, the aspect of consent is central to Gramsci's interpretation of hegemony,[32] also referred to as dominant belief (Durst, 2005; El Aidi & Yechouti, 2017; Mayo, 2020). Durst (2005) asserted that according to Gramsci, "a group

[32] According to Cortes-Ramirez (2015), the word hegemony is derived from the "Greek verb eghesthai, meaning 'to drive', 'to be the guide', 'to be the boss'", but could also derive from the "verb eghemoneno, that means 'to guide', "to precede', 'to drive', and hence 'to stay ahead', 'to command', 'to rule'" (p. 120).[33] The Bantu language family is generally referred to as a linguistic group of more than 500 languages and dialects in Africa, roughly covering current-day countries from Nigeria to East Africa and southern Africa (Saidi, 2024).

maintains its supremacy not simply through the direct domination of the coercive state apparatus but also, more fundamentally, through the organized consent of the governed in civil society" (p. 176). Within this interpretation, hegemony refers to the consent given by those not in power (Kurtz, 1996). Beyond hegemony in political and economic contexts, Gramsci also recognised hegemony in cultural contexts, whereby consent is applied to, for example, values, norms, perceptions and prejudices in cultural settings, such as education and the media (Kurtz, 1996; Mayo, 2020). Importantly, subaltern groups opposing and resisting hegemony or domination are considered counter-hegemonic (Kurtz, 1996).

Within a culturally responsive pedagogy (see Section 2.4.4), counter-narratives from non-hegemonic students can challenge the dominant beliefs and provide "validation for and pride in one's own culture and increase engagement in school when they can relate to the curriculum as opposed to always being 'othered'" (Hoffman & Martin, 2020, p. 693). Within the context of this study, which is underpinned by critical theory (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.2.2), Gramsci's notion of hegemony is relevant as it recognises the power cultural institutions, including schools and the media, employ to gain people's consent (Kincheloe, 2007). In this study, power and consent are exercised in stereotypical portraits, and the counter-narratives of the South Sudanese Australian students can be used to challenge these portrayals, asserting their agency and striving for social justice.

2.3.1.1.2 Ethnic Identity and Acculturation

Ethnic identity is a multifaceted concept that involves a dedication and feeling of connection to one's ethnic group (self-identification), a favourable assessment of the group, curiosity about and understanding of the group, and engagement in the activities and traditions of their ethnic group (Phinney, 1990). The development of ethnic identity in minority adolescents and young adults is a complex process generally involving three stages: unexamined ethnic identity, ethnic identity search (also referred to as moratorium), and ethnic identity achievement (Phinney, 1990). Alongside these stages, which are not necessarily experienced by all adolescents and young adults, nor are the order of these stages fixed, are the possible impact on one's own ethnic group and other ethnic groups or the mainstream society (Phinney, 1996). As mentioned above, self-identification, also called self-definition or self-labelling, is an essential aspect of ethnic identity development. According to Phinney (1990), ethnic minority adolescents can identify with two cultures. They can self-identify *as* a member of their ethnic group of origin; however, at the same time, they can identify *with* the mainstream culture (Phinney, 1990). Phinney's component of self-identification aligns with the definition of identity within the FoI framework, which are the resources shaped by historical experiences, cultural

development, and social interactions that are crucial for an individual's sense of identity, self-expression, and self-awareness (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a) (see Chapter 3, Section 3.2.3).

The process of ethnic identity development is sometimes considered similar to the process of acculturation; however, these two processes are dissimilar (Phinney, 1990) yet also overlap (Van de Vijver et al., 2016). Acculturation was first described by Redfield et al. (1936) as "those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups" (p. 149). Berry (1997) is well-known for his work on acculturation, which he described as "the general processes and outcomes (both cultural and psychological) of intercultural contact" (p. 8). Berry (1997) developed four different strategies one can employ in the acculturation process: integration, separation, assimilation, and marginalisation. The integration strategy refers to adopting elements of the host culture while maintaining elements of one's culture of origin (Berry, 1997). In contrast, the separation strategy is employed by those valuing their original culture and avoiding or rejecting the host culture (Berry, 1997). Assimilation occurs when the host or mainstream culture is valued and maintained above the original culture (Berry, 1997). Lastly, the marginalisation strategy refers to a situation when a person cannot identify with or rejects both the culture of origin and the host culture, which often occurs when there is an enforced loss of culture (e.g., ethnic cleansing) while experiencing discrimination or exclusion in the host society (Berry, 1997). Acculturation strategies and levels vary across cultural groups, families and individuals (Berry, 2022) and, at times, people cannot select a strategy because mainstream society enforces one upon them (Berry, 1997).

Acculturation occurs on a cultural/group level and a psychological/individual level, though the two levels are complementary, whereby there is "reciprocal or mutual influence" (Berry & Sam, 2016, p. 14). Recently, Berry (2022) proposed an ecocultural framework with cultural transmission as an essential part. Berry (2022) identified three ways by which this can occur. Firstly, vertical transmission refers to transmitting cultural knowledge and skills from parents to their children. Secondly, horizontal transmission refers to the transmission among peers. Thirdly, oblique transmission refers to elders informing the younger members of a community. The acculturation and cultural transmission processes are salient to this research, particularly in relation to the intergenerational issues and tensions and the notion of familial capital, which is a form of CCW (Yosso, 2005) and cultural FoI (Esteban-Guitart, 2012).

2.3.1.2 Gender Identity

In addition to cultural and ethnic identity, it is important to include the notion of gender as a key contributor to identity in this review of relevant literature. The World Health Organisation (World Health Organisation [WHO], n.d) referred to gender as:

> The characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time. Gender is hierarchical and produces inequalities that intersect with other social and economic inequalities (par 1 and 2).

Employing a decolonised feminist perspective in exploring the notion of gender within African contexts is essential for this research. Many pre-colonial African societies, particularly those from the Bantu language family[33], did not have binary gender categories that rigidly prescribed gender identities (Saidi, 2024; Tamale, 2020). Rather identities were developed through relational and social markers such as possession of specialised knowledge, kinship, and order of birth, while the anatomic differences were only highlighted during reproductive years (Saidi, 2024). These African societies exhibited flexible gender systems that did not necessarily conform to the rigid western dichotomies of 'male' and 'female (Oyěwùmí, 2005). For example, gender categories such as 'male daughters' and 'female husbands' were found in several African societies (Tamale, 2020).

From a linguistic perspective, certain African languages, such as those within the Bantu family, had gender neutral nouns and pronouns; however, the English colonisers imposed linguistic western gender hierarchies with pronouns and titles such as 'Mrs', 'Mr' and 'Miss' (Abidogun, 2021)[34]. In pre-colonial Africa, woman often held considerable power and participated in various rituals related to birth, marriage, burial rites and ceremonies (Tamale, 2020). This changed drastically when colonisers imposed the "dichotomous understanding of gender in terms of polarized, hierarchized identities (i.e., masculinity vs femininity)" (Tamale, 2020, p. 6). The hierarchised identities led to constructing Indigenous African women as inferior on the basis of both their racial and gender identities, which revealed their oppression at the intersection of race and patriarchy (Tamale, 2020). This aligns with Crenshaw's (1989) notion of intersectionality, which was originally developed to articulate how Black women's experiences of discrimination are shaped by overlapping systems of race and gender.

[33] The Bantu language family is generally referred to as a linguistic group of more than 500 languages and dialects in Africa, roughly covering current-day countries from Nigeria to East Africa and southern Africa (Saidi, 2024).

[34] Abidogun (2021) noted the impact of language differences on gendered knowledge with the following example: The Yoruba used the word *oba*, which translates as 'ruler', but was instead translated by the British as 'king'. Female rulers, *obas*, were incorrectly translated as 'regents' emphasising an Anglophone gendered identity.

Similar to the description provided by the WHO (n.d.), African feminist scholars Oyěwùmí (2005) conceptualised gender as a social construct. Drawing from Oyěwùmí (2005), Nyirenda and Simphiwe Sesanti (2023) argued that since gender is a social construct, gender identity is defined by and a product of community. Communities have different norms to define gender identity, and, as a social construct, these norms are inherently fluid and subject to change. As Nyrenda and Simphiwe Sesanti noted, "gendered identities […] have the potential to acquire new meaning" (p. 183). This perspective of defining and constructing gender identity can be linked to the *ubuntu* philosophy (see Section 2.3.1). While some scholars claim that, in pre-colonial African interpretations, *ubuntu* is without gender, in contemporary African societies, *ubuntu* is considered to contribute to gender inequalities as a result of its entanglement with masculinity and patriarchy (Shumbamhini & Chirongoma, 2025). Therefore, Shumbamhini and Chirongoma (2025) argued that *ubuntu* needs to be "emancipating and life-giving to women" and "interrogate and challenge those customs, traditions and cultural practices that dehumanize women in the name of *ubuntu*" (p. 790).

Within a decolonised perspective on gender, it is important to include the notions of gender performativity (Butler, 1990). Philosopher and feminist scholar Butler (1990) asserted that gender "ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts" (p. 140). Within this constructivist approach, these discursive repetitions of acts or practices are the premise of the performativity of gender (Butler, 1990). In other words, asserting that gender is performative implies that our comprehension of gender, as well as our identification and positioning as gendered or sexual individuals in relation to others, is accomplished through repetitive enactment of certain behaviours that are considered gendered by those around us and not necessarily due our inherent gender identity when performing these activities (Meyerhoff, 2015). It is essential to consider that these behaviours may either align with established gender norms or challenge those expectations in various ways (Butler, 1988).

Within a South Sudanese context, gender identity is impacted and determined by socio-culturally constructed norms and values. Edward (2014) indicated that women in South Sudan experience challenges, among which are "high illiteracy rates, early and forced marriages, gendered divisions of labor that restrict women's abilities to accumulate wealth and achieve economic independence" (p. 9). Within the South Sudanese context, customary roles are predominantly centred around the segregation of genders and gendered roles, which consequently contribute to the construction of gendered identities. The social context, which is mainly the home, is central to the construction of

gender identity, and both young males and females negotiate their gendered identity here in various cultural norms and practices (Breidlid & Breidlid, 2013). These norms and practices, as well as attitudes towards gendered roles, differ among the various ethnic groups in South Sudan (Madut, 2020). Boys and girls are taught their expected roles from a young age onwards and upon reaching adulthood, they are accustomed to culturally normative gendered duties (Edward, 2014). For girls, these duties are predominantly centred around household chores (e.g., fetching water, washing clothes, cooking food, and selling food) (Breidlid & Breidlid, 2013). The amount of work often leaves little time for girls to attend to their homework, if they are allowed to attend school at all (Madut, 2020). School attendance is overall low for girls, and they often experience a deficit attitude from their parents or elders in the community regarding their academic capabilities (Breidlid & Breidlid, 2013). Early marriage is prevalent for girls and is not determined by age but by their perceived readiness and maturity, with the first menstruation often considered the benchmark (Madut, 2020).

Within Australian contexts, the gender-assigned roles and responsibilities for girls (i.e., cooking, cleaning and looking after siblings) require South Sudanese Australian girls to mature rapidly, while they receive little trust from their parents to be more independent outside of the house, which can contribute to intergenerational tensions (Macaulay, 2021). Gender performativity and gender identity expectations often receive scrutiny, particularly from second-generation South Sudanese Australian young people (Poppit & Frey, 2007). Changing the attitudes towards the importance of education for girls and gender-assigned roles and responsibilities in the Australian context is challenging (Hatoss & Huijser, 2010). This study sought to provide additional insights to assist the South Sudanese Australian community in navigating these challenges.

2.3.1.3 Identity in the Third Space

Third space (Bhabha, 1994) was discussed in Chapter 1 in the context of allyship (see Section 1.7). Effectively a third space was created through my allyship with the South Sudanese community, in which I could position myself as a "transient insider" (Roberts, 2018, p. 116) and work *with* the participating South Sudanese Australian community members (K. E. Edwards, 2006). The concept of third space is also applicable to identity and identity development. Bhabha (1994) challenged the interpretation of 'pure' cultures and cultural identity as being "a homogenizing, unifying force" (p. 54). Instead, Bhabha (1994) suggested the third space in which there is cultural hybridity without fixed boundaries and where one is "free to negotiate and translate their cultural identities in a discontinuous, intertextual temporality of cultural difference" (p. 55). Within the context of this third space, new identities can be created, with Smith (2008) stating that,

> The third space is the in-between position, and it is also a newly crafted position. It did not exist prior to the merging of identities. This is one type of hybrid identity that arises as cultural boundaries meet and blur. (p. 8)

The previous section (Section 2.3.1.2) discussed gender identity and the challenges for South Sudanese Australian females negotiating their gendered roles at home (Macaulay, 2021). The notion of hybrid identity can also be applicable to gender, with Darling-Wolf (2008) defining gender hybridity as:

> A broad set of acts, behaviors, and attitudes that do not conform to the socio-culturally constructed meaning assigned to each gender in a particular society or culture at a particular point in time. (pp. 66-67)

Both notions of gender hybridity and the Third Space are relevant to this study, which examines the expressions of identity and identity development of young South Sudanese Australians, who often find themselves in between two cultures and experience "between-cultures stress" (Poppit & Frey, 2007, p. 170) (see Section 2.3.3). Tatham (2023) explained how the third space could support marginalised people, such as South Sudanese Australians, to negotiate their identity, including through resistance, stating that,

> The Third Space recognises how people resist hegemonic narratives of dominant ideologies through a process of ongoing negotiation and transformation. Negotiation is not just compromise, as it is commonly understood to mean, rather negotiation is political and includes acts of subversion, transgression and resistance. (p. 4)

This research examines how the participating South Sudanese Australian students negotiate their hybrid identities while using their resistance capital (Yosso, 2005) (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.3 and Chapter 7).

2.3.2 The Identity of the South Sudanese

According to Ndhlovu (2009), "African identities are multilayered, self-imposed, and ascribed by others and, as such, require a critical analysis to avoid essentialism that has bedevilled much of the discourse on Africa and the African people" (p. 19). As foregrounded earlier in the historical overview (Section 2.2.1), there are complexities pertaining to the identity of the South Sudanese. For centuries, their identity was reduced to an *'abid* (black), which represented being one of the "enslavable" people (Trout Powell, 2012, p. 27) who were considered racially inferior and subhuman to the northern Sudanese (Jok, 2011). More recently, during the Second Civil War, the identity of assumed "Southern Sudanese-ness was concretised as a collectivising socio-political reality against the North's power monopoly, the economic marginalisation of the South, and the oppression of southern Sudanese" (Garang, 2021, p. 6). Twali (2019) refers to this as a conflict-informed social identity. However, what was the consequence of the assumed southern Sudaneseness after South Sudan's independence?

Could a country with 11 million people comprising more than 60 ethnic communities[35] and more than 80 ethnic languages and cultural customs (UNMISS, 2014), and where one's identity is predominantly defined by ethnic background (Jok, 2011; Muluka, 2021), realistically create a national identity that promotes peaceful coexistence?

The first president of the Republic of South Sudan, Salva Kiir, called for unity among the ethnically and culturally diverse citizens (Sudan Tribune, 2011). This sentiment of national identity before ethnicity was echoed by several South Sudanese journalists and scholars, who, in addition, called for "not only tribal unity, but also a harmonization of pastoralist and sedentary cultures" (Frahm, 2012, p. 32). However, the desired and required process of national identity building was not achieved in the following years due to the "politics of identity and tribalism" (Madut, 2015, p. 4) that were visible in the constitution and appointment of ministers in the national government (Kuol, 2019). Garang (2021) concluded that "tribal diversity itself does not negate the presence of a South Sudanese collective 'national' identity because internal tribal divisions are a global phenomenon and 'tribal' and 'national' identities are activated contextually" (p. 5), therefore, the process of national identity building in South Sudan can still be initiated. Despite the absence of a national South Sudanese identity after independence in 2011 and the protracted internal conflicts since 2013, Johnson (2016) reported on the emerging cultural identity through South Sudanese football teams, actors, athletes, beauty pageants, musicians and models that represented the newly formed nation internationally.

The South Sudanese in the diaspora describe and express their identity in different ways. A recent arts-based study by Gitau et al. (2023), centred around a poem written by first-generation South Sudanese Australian Achol Arop, indicated how the South Sudanese identity was expressed through the use of the Dinka language and the cultural value of pride, but also how identity is impacted by trauma and intergenerational trauma. O'Byrne's (2014) study highlighted the role of traditional song and dances within the Acholi community (ethnic group from South Sudan) in New Zealand as a means of maintaining and developing their Acholi identity. These cultural practices were vital for fostering a sense of belonging and ensuring the transmission of cultural knowledge and skills to the younger generation in the diaspora. Furthermore, a study by Phillips (2013) involving resettled South Sudanese in Australia found that the participants either referred to their specific ethnic backgrounds as Australian, South Sudanese Dinka, or South Sudanese Nuer, or as being both South Sudanese and Australian. Philips (2013) concluded that the South Sudanese in the diaspora can have a ~~multicultural or hybrid identity,~~ meaning that,

[35] Ethnic communities mainly consist of several "groupings" that are further divided into "subclans" (Beswick, 2004, p. 43). When identifying themselves, South Sudanese sometimes include the state they originate from (e.g., Dinka Bor from Jonglei State) (Sano, 2019).

multiculutral or hybridd identity, meaning that, while they embrace their newly acquired identity as citizens of their resettled country, they do not exclude South Sudan or their ethnic group from their self-reported identity. However, despite many South Sudanese identifying themselves as Australian, frequent media portrayals provide stereotypical references and racially profile the identity of South Sudanese Australians, whereby they are accused of not behaving in the 'Australian way' (Nolan et al., 2016). In addition to the multicultural and hybrid identity, the citizenship of the South Sudanese people should be considered a "multi-layered construct" whereby the layers can be "local, ethnic, national, state, cross- or trans-state and supra-state" (Yuval-Davis, 1999, p. 122).

2.3.3 A Literature Portrait of the Identity of South Sudanese Australian Adolescents

Following Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis' (1997) portraiture methodology, which I have used to create narrative portraits of three female South Sudanese Australian students (see Chapter 5), I present in this section a 'portrait' of South Sudanese Australian adolescents drawn from existing literature.

The South Sudanese Australian community is frequently homogenised (or given a group identity) and publicly maligned, receiving unjustifiable negative publicity from politicians and the media (Benier, 2018; Macaulay & Deppeler, 2020). South Sudanese have been referred to as a community that poorly integrates (Benier et al., 2018; Macaulay & Deppeler, 2020) and its youth as 'African gang' members who terrorise the streets of Melbourne. Majavu (2020) contends that "the label 'African gangs' is discursively employed to criminalize the entire racial group – Blacks of African descent" (pp. 30-31). The 'African gang' narrative emerged in 2016 after the 'riots' at the Moomba[36] festival (Benier et al., 2018). Majavu (2020) concluded that the label 'African gangs' became a discursive shorthand for portraying the dangerous, violent, and "mentally unstable refugee Other" (p. 32). Following this fear-mongering about 'African gangs', who were seemingly making the streets of Melbourne unsafe, the abovementioned targeting and racial profiling intensified, criminalising Black youth, which continues until this day (Majavu, 2020). The South Sudanese Australian community was particularly impacted, as the media and public discourse often associated them with the so-called 'Apex gang' (Benier et al., 2018). Shepherd and Spivak (2020) cautiously reported that offending rates for Sudanese-born males were higher than those from other ethnic groups. However, these rates need to be contextualised as it is plausible that reasons such as racial profiling by the police, racism and discrimination, and over-sensationalising in the media are responsible for the higher numbers (Koumouris & Blaustein, 2022). A study by Shepherd et al. (2018) presented self-reported contributing factors to criminal offending

[36] The Moomba 'riot' refers to a violent clash between a group of young people and the police during the March 2016 Moomba Festival, which is a yearly cultural event in Melbourne, Australia (Weber et al., 2021). The media claimed that the Apex 'gang' was responsible for the 'riot', with young people of South Sudanese Australian backgrounds predominantly associated with this 'gang'. Consequently, the media portrayed these young people as the instigators of the 'riot' (Weber et al., 2021).

behaviour, including "disrupted education, family disconnection, peer group delinquency, excessive alcohol use, (clinically) unaddressed anger and emotional problems" and "a conflictual relationship with law enforcement" (p. 491).

South Sudanese Australian young people are frequently homogenised by their racial identity, being labelled as 'Black', which can lead to racial profiling and associations with negative stereotypes, such as 'bad' or even 'criminal' (Macaulay, 2023a; Majavu, 2020). Similarly, Mapedzahama and Kwansah-Aidoo (2017) stated, "The black body in white space has always been constructed as a problematic difference to whiteness: an inferiority and an 'other'" (p. 1). This discourse of the white normative mode of belonging (Due, 2008) contributes to the various challenges faced by South Sudanese Australian students. These challenges include deficit perspectives regarding academic capabilities, experiences of bullying, racism and discrimination (often fuelled by negative media portrayals), limited teacher support and understanding of cultural norms, and facing disproportionate disciplinary actions, all of which adversely impact student performance, engagement, retention, and feelings of belonging (Abur, 2018; Baak, 2011, 2019; Benier et al., 2018; Pittaway & Dantas, 2021; Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission, 2008).

Sporadically, news articles cover South Sudanese Australians' athletic achievements in sports; however, athletes also frequently report experiences with racism or racialised media portrayals.[37] Furthermore, South Sudanese Australian adolescents are also homogenised by their racial identity as being 'Black' and, therefore, inherently different within the broader 'white' identity of Australian society (Macaulay, 2023a). In these instances, racial identity is transformed into racial profiling. Besides being racially profiled as being 'Other', the adolescents' racial identity of being 'Black' is often associated with 'bad' or even with being 'criminal' (Majavu, 2020). S. Williams (2022) observed an identity crisis among young South Sudanese Australians resulting from identity politics, with some young people being forced to create hybrid identities that encompass transnational identities (e.g., identifying as both Australian and South Sudanese), cultural identities and diaspora identities.

In addition to Othering and criminalising South Sudanese Australian youth, the stereotypical representations in the media adversely impact all members of the South Sudanese Australian community (e.g., with securing employment) and cause mental health issues (Burford-Rice et al., 2020; Macauley & Deppeler, 2020). It is important to note that South Sudanese Australian community members acknowledge that the poor behaviour of some young people promotes specific racial

[37] See, for example, an article in *The Age* from May 2022: https://www.theage.com.au/sport/afl/i-ve-only-been-here-four-years-and-i-m-better-than-you-how-south-sudanese-players-are-enriching-dantasthe-afl-20220523-p5ans2.html

perceptions (Burford-Rice et al., 2020); however, depicting the South Sudanese Australian community as homogenous and violence-prone is unwarranted, further marginalises the community and promotes racism.[38] In 2022, a report by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent stated that South Sudanese Australians experience "severe and pervasive racism" in schools and in the community, which has "impacted their sense of belonging and their opportunities" (UNHCR, 2022, par. 3). This report aligns with findings from a study by Pittaway and Dantas (2021) who reported that nearly all of their 15 participants indicated daily experiences with racism, including institutional racism from the police and racial profiling based on their skin colour and physical stature. The participants in this study also shared how negative media portrayals significantly affect their mental health, which is further exacerbated by the South Sudanese cultural stigma surrounding mental health problems and distrust of support organisations, creating barriers to seeking help (Pittaway & Dantas, 2021). Untreated mental health issues and the potential presence of trauma or PTSD place South Sudanese Australian adolescents at a higher risk for excessive alcohol and drug use (Pittaway & Dantas, 2023).

Another aspect impacting the mental health of South Sudanese Australian adolescents is negative factors contributing to their identity development. Within the process of acculturation, described by Berry (1997, p. 8) as "the general processes and outcomes (both cultural and psychological) of intercultural contact," there is group-level acculturation and individual-level acculturation. Individual-level acculturation comprises "changes in behavior, values and attitudes, and identity" (C. L. Williams & Berry, 1991, p. 633). At times, individual-level acculturation can result in acculturative stress, which is caused by a conflict between taking on aspects of the culture of the country of settlement while shedding certain aspects of one's culture of origin (Berry, 1997). C. L. Williams and Berry (1991) stated that acculturation stress can result in "anxiety, depression, feelings of marginality and alienation, heightened psychosomatic symptoms, and identity confusion" (p. 634). Acculturative stress can also be caused by parental control, which can, at the same time, be a contributing factor to intergenerational conflicts (Poppit & Frey, 2007). Parental control regarding specific cultural rules, such as gender roles and gender role expectations, has been experienced as challenging for young South Sudanese Australian girls growing up in a society that emphasises gender equality (Poppit & Frey, 2007). These challenges can also cause acculturation stress, mainly when the adolescents observe that their parents want to raise them as if they were still in Africa, whereby the expectation is that the young people behave within the culturally set norms and values (Macaulay, 2021).

[38] Racism is defined as "prejudice, discrimination or hatred directed at someone because of their colour, ethnicity or national origin" (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2021, p. 3).

Overall, parenting within Australian contexts is considered strenuous for many South Sudanese Australian parents; they struggle to keep their children connected to traditional customs and values while their children are schooling and growing up in an inherently different society (S. A. Deng, 2016a, 2016b; Hove, 2019; Losoncz, 2019; Macaulay, 2021). This can interrupt intergenerational cultural transmission between parents/caregivers and their children. Furthermore, South Sudanese Australian adolescents are aware of Australia's conflicting social norms regarding aspects such as respect, freedom and autonomy during adolescence and the use of physical disciplining, which are all major contributing factors to intergenerational conflicts and communication breakdowns between parents and their children (S. A. Deng, 2016a, 2016b; Hove, 2019; Losoncz, 2019; Macaulay, 2021; Poppit & Frey, 2007). There is currently limited research exploring the impact of intergenerational cultural conflicts on schooling experiences, including elements such as educational engagement and retention.

Adolescence is a crucial, though often challenging, stage in adulthood and identity development (Erikson, 1968). This stage is particularly challenging for South Sudanese Australians within the contexts of acculturative stress and intergenerational conflicts. Adolescents have reported being "in-between" two cultures regarding their cultural identity, considering themselves Australians but also South Sudanese, which at times can result in "between-cultures stress" that can vary in intensity depending on factors such as parental levels of acculturation (Poppit & Frey, 2007, p. 170). Few studies have explored the impact of intergenerational conflicts and communication breakdowns and the issues currently experienced by some South Sudanese Australian adolescents in the broader Australian community. However, adolescents who participated in a recent study by Pittaway et al. (2023) stated that they should not be blamed for their misbehaviour; instead, "the elders and parents did not listen to them, did not understand parenting in the context of Australian culture, and wilfully stood back from their parental obligations", which includes leaving them in charge of their siblings while the parents are attending parties (p. 220). One of the study's participants pleaded as follows:

> Listen to us, talk to us, support us at school and at our sports and with our friends. Don't leave us to fend for ourselves. Don't keep making excuses for your poor behaviour. And most importantly, don't lay the blame of this community breakdown at our feet; we are the result of your mistakes. (Pittaway et al., 2023, p. 220)

These voices from young people call for further studies to examine the contributing factors to issues with adolescent behaviour. Current studies have made it clear that the situation is complex and requires a whole-community approach. This research sought to provide more insights into the experiences of South Sudanese Australian adolescents and the factors contributing to their identity development.

While this section has explored key themes in identity research, it is essential to recognise a significant gap in the literature concerning the lived experiences of South Sudanese Australian adolescents, particularly in relation to identity and identity development. Although some studies exist, they often focus broadly on young people of African heritage, rather than specifically on South Sudanese Australian. Furthermore, much of this scholarship has been produced by researchers outside the community, including white (settler) scholars. While their work is often grounded in genuine solidarity and allyship (including this research), there is an increasing recognition of the value and necessity of research led by South Sudanese scholars and young people themselves. Insider perspectives are crucial for generating deeper, more culturally nuanced understandings of identity formation, especially given the complex and intersecting challenges that shape the lives of South Sudanese Australian adolescents.

2.3.4 Identity Section Summary

The main points of this section are:

- There are various definitions of identity from both African-centred and western centred perspectives.
- The African notion of *ubuntu* can be used as an alternative decolonial lens through which identity and identity development can be explored and understood.
- *Ubuntu* considers identity development as a social and relational process.
- Adolescence is a critical stage for identity development, often characterised by identity crisis and confusion.
- Family functioning and parental involvement play essential roles in reducing adolescent identity confusion and misconduct.
- Adolescent identity development is influenced by socio-cultural contexts, particularly within school environments where race, ethnicity, and gender intersect to shape educational experiences.
- Refugee-background adolescents face additional challenges in identity development due to disruptions in socio-cultural contexts, experiences of racism, and feelings of exclusion within educational settings.
- The notion of belonging is crucial in understanding identity development, with higher levels of school belonging associated with reduced depression and increased self-efficacy among refugee-background adolescents.
- Power dynamics and politics within educational settings influence the experiences of belonging and identity development, highlighting the need to consider these factors when

exploring the identities of marginalised groups, such as South Sudanese Australian adolescents.

- The notion of cultural hegemony highlights power dynamics and consent in shaping dominant beliefs and values within society.
- Ethnic identity development is a multifaceted process involving stages such as unexamined ethnic identity, ethnic identity search, and ethnic identity achievement.
- Gender is not a stable identity but rather a tenuously constituted identity formed through the repetitive enactment of gendered behaviours, known as performativity.
- South Sudanese Australian girls face expectations of maturity and responsibility at a young age but may experience limited trust and independence outside the home, often leading to intergenerational tensions.
- Second-generation South Sudanese Australian youth frequently scrutinise gender performativity and identity and challenge traditional gender roles.
- South Sudanese often value their ethnic background identity over national identity, with the adolescents often taking on a hybrid identity while resettling in countries such as Australia.
- South Sudanese Australian adolescents are frequently racially profiled and criminalised by the media with stereotypical portraits. This adversely impacts their mental health, feelings of belonging, and identity development.
- Conflicting ideas of parents and their children about their rights and responsibilities regarding cultural aspects such as respect, freedom and autonomy in adolescence, physical disciplining and punishment are contributing factors to intergenerational conflicts and communication breakdowns.

Identified gaps in the current literature:

- The impact of intergenerational conflicts on schooling experiences, including elements such as educational engagement and retention.
- A whole-community research approach exploring contributing factors to issues with adolescents at school and in the community that also offers solutions suggested and carried by the South Sudanese Australian community.
- There is a significant need for identity research led by South Sudanese Australian scholars and young people, as insider perspectives can offer a more culturally nuanced and contextually grounded understandings of identity development.

2.4 Inclusive Education in Australia

This third section of the literature review provides an overview of inclusive education and establishes insights from relevant studies on inclusive policies and teaching pedagogies for South Sudanese Australian adolescents. As this research aimed to explore what FoI the adolescents draw from in undertaking their education and how their educational experiences contribute to these FoI, research literature helped position the current schooling contexts and lived experiences of education for South Sudanese Australian adolescents. This section starts with a general overview of inclusive education according to descriptions from international bodies. After this, I provide an overview of the inclusiveness of educational settings in Australia as described in the literature, particularly for South Sudanese Australian adolescents.

2.4.1 What is Inclusive Education?

The foundation of inclusive education is Article 26 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that everyone has the right to education (UN General Assembly, 1948). Since 1948, the notion of inclusive education has evolved from a mere focus on children with a disability, as described in the 1994 *Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education* (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 1994), to a considerable extension of inclusive education pertaining to other vulnerable groups of children, such as ethnic minorities, Indigenous people, nomadic children, refugees and displaced children in The *Guidelines for Inclusion: Ensuring Access to Education for All* (UNESCO, 2005) and the subsequent *Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education* (UNESCO, 2009).

UNESCO (2005, 2009) specified that all vulnerable children, including disabled, ethnic minorities, Indigenous, nomadic, refugees and displaced, must be ensured access to education. According to UNESCO (2009), inclusion is:

> The process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children, youth and adults through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing and eliminating exclusion within and from education. (p. 8)

Furthermore, the 2005 Guidelines for Inclusion*: Ensuring Access to Education for All* (UNESCO, 2005, pp. 14-15) formulate the following four key elements:

1. Inclusion is a process.
2. Inclusion is concerned with the identification and removal of barriers.
3. Inclusion is about the presence, participation and achievement of all students.

4. Inclusion involves a particular emphasis on those groups of learners who might be at risk of marginalisation, exclusion or underachievement.

The second key element is particularly relevant for this research, which is aimed at exploring the FoI and the lived experiences of South Sudanese Australian adolescents to ultimately improve learning outcomes and could include the identification of barriers they experience whilst undertaking their education.

In addition to the UNESCO guidelines on inclusive education, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted by all United Nations Members States in 2015, announced 17 sustainable development goals (SDG) (United Nations [UN], 2015), including an education goal. SDG4 is focused on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for everyone (UN, 2015). In addition, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), with Australia as one of its members, strongly focuses on developing and implementing inclusive and equitable education measures to respond to the ever-increasing diversity in schools worldwide with the Strength through Diversity Project (OECD, 2023). Interestingly, according to a recently published report about the Strength through Diversity Project, Australia does not have a definition of inclusion in education but focuses only on equity (OECD, 2023).

2.4.2 How Inclusive are Schools in Australia for Students of Former Refugee Backgrounds?

Australian education policy is guided by two educational goals from the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration, with the first goal focusing on promoting excellence and equity (Education Council, 2019). Though the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration mentions that all Australian governments will "provide all young Australians with access to high-quality education that is inclusive and free from any form of discrimination" (Education Council, 2019, p. 5), there is no mention of specific cohorts of vulnerable and marginalised groups of people, such as students from refugee backgrounds.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) develops the Australian Curriculum and echoes the focus on excellence and equity (ACARA, n.d.). In addition, ACARA mentions inclusive teaching programs to cater to diverse students, including students who speak English as an Additional Language or dialect (ACARA, n.d.). In contrast, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) mentions inclusive practices as part of Australia's education policy; however, the focus is almost exclusively on children with a disability (AITSL, n.d.). Similarly, on a state

level, inclusive education guidelines from the Department of Education (DE) in Victoria pertain only to children with a disability (DE, 2023; 2024a).

Between July 2022 and June 2023, a total of 62,331 people arrived in Victoria, out of which 7,891 came on a Humanitarian visa, 19,226 as part of the Family Migration Stream, and 35,214 as skilled migrants. This total also included 3,578 young people[39] (Department of Home Affairs, 2023). In 2018-2019, 1,362 students arrived in Victoria on a Humanitarian visa[40] and enrolled in school, with most students having no or limited English language skills (Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network Australia [MYAN], 2019). Upon arrival, eligible students are entitled to enrolment in an English language school for six to 12 months before starting primary or secondary school (DE, 2024b). In recent years, the Department has provided the Virtual New Arrivals Program (VNAP) to cater to students living in rural or isolated areas (DE, 2024b).

Schools are a microcosm of Australia (Mansouri & Jenkins, 2010), hosting students from diverse cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds, including those from refugee backgrounds (ABS, 2022; MYAN, n.d.). Refugee-background students represent a heterogeneous group, each with a unique pre-settlement experience (Matthews, 2008; MYAN, 2020). While schools are essential places in the settlement process of young people of refugee backgrounds (Cassity & Gow, 2005), they are also challenging places. These students frequently experience social isolation due to language barriers, lack of friendships, limited understanding of the educational system and delivery, racism and discrimination, and insufficient support for mental health and well-being issues (Block et al., 2014; Matthews, 2008; Wiseman & Cassidy, 2019). Students from migrant backgrounds might experience challenges settling into school, mainly when they are from minority ethnic backgrounds. However, it is imperative to consider that educational needs and challenges differ vastly between migrant and refugee backgrounds due to differences in pre-settlement experiences, settlement conditions, and possible trauma (MYAN, 2019, 2020; S. Taylor, 2008). Despite these challenges, Baak, Miller et al. (2023) and Matthews (2008) asserted that schools must recognise the student's resilience and employ asset-based policies. These asset-based policies "place value on students' insights, languages, and cultural practices" and aim to offer "counter narratives to deficit ideology outcomes" (Flint & Jaggers, 2021, p. 255).

[39] Some families, including South Sudanese, might not have arrived in Australia as part of the Refugee and Humanitarian Program. Still, they might have a refugee background or have refugee-like experiences, such as exposure to violence, conflicts, and human rights violations (MYAN, 2020).

[40] Those entering Australia on a Humanitarian visa become Permanent Residents and officially lose their refugee status (Baak, 2021).

Despite significant numbers of students from refugee backgrounds entering the Australian school system and states being under the obligation to respect the rights of refugees and people seeking asylum to housing, health care and education (Rights Advocacy Project [RAP], 2018), federal education policies do not specifically mention and target refugee students (Sidhu & Taylor, 2007; S. Taylor, 2008). Matthews (2008) concluded:

> Refugee education is piecemeal and dominated by psychological approaches that over emphasise pre-displacement conditions of trauma. Preoccupation with therapeutic interventions locate issues at an individual level and overlook broader dimensions of inequality and disadvantage. (p. 32)

A recent study by Baak, Miller et al. (2023) concluded that not much has changed after fifteen years:

> No matter the use (or absence) of the term 'refugee' in policies, policy intermediaries largely perceived refugee students as a homogenous cohort requiring wellbeing and language support. Such knowledge structures reproduced recursive policy–practice enactments across school sectors, drawing ideas of trauma (wellbeing focus) or language (EALD focus) into the shaping of policies and practice. (p. 573)

According to the 2018 States of Refuge report from Liberty Victoria's Rights Advocacy Project, the federal system in Australia enables States to implement— or neglect to implement — measures that protect the rights of refugees and people seeking asylum (RAP, 2018). However, the report indicated that, compared to other Australian jurisdictions, Victoria provides the most explicit guidelines regarding refugees' eligibility for school enrolments and fee exemptions and is overall the best-performing state (RAP, 2018).

Victoria has implemented a general policy regarding the Victorian Curriculum F-10 English as an Additional Language (EAL) that schools with cohorts of EAL students need to use (DE, 2024c). In addition, the Victorian Government provides funding for implementing EAL programs, employing EAL teachers, and employing multicultural educational aides (MEAs) (DE, 2024c). Despite the absence of a specific education policy, the Victorian DE website has a page dedicated to assisting and informing schools on how to support students with refugee backgrounds, such as resources and programs from the Foundation House (DE, 2024d; Victoria Foundation for Survivors of Torture [VFST], 2021).

S. Taylor and Sidhu (2012) suggested aligning the Australian approach to inclusive education for students with refugee backgrounds with a holistic model suggested by Arnot and Pinson (2005). This holistic model acknowledges that the refugee student cohort needs extra support in addressing learning, social and emotional needs and is focused on parental educational involvement, creating strong links to families and the community, and the involvement of external agencies (Arnot & Pinson, 2005). In addition to the focus areas of the holistic model, S. Taylor and Sidhu (2012) concluded that committing to social justice for students and families of refugee backgrounds is crucial. An example of

a holistic model developed and implemented in Australia is the Berry Street Education Model (BSEM), which is centred around developing an understanding of trauma in children, its impact on development and learning, and trauma-informed teaching practices (Berry Street, n.d.). Another approach to inclusive education for students of former refugee backgrounds is a contextualised and holistic "good practice" approach suggested by Baak, McDonald et al. (2023, p. 285). Good practice is characterised by the following six tenets: school ethos, celebrating diversity, targeted support, positive relationships, parental involvement, and community partnerships (Baak, McDonald et al., 2023). Both holistic models as suggested by S. Taylor and Sidhu (2012) and Baak, McDonald et al. (2023) can be employed to explore and evaluate inclusive practices utilised by schools with culturally and linguistically diverse student cohorts, particularly those of former refugee backgrounds.

As mentioned above, one of the six tenets of the holistic good practice approach to inclusive education is parental involvement (Baak, McDonald et al., 2023), Previous studies have reported on the positive impact of parental educational involvement relating to the academic achievement, cognitive development and English literacy skills of students, including those of immigrant backgrounds (e.g., Boonk et al., 2018; Castro et al., 2015; Jung & Zhang, 2016). The aspects of parental involvement impacting academic achievements include high academic expectations, engaging in open communication with one's child(ren) regarding school-related topics and homework, and fostering strong reading habits (Castro et al., 2015). In previously conducted studies, language is a recurrently reported barrier to parental involvement (e.g., Cranston et al., 2021; Hamilton, 2013; Jung & Zhang, 2016; Molla, 2024; Zengin & Ataş-Akdemir, 2020) and is particularly challenging for refugee-background parents. While language barriers represent a challenge that requires long-term interventions, schools can take proactive steps by translating all outgoing communication to the parents and providing interpreters when required. Cranston et al. (2021) asserted that schools must recognise that, similar to their children, many refugee parents are also language learners, and thus, schools should make accommodations to meet their needs. Furthermore, schools can encourage parental involvement by exploring culturally relevant implementation strategies (Cranston et al., 2021). These strategies involve ensuring that teachers are cognisant of and steer away from normative descriptions and expectations regarding parental involvement while aiming to reduce power differences between teachers and parents (Cranston et al., 2021). In addition to this, teachers are encouraged to embrace an "outreach mentality" (Hamilton, 2013, p. 313), which requires a reflexive and empathetic perspective while considering questions regarding their own social positioning and stereotypical views that may negatively impact on relationship building between teachers and schools with students, parents and their community.

In important aspect of implementing inclusive practices in schools in the employment of teachers with immigrant experiences. These teachers often have a deeper cultural understanding, including awareness of language barriers and the challenges encountered during settlement. Consequently, these teachers are more inclined to implement inclusive practices in their classrooms (Özçürümez et al., 2023). Teachers' personal experiences can mitigate the tendency to homogenise the pre- and post-settlement experiences of people with refugee backgrounds. Teachers with immigrant experiences are thus often better equipped to accommodate the diverse needs of the students, including those of second-generation refugee backgrounds (Bloch & Hirsh, 2017).

Lastly, in the broader interpretation and implementation of inclusive education, it is crucial to consider the impact of micro policies within school settings. One example is the positioning of particular groups of students as being 'unruly' or threatening (Rizvi, 2023). This positioning is often based on racialised perceptions and puts students at risk of "being discursively constructed as different and potentially threatening and thus deserving of educational and wider forms of exclusion and punishment" (Rizvi, 2023, p. 262). This means that, although schools may present themselves as inclusive, micro policies can place 'unruly' students are risk of exclusion. Hackl (2022) and Gilliam (2020) referred to this as "conditional inclusion," noting that this often affects minority groups, Muslims and those who fall short of being recognised as 'good'. Baak and Aslan (2025) observed that for refugee students, conditional exclusion requires them to perform the identity of the "good refugee student" (p. 195), meaning one who is grateful for educational opportunities, compliant in their behaviour and focused on learning. These performative expectations align with the broader conceptualisation of the 'good refugee,' which, as described by Clark et al. (2024), refers to a refugee possessing "an assemblage of characteristics that denote passivity, vulnerability, gratitude, compliance, and productivity" (p. 150).

2.4.3 Educational Inclusion and South Sudanese Australian Students

Cassity and Gow (2005) reported that during the peak of arrivals, the South Sudanese Australian community was already experiencing education-related issues, such as chronic absence. During this time, a clear policy addressing students' needs with a former refugee background was absent (Sidhu & Taylor, 2007). Since then, the continuation of educational issues for young South Sudanese Australians, many of whom are second-generation settlers, is visible in the absence of a clear refugee education policy, low educational retention numbers, and growing numbers of disengaged students (see, for example, Commission for Children and Young People, 2023; Yak, 2016). This continued trend

warrants this research, which voices the South Sudanese Australian community's perceptions and seeks to explore solutions as possible circuit-breakers for these issues.

A number of Australian studies have been conducted that exclusively explored the educational experiences of South Sudanese Australian students (e.g., Abur, 2019; Baak, 2009, 2019; Hatoss & Huijser, 2010; Macaulay, 2023a, 2023b; Miller & Khawaja, 2010; Sellars & Murphy, 2017; Weber et al., 2021). As mentioned in Section 2.3.3, South Sudanese Australian young experience substantial challenges within educational settings, including deficit perspectives regarding academic capabilities, experiences of bullying, racism, discrimination and Othering, limited teacher support and understanding of cultural norms, and facing disproportionate disciplinary actions (Abur, 2019; Baak, 2009, 2019; Hatoss & Huijser, 2010; Macaulay, 2023a, 2023b; Miller & Khawaja, 2010; Sellars & Murphy, 2017; Weber et al., 2021). Collectively, these factors negatively affect students' academic performance, engagement, retention, and a sense of belonging within school communities. This indicates that, despite the increasing emphasis on inclusive education in Australian policy and practice, many South Sudanese Australian students continue to experience exclusion and marginalisation within educational settings.

A study by Baak et al. (2018) proposed a framework whereby one of the pillars is to "build an inclusive school culture" through "strategic planning, additional programs, and innovative approaches to engagement" (p. 10). As part of this strategic planning, schools are encouraged to employ Bilingual Support Officers (Baak et al., 2018) (also known as CLOs or MEAs) and staff from diverse cultural backgrounds. These suggestions could be instrumental in addressing the South Sudanese Australian students' frequently experienced exposure to racism and Othering within school settings, lack of understanding of the educational system, and a lack of educational support (Baak, 2011, 2019; Benier et al., 2018; Harris et al., 2015; Macaulay, 2023b; Pittaway & Dantas, 2021; Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission, 2008; Weber et al., 2021).

CLOs can be a connecting bridge between schools and communities. Some studies refer to CLOs as 'cultural brokers' (e.g., Gentemann & Whitehead, 1983; Rissanen, 2023; Yohani, 2013). Rissanen's (2023) recent study on Muslim teachers who were informally working cultural brokers in Finnish and Swedish schools highlighted their important role in aspects such as informing school leadership, teachers and parents regarding customs and values, advocating and supporting, mediating in conflicts, interpreting and being role models. However, Rissanen's (2023) study does not report on the impact of cultural broker teachers in the schools, but rather focused on their experiences, including

challenges within their roles. For example, the additional workload given to the cultural broker teachers was often not acknowledged by the school leadership team and limited resources were allocated to support students and their families (Rissanen, 2023). Yohani (2013) examined cultural brokers from diverse ethnic backgrounds working in Canadian schools. This study also indicated the benefits of employing cultural brokers, including bringing perspectives from different communities into school, increasing cultural understanding, and using the community to identify the required steps to address issues (Yohani, 2013). Although Yohani (2013) identified a negative wellbeing impact of increased stress for cultural brokers working with the same ethic background as their own, hinting at the work CLOs do when working with their own community in schools.

Several Canadian studies (e.g., Beglari & Thai, 2000; Vargas, 1999) referred to CLOs as Multicultural Liaison Officers (MLOs). In Australian studies, MLOs are also mentioned; however, this often pertains to liaisons between the police force and a specific community (e.g., Opportunity & Human Rights Commission, 2009). Molla (2024) referred to African community engagement officers and liaison officers in schools and highlighted the importance of their relatability to African students and their families. Miller et al. (2022) referred to bicultural staff and emphasised their importance as a key component of inclusive educational practices. Bicultural staff are instrumental in English language acquisition and dissemination of information to newly arrived students and their families. This is an essential part of inclusive practices to assist newly arrived students and their families. However, Miller et al. (2022) also noted the limited implementation of employing bicultural staff, especially in teaching positions, and recommended more diverse hiring practices. While some Victorian schools employ bicultural staff, more research is required to examine why some schools chose not to employ them, , what is their impact on student engagement and support, and experiences with discrimination and racism.

During the peak of the arrival of South Sudanese refugees in the mid-2000s, a study by Cassity and Gow (2005) recommended installing ‘cultural mediators’ to address issues within school settings. The participants in this study suggested liaising with the community or networks within the community, particularly elders, due to the “Southern Sudanese cultural disposition toward mediation via a third party” (Cassity & Gow, 2005, p. 54). This is a crucial insight, yet it is remarkable that the advice from this study, dated nearly twenty years ago, has not been readily applied in multiple Australian schools with growing numbers of South Sudanese Australian student cohorts. Further research is required to examine the work of South Sudanese Australian CLOs in schools and the impact they have on issues currently experienced by South Sudanese Australian adolescents.

The Foundation House (VFST, 2021) and the Victorian DE (2024f) refer to CLOs as MEAs. The DE's Multicultural Education Aide Support Program (MEASP) (2024f) primarily focuses on supporting EAL learners and creating connections between schools, families, and communities. However, the roles and responsibilities of MEAs appear less extensive than those of the CLOs employed at Riverwalk College. This observation aligns with a recent recommendation by Macaulay (2023b), who suggested that:

> Wider implementation of MEAs, and broader eligibility requirements for funding to employ MEAs, may assist teachers in better understanding the intercultural challenges faced by some Australian Sudanese/South Sudanese youth. This may challenge some teachers' biases and the expectations they have of these students. (p. 1338)

At the time of writing, no studies have specifically investigated the impact of MEAs (or CLOs) in Australian schools, and there is no current data on the number of MEAs (or CLOs) employed.

2.4.4 Pedagogies for Inclusive Education

The last part of the inclusive education section will provide an overview of pedagogies that can be employed to promote inclusive education in multicultural educational contexts. Within the aims and objectives of this research, I later consider Freire's notion of critical pedagogy (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.2.2.3), an important element of inclusive education through its emphasis on social justice and the positioning of education as being political (Freire, 2005). Several inclusive, asset-based pedagogies align with Freire's critical pedagogy in terms of their goals, underlying philosophy, and focus on social justice and equity for students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The following sections provide an overview of the asset-based inclusive pedagogies and explore how they can inform this research.

2.4.4.1 Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Culturally relevant pedagogy was proposed by the prominent scholar Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995a). In her earlier work, Ladson-Billings (1992) initially described this concept as "a pedagogy of opposition" (p. 314), and her focus was predominantly on students from African-American backgrounds (Ladson-Billings, 1995a). In her seminal work *Towards a Culturally Relevant Pedagogy*, it is described as a "theoretical model that not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate" (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, p. 469). Within this model, teachers employing culturally relevant pedagogy must aim for three propositions. Firstly, teachers must develop academic learning and achievement for their students. Secondly,

teachers need to develop cultural competence among their students. Thirdly, teachers need to develop a critical or sociopolitical consciousness pertaining to social inequities to inform themselves and, subsequently, their students (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 1995b). The main goals of culturally relevant pedagogy are empowering students to be critical of their lived spaces, gain various forms of literacies (e.g., languages, mathematical, cultural and political), and use these to bring about social change (Ladson-Billings, 1992). In addition, culturally relevant pedagogy enhances student achievement and engagement, reduces achievement disparities, and positively impacts the development of racial-ethnic identity and critical consciousness (Byrd, 2016).

Culturally relevant pedagogy is not only a 'doing' but also a 'being', meaning that teachers embracing this form of pedagogy are actively engaged and become skilled in critical reflection on what shapes their disposition and beliefs pertaining to social justice and equity in multicultural educational settings (Dixson, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 2006). Although culturally relevant pedagogy addresses both the 'doing' and the 'being', it remains unclear how teachers can practically implement it. Howard and Rodriguez-Minkoff (2017) correctly argued that it is unlikely that teachers are informed about the cultural knowledge students bring to school and are, therefore, unable to develop critical competence among their students. Consequently, teachers would need to employ practical approaches such as the FoK (Moll et al., 1992) and FoI (Esteban-Guitart & Moll 2014a) to gather knowledge and insights pertaining to their students and families to implement culturally relevant pedagogy. In addition, Paris (2012) questioned whether the term 'culturally relevant' adequately addresses all the diverse languages, literacies, and cultural practices of students and their communities. Paris (2012) was also concerned whether culturally relevant pedagogy and culturally relevant research effectively ensure the maintenance of languages and cultures of diverse communities in classrooms and whether it is critical of unequal power relations. Furthermore, Alim and Paris (2017) asserted that "the term 'relevant' does not do enough to explicitly support the goals of maintenance and social critique" (p. 5) and proposed the term 'sustainable' instead (see Section 2.4.4.3). Lastly, Beauboeuf–Lafontant (1999) proposed renaming culturally relevant pedagogy to politically relevant teaching, to "emphasize the political, historical, social, as well as cultural understandings" of teachers who consider aim to employ a pedagogy that is "'relevant' to the political experiences of inequity and disenfranchisement of their students" (pp. 704-705).

In *Culturally Relevant Pedagogy 2.0: a.k.a. the Remix,* Ladson-Billings (2014) proposed a remix of culturally relevant pedagogy upon realising that "the fluidity and variety within cultural groups has regularly been lost in discussions and implementations of culturally relevant pedagogy" (p. 77).

Ladson-Billings (2014) observed that often the implementation of and referral to culturally relevant pedagogy was "a distortion and corruption of the central ideas I attempted to promulgate" (p. 82). Ladson-Billings (2014) acknowledged the need for a revised version of culturally relevant pedagogy that can address the changing dynamic of culture, whereby the 'remix' leans towards Paris's (2012) culturally sustaining pedagogy, which emphasises the fluidity of culture. Recently, Ladson-Billings (2021) referred more generally to "culturally relevant/sustaining/revitalising/reality pedagogies" (p. 353), which could suggest that Ladson-Billing considered the suitability of all four asset-based pedagogies to challenge educational inequities. This development, to considering multiple pedagogical approaches in aiming to improve student learning and outcomes, aligns with my research that draws from the philosophical underpinnings of both the FoI approach and portraiture methodology which are centred around social justice, equity and goodness (Esteban-Guitart, 2021; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

2.4.4.2 Culturally Responsive Teaching

The second asset-based pedagogy is culturally responsive teaching, defined as "using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively" (Gay, 2002, p. 106). Culturally responsive teaching aims to move beyond the taught curriculum to developing students' ethnic identities and fostering knowledge of ethnic and cultural diversity, thereby emphasising the link between learning at home, at school and in the community (Gay, 2013). This characteristic of culturally responsive teaching closely resembles the FoK framework (Moll et al., 1992). Gay (2002) suggested several ways to prepare teachers in becoming culturally responsive. Firstly, teachers need to acquire knowledge of cultural characteristics, values, traditions and learning styles of their culturally and linguistically diverse students (Gay, 2002; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Secondly, teachers need to develop culturally responsive curricula incorporating the acquired knowledge and purposively include potentially controversial topics such as racism, using teaching materials that accurately reflect cultural representations and perspectives (Gay, 2002). Thirdly, Gay (2002) stated, "Pedagogical actions are as important as (if not more important than) multicultural curriculum designs in implementing culturally responsive teaching" (p. 109), and encouraged teachers to embrace a holistic approach to creating caring and culturally responsive learning environments. In doing so, teachers become agents of change within educational settings and the broader society (Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Culturally responsive teaching recognises that school environments not only focus on academic achievements but implement strategies that are centred around improving educational outcomes and

consider a plethora of factors (problems) that contribute to student performance and engagement. Therefore, Gay (2015) stated that "to correct these problems require comprehensive and systemic knowledge, thought and action, complemented by an activated code of ethics heavily grounded in equality, justice, and empowerment" (p.133). Consequently, culturally responsive teaching is transformative because it recognises and utilises students' skills and knowledge as resources for teaching and learning, confronts cultural hegemony present in curricula and teaching praxis, and develops critical thinking skills in students that empower them to address any form of injustice and oppression (Gay, 2018).

Although culturally responsive teaching, as described by Gay (2002, 2018), incorporates techniques to implement the asset-based pedagogy, it remains unclear how teachers can systematically acquire knowledge unless employing practical approaches such as the FoK (Moll et al., 1992) and FoI (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a) to gather students' knowledge and insights. Furthermore, teachers might lack certain cultural competence skills to implement culturally responsive teaching, particularly when discussing controversial topics (Idrus et al. 2023). Weinstein et al. (2004) made a critical note on the possible "cultural biases and ethnocentric tendencies" (p. 29) of teachers when implementing culturally responsive teaching, potentially impacting its effectiveness. Lastly, critically responsive teachers might lack an understanding of institutionalised hegemonic norms, particularly in applying culturally appropriate classroom management strategies, which can limit the transformative potential of CRT (Weinstein et al., 2004). Therefore, when employing culturally responsive teaching, efforts should be made to address these limitations by providing cultural competence training to teachers and promoting ongoing reflexivity regarding potential cultural biases, ethnocentricity and institutionalised hegemonic norms and values.

2.4.4.3 Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy

Paris (2012) proposed culturally sustaining pedagogy after he questioned the suitability of the terms 'relevant' and 'responsive' to adequately address the diverse languages, literacies, and cultural practices of students and their communities. Paris (2012) described culturally sustaining pedagogy as seeking to "perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling" (p. 95). Culturally sustaining pedagogy differs from culturally relevant pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching in the way that it utilises education to sustain pluralism and embraces the use of native languages and cultures in the pedagogy, which is most relevant in increasingly diverse educational contexts (Paris & Alim, 2014). Culturally sustaining pedagogy acknowledges and sustains the wealth of linguistic, literate, and cultural practices students bring to

school as part of their identity (Paris, 2012). Furthermore, Paris and Alim (2014) concluded that culturally sustaining pedagogy is relevant in today's global contexts where young people navigate their hybrid identities and draw from both heritage practices and community practices that combine race, cultures and languages. This element of culturally sustaining pedagogy closely aligns with the theoretical framework of FoI (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a). Another characteristic of culturally sustaining pedagogy is its aim to "decenter the white gaze" (Alim et al., 2020, p. 269). Lastly, although initially developed as a response to critiquing culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally sustaining pedagogy also draws from it (Alim & Paris, 2014), and Ladson-Billing (2014) confirmed this stating, "Culturally sustaining pedagogies uses culturally relevant pedagogy as the place where the beat drops" (p. 76). As noted earlier, Ladson-Billings (2021) recently referred more generally to "culturally relevant/sustaining/revitalising/reality pedagogies" (p. 353).

Compared to culturally responsive teaching, culturally sustaining pedagogy provides limited practical guidance on how to implement its pedagogical approach. Paris (2021) suggested teachers should focus on "both *divesting* from particular ideologies, logics, and associated educational policies and practices and *investing* in others" (p. 368), thereby primarily targeting those considered privileged in terms of race, gender, sexuality, disability and more. While decentring the white gaze is crucial and aligns with the notion of the decolonising methodology (Tuhiwai Smith, 2021), culturally sustaining pedagogy lacks clear instructions on how teachers can practically embrace and commit to its principals. Therefore, despite the aligning philosophical underpinnings of both culturally sustaining pedagogy and this research, I consider it less practical than culturally responsive teaching.

2.4.4.4 Culturally Relevant Education: Synthesising the Three Asset-Based Pedagogies

The three asset-based pedagogies, while having slightly different focuses, share a common goal of critiquing oppression and enhancing social justice, equity and access for students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Flint & Jaggers, 2021) and can collectively be referred to as culturally relevant education (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Dover, 2013). D'Andrea Martínez et al. (2023) stated that culturally relevant education "recognizes that for the identities that inform schools to change, schools must contend with longstanding inequities and issues of power, including imagining a more empowering role for students and families in the work of schools" (p. 479). Aronson and Laughter (2016) described four tenets of culturally relevant education:

1) Connect students' cultural references to academic skills and concepts.
2) Engage students in critical reflection about their own lives and societies.
3) Facilitate students' cultural competence.

4) Expose oppressive systems through the critique of discourses of power.

Building on these four tenets, Cegielski et al. (2023) suggested culturally relevant education focused teachers to do the following:

1) Build bridges between students' cultural references and academic skills and concepts.
2) Use students' prior knowledge and cultural assets to create a culturally relevant classroom inclusive of all students.
3) Engage students in critical analysis and reflection about their own lives and society through the use of inclusive curricula and activities.
4) Facilitate students' cultural competence in which students both learn about and develop pride in their own and others' cultures.
5) Unmask oppressive systems by critiquing discourses of power in the active pursuit of social justice for all members of society.

When referring to pedagogies for inclusive education in this research, I will use the term culturally relevant education. Culturally relevant education is particularly relevant for identifying and framing this research's recommendation in answering the third research sub-question: What change would need to occur to improve educational outcomes, engagement, and participation of South Sudanese Australian adolescents?

As mentioned earlier (see Sections 2.4.2 and 2.4.3), there are limited Federal and State guidelines pertaining to inclusive education and culturally relevant teaching pedagogies. However, evidence indicates an increased interest in the Australian school sector in developing culturally inclusive skills and understandings. For example, the Cultural Diversity and Inclusive Practice toolkit is an initiative by the University of New South Wales (UNSW, n.d.) for their pre-service teachers. Furthermore, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) has produced a handbook, *Building A Culturally Responsive Australian Teaching Workforce* (AITSL, 2022). However, this primarily concerns Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander students, although it can still apply to other student cohorts. The Victorian Department of Education allocates funding through the English as an Additional Language Index, which can be utilised for employing MEAs (DE, 2024c). These MEAs/CLOs can play a crucial role within school settings by assisting educational stakeholders in developing culturally relevant education tailored to the specific student cohorts. However, there is a paucity of research examining whether schools utilise this funding for MEAs/CLOs, and, if so, what the potential impact of their presence may be for students such as South Sudanese Australians.

2.4.5 Inclusive Education Section Summary

The main points of this section are:

- Inclusive education involves addressing diverse needs, removing barriers, and ensuring participation and achievement for all students, particularly those at risk of marginalisation or exclusion.
- Australian education policy, guided by the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration, emphasises excellence and equity yet does not mention vulnerable groups such as students from refugee backgrounds.
- There is a lack of clear refugee education policies in Australian and state-level guidelines, such as those in Victoria. Policies primarily address inclusion for children with disabilities.
- Schools in Australia reflect the nation's diverse cultural, linguistic, and religious landscape, with students from various backgrounds, including those from refugee backgrounds. These student cohorts are heterogeneous, each with unique lived experiences.
- While schools play a crucial role in the settlement process for refugee youth, they also present challenges such as social isolation, language barriers, and discrimination.
- South Sudanese Australian students have faced ongoing educational challenges since the mid-2000s, including exposure to racism and Othering, low engagement and attendance rates, lack of parental understanding of the educational system, and a lack of teacher support.
- Employing Bilingual Support Officers (also referred to as CLOs or MEAs) is an essential element in implementing culturally responsive inclusive education.
- The three main asset-based inclusive education pedagogies aimed at addressing and improving social justice, equity and access for students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds are culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching, and culturally sustaining pedagogy. The three pedagogies can collectively be referred to as culturally relevant education.

The identified gap in the current literature:

- More research is required to examine the impact of employing Bilingual Support Officers (also referred to as CLOs or MEAs) on the engagement, support, and experiences of South Sudanese Australian students, particularly regarding discrimination and racism.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the literature pertaining to the three areas relevant to this research of South Sudanese Australian adolescents' FoI and educational experiences. The first section presented a historical overview centred around the continued struggle of the South Sudanese caused by several factors (see Appendix A) including three civil wars. As a consequence of South Sudan's complex history and the accompanying lived experiences, which include trauma and ITT, the identities of resettled South Sudanese in Australia are significantly impacted. These factors contribute to the ongoing struggles this community is currently facing in contemporary times. The second section discussed the notion of identity and explored the identity of South Sudanese, particularly the identity of South Sudanese youth living in Australia. The last section provided an overview of inclusive education and examined the current literature pertaining to inclusive educational practices that could be used to support inclusive educational experiences for South Sudanese Australian young people. The last section concluded with a brief overview of the three most commonly known and applied pedagogies for inclusive education, namely CRP (Ladson-Billings, 1995a), CRT (Gay, 2002), and CSP (Paris, 2012).

The next chapter presents the two key theoretical frameworks and a justification for selecting them as the foundation for this research. The first is the FoI framework (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a), which focuses on identity construction and builds on the FoK framework (Moll et al., 1992). The second is the CCW framework (Yosso, 2005), which draws from CRT in education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Chapter 3: Theoretical Frameworks

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the two key theoretical frameworks used in this research. Firstly, this research is framed by the FoI (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a). As noted in Chapter 1, FoI is defined as "the historically accumulated, culturally developed, and socially distributed resources essential for a person's self-definition, self-expression, and self-understanding" (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a, p. 31) and is a framework used to contextualise learning. The FoI framework has informed the research questions centred around the FoI of South Sudanese Australian adolescents. The FoI approach also guided the data-collecting methods and analysis. The FoI framework is considered an extension of the FoK; therefore, it is included in this chapter's overview. This research is also framed by CCW (Yosso, 2005), an anti-deficit model that draws from CRT. The following sections provide an overview of these two theoretical frameworks, a justification for selecting them as the foundation for this research, and a visual representation of a combination of the frameworks.

3.2 Theoretical Framework: Funds of Identity

3.2.1 Introduction

This research employs the FoI approach and the proposed data collection methodologies described by Esteban-Guitart and Moll (2014a) to explore the identity of South Sudanese Australian adolescents. The main research question underpinned by the FoI framework is: What FoI do South Sudanese Australian adolescents draw from in undertaking their education? The FoI is complementary to the educational framework of FoK (Moll et al., 1992). Therefore, in order to comprehend the FoI and the justification for employing this framework, it is essential to review the FoK initially. Following this, I provide an overview of the FoI, including recent additional concepts to the framework, data collection techniques to explore FoI and a justification for using FoI as one of the underpinning theoretical frameworks for this research.

3.2.2 Funds of Knowledge

The notion of FoK was first described by Vélez-Ibáñez (1988) in an article reporting on the funds of skills and knowledge within Mexican-American household clusters and how networks with other households and people can be utilised to mobilise these skills and knowledge. A few years later, Vélez-Ibáñez joined forces with anthropologist Greenberg and focused on challenging a deficit model present in American public schools whereby educators, due to a lack of knowledge pertaining to the cultural identity of marginalised students, often employed a deficit discourse in their teaching

pedagogy (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992). The authors, inspired by the work of Wolf,[41] stated that relationships between teachers, students and their parents/caregivers are strengthened when the FoK, described as "strategic and cultural resources", are acknowledged and utilised in the classrooms. This, in turn, will improve educational quality and equity (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992, p. 313). Shortly after, Moll and colleagues (1992) extended the definition of FoK, describing it as "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and wellbeing" (Moll et al., 1992, p. 133). In addition to refining the description, Moll and colleagues used the concept of FoK to design qualitative research in which teachers as co-researchers conduct ethnographic research with their students' families through observations, interviews and case studies. This would be used to determine household knowledge and skills, allowing for the development of a culturally relevant pedagogy in their classrooms (González et al., 2005; Moll et al., 1992). For example, families can have FoK related to agriculture, science, mining, business, and folk medicine, which can all be utilised within educational settings (Moll et al., 1992). The core of the FoK approach is to challenge deficit thinking[42] in education by questioning the assumption that low academic performance among children from underrepresented groups is solely due to deficits and deficiencies in the family environment (González et al., 2005). Instead, these underrepresented students are "beneficiaries of sociocultural practices through which they accumulate lived experiences, intellectual resources, technical skills, and social relationships of exchange and support" (Esteban-Guitart, 2023a, p. 8).

Though the FoK was initially predominantly used to improve the educational experiences of Latino students and their families, the FoK approach has grown into an internationally recognised culturally relevant teaching pedagogy that can be employed in any marginalised community where its members are perceived as deficient (González et al., 2005). Since its beginnings in the 1990s, a plethora of scholars have conducted research exploring the FoK framework and its application to enhance social justice in education (see, for example, literature reviews from Hogg, 2011; Llopart & Esteban-Guitart, 2017; 2018; Rodriguez, 2013).

The notion of FoK draws from several Vygotskian theories (González et al., 2005). Moll and Greenberg (1990) described how their initial work on the FoK was predicated on Vygotsky's concepts of mediation and the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978). Within the FoK, the concept of ZPD

[41] Vélez-Ibáñez and Greenberg (1992) gave credit to Wolf's work *Peasants* (1966), in which he writes about how rural communities use several funds, such as caloric funds, funds for rent, replacement funds, ceremonial funds and social funds, to survive. Though Wolf did not mention the words 'Funds of Knowledge', Vélez-Ibáñez and Greenberg adapted the word 'funds' and used 'funds of knowledge' henceforth.
[42] Valencia (2010) described six characteristics of deficit thinking: victim blaming, oppression, pseudoscience, temporal changes, educability, and heterodoxy (p. 18).

refers to the transfer (mediation) of knowledge and skills from a more knowledgeable person, such as parents and caregivers, to children. Moll and Greenberg (1990) stated that each household is "an educational setting in which the major function is to transmit knowledge that enhances the survival of its dependents" (p. 320). Therefore, Moll (2010) described the purposes of the FoK approach as twofold. Firstly, to generate knowledge through ethnographic research by teachers visiting the homes of minority and marginalised families. The gathered knowledge can inform the teachers of the wealth of knowledge available in households. This can challenge the deficit discourse often employed by teachers, particularly when the socio-cultural backgrounds of students differ from those of the teachers. These visits will also allow the teachers to establish relationships of trust with the families. Secondly, Moll (2010) stated that the purpose of the FoK approach and its framing within socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) is to facilitate new ways of learning where the teachers contextualise learning—learning that goes beyond the curriculum and connects with students' lived experiences and knowledge acquired within their households (González et al., 2005).

Over the years, several scholars have commented on aspects of the FoK approach that can be considered problematic. Firstly, Moll (2005) stated that racism and power are ingrained in educational settings; therefore, FoK studies and their interpretations need to be carried out within the broader context of social class, ideology, and power. In a similar vein, Rodriguez (2013) concluded that several scholars who employed the FoK approach in their research recognised the existence of more extensive, overarching power systems. These persist and, at times, suppress community knowledge, thereby sustaining educational inequalities and promoting a deficit discourse despite the FoK approach's aim to transform the nature of education for marginalised students (see also Colina et al., 2023; Subero et al., 2015).

Furthermore, Zipin (2009), who employed the FoK approach in the Redesigning Pedagogies in the North project in Adelaide, South Australia, concluded that teachers encountered "dark lifeworld knowledge" among students, such as experience with crime, alcohol, drugs and mental health issues (p. 320). However, the participating teachers hesitated to include these so-called "dark funds of knowledge" into the curriculum despite the students discussing these experiences as important aspects of their lives (Zipin, 2009, p. 325). Zipin (2009) emphasised that it is imperative to consider the dark FoK as assets; however, existing structures within educational settings often prohibit connecting learning to dark lifeworld knowledge.

In a similar vein, Becker (2014) suggested "funds of (difficult) knowledge to account for the emotionally difficult chapters of one's cultural heritage or migration story" (p. 19), hereby highlighting that (difficult) knowledge is subjective and is therefore placed in between brackets. Becker (2014) called for reflexivity when determining which knowledge counts and is included in the classrooms, encouraging teachers to consider the consequences when they decide not to include (difficult) knowledge. This aligns with Gallo and Link (2015), who followed Freire's stance pertaining to teaching being political[43] and, therefore, suggested another subset of the FoK framework that can be considered as dark lifeworld knowledge, the so-called "politicized funds of knowledge" (p. 361). Politicised FoK are lived experiences and knowledge of young people that can be considered inappropriate to include in the curriculum, such as knowledge of and experiences with immigration and forced deportation (Gallo & Link, 2015). Bylica (2023) asserted that critical reflection on 'dark' and 'politicised' FoK is essential, as simplistically labelling them into categories, such as light or dark, can diminish the underlying complexities of lived experiences that contribute to developing young people's identities. In line with the abovementioned power system in schools (Rodriguez, 2013), Subero et al. (2015) stated that it is imperative to consider the notions of power and agency in schools when incorporating FoK in the curriculum, especially when these FoK are 'dark' FoK. Lastly, Cho and Yi (2020) cautioned scholars exploring FoK of minority students to carefully consider the students' backgrounds because it is frequently assumed that this cohort lacks, per definition, skills and knowledge, particularly when they are not speaking the mainstream language. However, being in a minority does not necessarily imply being deficient, as there is a vast diversity pertaining to the skills and knowledge of minority students (Cho & Yi, 2020).

3.2.3 From Funds of Knowledge to Funds of Identity to FoK/I

In addition to the considerations mentioned above and additional concepts to the FoK framework, several scholars have critiqued the FoK concept. For instance, Oughton (2010) expressed reservations regarding the "uncritical use" and limited critical reflection of the FoK approach, identifying three problematic aspects (p. 70). First, FoK can contribute to "essentialising" (stereotyping), which can homogenise cultural or ethnic groups (Oughton, 2010, p. 70). Second, Oughton (2010) questioned the appropriateness of the term 'funds' and urged scholars employing the FoK framework to critically reflect on the meaning they ascribe to it. Lastly, similar to Zipin (2009), Becker (2014), and Subero et

[43] Freire has a clear stance on including lived experiences of young people that are 'dark' and 'difficult'. For example, in his book *Pedagogy of Freedom* he stated: "Why not discuss with the students the concrete reality of their lives and that aggressive reality in which violence is permanent and where people are much more familiar with death than with life? Why not establish an 'intimate' connection between knowledge considered basic to any school curriculum and knowledge that is the fruit of the lived experiences of these students as individuals?" (Freire, 1998, p. 36).

al. (2015), Ougthon (2010) cautioned against the risk of teachers or researchers determining what qualifies as knowledge, potentially imposing their own “cultural arbitraries” (p. 72).

Furthermore, Moll (2005), one of the scholars behind the FoK approach, considered that the FoK assumes that knowledge obtained from parents and caregivers will directly provide information about the knowledge of their children. However, he continued, stating, “We also know that children create their own social worlds, with accompanying funds of knowledge, which may be independent of adults’ social life” (Moll, 2005, p. 279). Rios-Aguilar et al. (2011) also commented on this incorrect assumption in the FoK framework. For instance, through the development of modern technology (e.g., mobile phones), young people have access to knowledge from different knowledge sources other than their families and learn in various contexts, meaning that households are not the only places where FoK should be explored (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014b). Another limitation of the FoK pertains to the fact that the ethnographic research conducted by teachers in the form of house visits, as the primary source of information for identifying and collecting FoK, is time-consuming and often not feasible, especially when there are students from multiple cultural and linguistic backgrounds in a class (Esteban-Guitart et al., 2019). Two additional limitations of the FoK approach prompted Esteban-Guitart (2012) to develop the FoI approach. Firstly, while the FoK aims to explore and utilise students' cultural identity in educational settings, it lacks a comprehensive description of identity and a method to detect it (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a). Secondly, the methodology to capture FoK is primarily interview-based, which limits the exploration of the various funds contributing to one’s identity; therefore, this necessitates a more extensive methodology (Esteban-Guitart, 2012; Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014b; Esteban-Guitart et al., 2020). In response to limitations, Esteban-Guitart developed the FoI framework to complement the FoK approach.

The FoI theoretical framework has several strengths. Firstly, it is founded on a solid definition of identity (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a). Secondly, the FoI employs a multi-method approach to explore the different funds, with a strong emphasis on creating arts-based artefacts (Esteban-Guitart, 2012; Esteban-Guitart et al., 2020). Thirdly, the primary focus of FoI is on the learners rather than the parents or teachers (Esteban-Guitart, 2021). These strengths justify employing the FoI in this research, as it aligns with the aim of exploring the FoI of South Sudanese Australian adolescents. The following sections explore the FoI framework and elucidate why it was selected as one of the theoretical frameworks of this research.

3.2.4 Funds of Identity

The term 'funds of identity' was first suggested by Saubich and Esteban-Guitart (2011) in a study concerning the FoK of a Moroccan family living in Spain. The authors described FoI as "the culture-bound stories, technologies, documents and discourses that people internalize and construct in order to make sense of the events in their lives" (p. 84). The purpose of Saubich and Esteban-Guitart's (2011) study was to capture the FoK and determine how these contribute to identity by asking the participants to draw a self-portrait, complete a self-definition task, identify family artefacts, make photos of everyday activities, draw a relational map, and complete questionnaires (Saubich & Esteban-Guitart, 2011). Based on the outcomes of the study and the exploration of a multimodal methodology, the scholars concluded that the "funds of identity are the result of the socially-distributed funds of knowledge" and suggested exploring this as a new concept (Saubich & Esteban-Guitart, 2011, p. 99).

Esteban-Guitart (2012) continued working on the FoI concept and re-defined it as a "set or resources or box of tools; that have been historically accumulated and culturally developed" (p. 177). However, this definition was amended and extended by Esteban-Guitart and Moll (2014a), after further exploring the notion of identity from a Vygotksyan perspective. In addition to this amended definition, Esteban-Guitart and Moll (2014a) stated that "funds of knowledge – bodies of knowledge and skills that are essential for the well-being of an entire household – become funds of identity when people actively use them to define themselves" (p. 31). This statement explains how the FoI is located within the FoK framework (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a), or, as Esteban-Guitart (2021) stated, FoI is the result of a merging between FoK and the study of identity utilising visual and literary resources that construct one's identity.[44]

Recently, Esteban-Guitart (2021) re-conceptualised the FoI theory in two ways after studies exploring the FoI theory identified certain limitations (e.g., Hedges & Cooper, 2016; Hogg & Volman, 2020; Hviid & Villadsen, 2014). Firstly, where initially the FoI was intended to be used by teachers as valuable resources to contextualise learning, Esteban-Guitart (2021) added that FoI are also "symbolic resources that are used to give meaning to oneself and help to project, plan, and organize life projects" and can be a starting point to develop a "critical understanding of reality" (p. 169). Secondly, the FoI concept has been re-conceptualised as "an ongoing, subjective, social and cultural, generative-directive process, grounded in our embodied experience of the world and in social interactions" resulting from imaginative and agentive processes (Esteban-Guitart, 2021, p. 169).

[44] Based on Poole's scholarly interactions with the FoI framework, he considers it an "evolution" of FoK and refers to it as Funds of Knowledge 2.0 (Poole, 2017a, p. 50)

Most recently, Esteban-Guitart (2023a), in his book *Funds of Knowledge and Identity Pedagogies for Social Justice*, combines the FoK and FoI approaches and refers instead to FoK/I, which was previously suggested by Volman and 't Gilde (2021). Along with this merging of the two approaches, Esteban-Guitart (2023a) created a new definition that encompasses both FoI and FoK:

> A complete inventory of meaningful social knowledge, cultural competencies, and subjective productions that students, families, and communities develop in order to live their lives. This can incorporate all manner of epistemologies: Cultural artifacts; significant social relationships; valued, meaningful institutions; sociocultural activities and practices; life experiences, both positive and negative; as well as geographical spaces and contexts—all of which are aspects that are interwoven in the voices and life trajectories of people. (p. 11)

In addition to FoK/I, Esteban-Guitart et al. (2022) suggested the new term "community funds of knowledge and identity", which refers to "resources, services, facilities, and cultural, social, and/or educational opportunities available in a given territory" that can be utilised in educational projects (pp. 310-311). Although FoK/I and community FoK/I are relevant to this research, I use FoI as it was initially described by Esteban-Guitart and Moll (2014a).

The premise of FoI is centred around the construction of identity, whereby, according to Esteban-Guitart and Moll (2014b),

> Identity is embedded in culture and vice versa; thus, we cannot reduce human identity to individual properties or traits. Instead, it is always mediated, distributed among people, artefacts, activities and contexts. People define themselves through other people and through the artefacts and resources—visible and invisible—of their social and cultural worlds. (p. 70)

In addition, FoI is centred around the notions of equity and justice; its purpose is to contextualise learning experiences by acknowledging, affirming and including FoI as valuable resources in educational settings and, consequently, challenge existing deficit perspectives of disadvantaged students (Alvarez et al., 2023; Esteban-Guitart, 2021). In Esteban-Guitart's (2023a) most recent book, he addressed the transformative character of FoK/I by emphasising action towards social justice. He proposed five principles in which this can be enacted: 1) commitment to ongoing critical research-practice inquiries, 2) promoting active agency, 3) facilitating safe and caring practices for co-learning, 4) understanding the complexity of cultures in motion, and 5) disrupting epistemic oppression or injustice (Esteban-Guitart, 2023a, p. 17).

Furthermore, within school settings, FoI can become "prior funds of identity" that can be utilised when teachers contextualise learning by connecting the prior knowledge (prior FoI) to teaching activities that will assist the students in their learning and remembering new content (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a, p. 44). A study by Zhang-Yu et al. (2021) concluded that FoI, as a theoretical and methodological

approach, does not need to be utilised within educational settings but can instead be employed to initiate critical self-reflections among young people and emphasise the importance of student voice.

Esteban-Guitart (2012, p. 177) suggested the following five sub-categories of FoI that can be used for self-definition, self-expression and self-understanding:

- **Geographical FoI**: Any geographical location (e.g., country, river, mountain) that becomes a source of self-identification.
- **Practical FoI (identity practices):** Any meaningful activity (e.g., work, sports or music).
- **Cultural FoI:** Artefacts, national flag, and social categories (e.g., age, gender, or ethnic group).
- **Social FoI:** Significant other people.
- **Institutional FoI:** Any social institution (e.g., family, marriage, or church).

It is important to consider that these different types of FoI can intersect (Esteban-Guitart, 2012), are subjective and significant to each individual, and are not static, as identity in itself is dynamic and constantly evolves depending on the resources used for self-definition (Esteban-Guitart, 2021). Furthermore, at times, FoI can be "invisible" when people are unaware of certain "hegemonic societal values and concepts that may be so naturalized" that they are not included in FoI explorations (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a, p. 44). Recently, Esteban-Guitart (2023c) returned to the notion of invisible FoI after critical insights from a study by Marsh and Zhulamanova (2017). These authors labelled certain FoI ('princesses' and 'beauty') problematic in the sense that they are centred around stereotypical representations, mostly pertaining to gender and race. Esteban-Guitart (2023c) described invisible FoI in these emerging contexts as "hegemonic discourses and practices that are produced and distributed historically, culturally, and socially and which end up tacitly embedded in people's behaviors, thoughts, and practices" (p. 1457). These invisible FoI cannot be readily identified in identity artefacts, such as a significant circle or identity drawing, but through critical inquiries (Esteban-Guitart, 2023c). Within my research, it is assumed that certain invisible FoI (e.g., stereotypical assumptions) cannot be identified in the arts-based activities; however, they can emerge in the focus group discussions and individual interviews.

3.2.5 Additional Concepts of the Funds of Identity Framework

The FoI is situated within the Vygotskyan concept of *perezhivanie,*[45] which Esteban-Guitart and Moll (2014b) translated as 'lived experience'. This can be explored to capture FoI. More recently, Esteban-

[45] According to Blunden (2016), the concept of *perezhivanie* is difficult to translate into English as there are no current words that capture the true meaning of this Russian word. Over the years, a plethora of translations have been provided, including experience, emotional experience, lived experience and experiencing (Blunden, 2016).

Guitart (2021) joined scholars Clarà (2016), Poole (2020), and Poole and Huang (2018), who translated *perezhivanie* as 'experiencing-as-struggle'. Poole (2017b, 2020) critiqued the FoI approach for its emphasis on positive lived experiences as it does not align with the experiencing-as-struggle translation of *perezhivanie.* Although Poole (2020) acknowledged the significance of using positive experiences in educational settings to counteract the deficit discourse that views students from minority ethnic backgrounds as problematic or academically deficient, he also emphasised that negative lived experiences are valuable as they can equip young people with essential knowledge and skills. Poole (2020) concluded that "seemingly negative experiences from the past are refracted through the prism of the present and transformed to become strategies for negotiating the future" (p. 412). Therefore, Poole and Huang (2018) proposed including the category of existential FoI, which refers to both the "positive and negative experiences that students develop and appropriate to define themselves and use to help them grow as human beings" (p.129).

Similarly, Charteris et al. (2018) proposed 'dark' FoI as an additional concept to the framework. They were guided by Zipin's (2009) notion of dark FoK, which refers to the "difficult lifeworld knowledge" (p. 323). Zipin (2009) questioned whether "only 'positives' in learners' lifeworlds constitute positive learning assets" (p. 322) and suggested developing a curriculum that recognises and incorporates the dark FoK (e.g., knowledge of mental health issues, poverty, and abuse). Aligning with dark FoK (Zipin, 2009), Charteris et al. (2018) considered how identity development in the context of preservice teacher education programs can draw from dark experiences and knowledge and inform future teacher identities.

An important contribution to the FoI scholarship is provided in a study by Oikonomidoy and Karam (2022). Oikonomidoy and Karam (2022) stated that while invisible FoI (Esteban-Guitart, 2023c; Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a), existential FoI (Poole, 2017b) and dark FoI (Charteris et al., 2018) considered issues of power and hegemonic discourses and practices, their study looked at "contextual power dynamics that can nullify" FoI (p. 635).These contextual power dynamics could be visible in xenophobic microaggression, race, social class, and religion, and can defund (or block) children from accessing and employing their FoI utilised to construct their identities. The study also acknowledged that households and parents/caregivers can experience obstacles that hinder or block their abilities to assist their children's educational development (Oikonomidoy & Karam, 2022). These include limited English language proficiency, insufficient financial resources to provide additional educational materials or tutoring, and a lack of familiarity with the local curriculum (Oikonomidoy & Karam, 2022). The authors referred to "a tug of war between funds of identity and defunding processes"

(Oikonomidoy & Karam, 2022, p. 635). For example, young people can use their cultural heritage, religious beliefs and linguistic capabilities (or linguistic FoI) as essential sources of FoI; however, these FoI can be defunded when young people lose their abilities to speak their mother tongue or when they experience racial or religious exclusion (Oikonomidoy & Karam, 2022). While the authors highlighted the importance of understanding the defunding processes, they are cautious to add to the deficit scholarship pertaining to students of refugee backgrounds.

While Oikonomidoy and Karam's (2022) perspectives are insightful and valuable for the FoI scholarship, the extent to which the FoI defunding process is experienced as a block or hindrance remains unclear. Therefore, my research primarily engages with the concepts of dark (Charteris et al., 2018) and existential FoI (Poole, 2017b) to explore the difficult lived experiences that contribute to the identity and identity development of South Sudanese Australian young people. Most importantly, my research will explore how these experiences, while negative in nature, can serve as catalysts for personal growth, improved educational engagement, and the development of what Poole (2020) referred to as "strategies for negotiating the future" (p. 407).

Besides the suggested additional concepts of existential and dark FoI, Hedges (2021) conducted a study in an early childhood centre in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and concluded that the concepts of agency and imagination are crucial in exploring (future) identities. Hedges (2021) proposed including these concepts in the FoI framework. Recently, Alvarez et al. (2023) explored how agency and imagination practically applied within the FoI framework, emphasising students "as givers of knowledge and subjects of social understandings," particularly in addressing and challenging epistemic injustice (p. 2). Alvarez et al. (2023) asked students to create artefacts, compile photos and write stories expressing their agency and imagination and envisioning social change based on their experiences of discrimination and racism. This study demonstrated how integrating the FoI approach with the notions of imagination and agency can empower students to critically reflect on the impact of oppression on cultural identity and envision alternative futures for education (Alvarez et al., 2023). Students' insights can guide teachers in creating inclusive learning environments in which students' diverse knowledge and interests contribute to collective learning (Alvarez et al., 2023).

This practical application of the FoI framework, especially in addressing systemic injustices in education, aligns with the focus of my research, which includes recommendations from South Sudanese Australian community members and adolescents (see Sections 5.2.3, 8.5, and 9.3). Some of these recommendations aim to address injustices experienced in educational settings and provide

strategies to create more equitable and inclusive school environments for South Sudanese Australian students.

Poole (2017b) proposed the inclusion of 'ideological' FoI, which can be political, cultural, or religious beliefs. Lastly, Poole (2017a, 2017b, 2021) introduced 'digital' FoI, which can be utilised as a FoI data collection technique whereby literary and visual artefacts can incorporate digital elements (e.g., an avatar[46]) that provide insights into the identities of young people. According to Poole (2017a), avatars, as digital artefacts, can be suitable for exploring digital FoI:

> The construction of an avatar is an open-ended, on-going process that reflects the postmodern notion of identity formation as a perpetual process of coming into being. Students are therefore able to modify their avatars' appearance in order to reflect their own emotions and developing understanding of themselves. (p. 56)

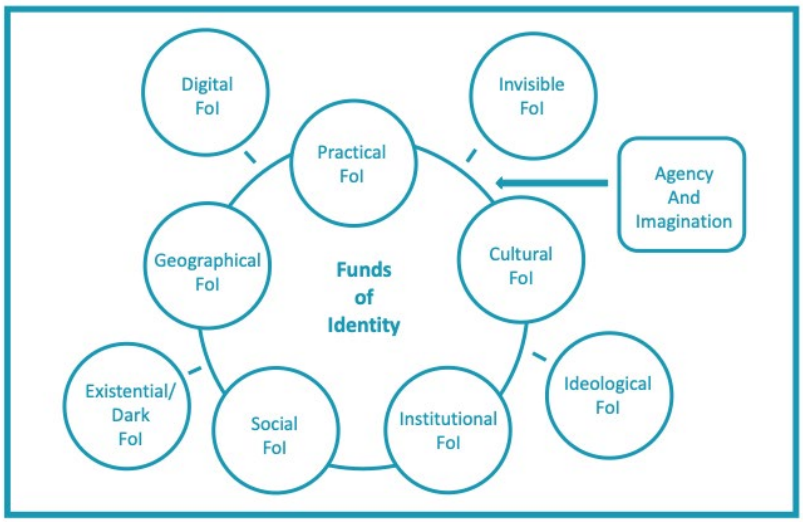
Poole (2017a) explored the notion of digital identity within the FoI approach and asserted that "digital identities are mediated by digital literacies and multimodalities that allow individuals to (re)present themselves in ways that would be impossible in the *real* world" (p. 55). Additionally, Poole (2020) recommended that teachers utilise multimodal methods to explore students' FoI. These methods include digital identity artefacts, such as avatars and word clouds, accompanied by written reflections that offer an interpretation of the artefacts (Poole, 2021). Expanding on the notion of digital FoI, a study by Little and Cheng (2023) explored touchscreen technology activities by creating mediagrams to examine the development of multiple languages in a young child. The authors concluded that teachers could use mediagrams to gain insights into the digital FoI and the familial FoK (Little & Cheng, 2023). Lastly, in addition to digital FoI as a data collection method, digital FoI in the form of digital objects (e.g., phones, laptops and headphones) can be considered an additional category within the FoI framework and used for self-definition, self-expression and self-understanding.

I have created a visual overview (see Figure 1) to facilitate the understanding of the FoI framework with its original five categories, as introduced by Esteban-Guitart (2012), along with the proposed additional concepts of the FoI framework: digital FoI (Poole, 2017a), invisible FoI (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a, 2023c), ideological FoI (Poole, 2017b), and existential/dark FoI (Charteris et al., 2018; Poole, 2017b). The notions of agency and imagination (Hedges, 2021) have not been included as an additional sub-category but rather as concepts that can contribute to all the different sub-categories, particularly in relation to addressing and challenging systemic injustices (Alvarez et al., 2023).

[46] Poole (2021) explained that an avatar refers to a representation of oneself in the virtual world.

Figure 1

The Researcher's Adapted Overview of the Funds of Identity Framework and Suggested Additional Concepts



3.2.6 Explorations of the Fund of Identity Framework

An insightful study by Zipin et al. (2020) explored how the formation of identity in young people is linked to emerging future identities and involves the "labors of thought, feeling, ethics and imagination" (p. 152). Within the study context, Zipin et al. (2020) found that "young people re-labor *knowledge* 'funds', inherited in present life-worlds, into *identity* 'funds' for future imagining" (p. 14), whereby dark funds often contributed to pessimistic aspirations. However, this study highlighted the importance of a community characterised by acceptance and connection and where adolescents use positively experienced encounters in their communities to fuel their future jobs and aspirations (Zipin et al., 2020). Further research could explore whether dark funds can potentially inspire identity funds and encourage adolescents to pursue specific aspirations.

Considering educational applications for FoI, Hogg and Volman (2020) provided a critical perspective on the potential usefulness and impact of implementing FoI by examining educational studies conducted between 2011 and 2018 that are framed within the concept of FoI. Based on their analysis, they concluded that studies employing FoI, including digital FoI and existential or dark FoI, mainly elaborated on how to identify and draw on students' FoI but missed clear evidence on the impact of FoI when utilised in educational settings (Hogg & Volman, 2020). However, a recent study by Veerman et al. (2023) specifically aimed to measure the effect of utilising the FoI approach in classrooms. Their mixed-methods study found significant improvements in students' engagement levels, as well as a positive impact on student well-being, whereby the results were most profound for children from low socio-economic backgrounds and multi-linguistic backgrounds (Veerman et al., 2023). Similarly,

Volman et al. (2023) commented on the positive impacts of FoI applications regarding an increase in communication and digital skills and an overall improvement in the class atmosphere. Considering the social justice aspect of implementing FoI, the authors concluded that "FoI is not just a teaching method or a technique; it involves a critical consciousness and, for some teachers, a fundamental change of attitude towards students, teaching, and the curriculum" (Volman et al., 2023, p. 83). Although my research is not aimed at measuring the impact of employing FoI in the classroom, Veerman et al.'s (2023) study confirmed the usefulness of employing FoI in the classroom (or in similar learning environments such as the collaborative activities in this research) to improve engagement and well-being, particularly for student cohorts such as South Sudanese Australians. Lastly, implementing FoI in schools with the purpose of social justice positively impacts the critical consciousness of those involved (Volman et al., 2023). Therefore, there was an optimistic expectation that my research would yield a similar impact, especially for those involved and for future readers, including educational stakeholders with whom this research aims to engage.

Similarly, Poole (2023) commented on how employing FoI in his research in China has led to academic and personal transformations. For instance, Poole (2023) stated that FoI aided him in reducing labelling and generalising his students based on deficit perspectives. This valuable insight encourages teachers to utilise the FoI to strengthen their connections with students and contextualise the teaching while transforming their perspectives regarding their students. On the other hand, based on his research in China, Poole (2023) questioned the suitability of implementing FoI in a non-western context due to the "democratic assumption on which the approach is predicated" (p. 64). These insights are salient for this research as the notions of identity and *perezhivanie* in the FoI are based on western concepts, and interpretations could, therefore, be unsuitable to use in studies that include non-western participants, such as South Sudanese Australians. Firmly situating this s research within a socio-cultural context and ongoing researcher reflexivity in employing the FoI framework is paramount.

3.2.7 Justification for Using Funds of Identity in the Research

The FoI approach was selected as the overarching theoretical and methodological framework for this research. The reasons for doing so include the explorative nature of the FoI approach, the focus on identity, recent re-conceptualisations, the notions of power and agency, and the inclusion of arts-based data collection methods. These features make it particularly suitable for research involving South Sudanese Australian young people who are developing and negotiating their identities in complex and challenging contexts. Furthermore, considering the former refugee backgrounds of

(some of) the participating adolescents, the notions of dark FoI and invisible FoI are of particular interest for this research. At the time of writing, only three FoI studies (Oikonomidoy & Karam, 2020, 2022, 2023) have specifically included participants from refugee backgrounds. Thus, this research seeks to contribute to and expand the existing FoI literature by deepening understandings of identity and identity development among adolescents from refugee backgrounds and those raised in families with experiences of forced migration.

3.3 Theoretical Framework: Community Cultural Wealth

3.3.1 Introduction

The second theoretical framework utilised in this research is CCW (Yosso, 2005), which is grounded in CRT. The following provides a brief overview of CRT and an explanation of CCW, as well as justification for employing CCW as a theoretical framework for this research.

3.3.2 Critical Race Theory

CRT emerged in the 1970s and originated from critical legal studies (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Tate, 1997). Derrick Bell, a Black civil rights lawyer and Harvard Professor who is considered by many to be the founding father of CRT, stated that race and racism are central to the American Law System (Bell, 1992; Ray, 2022; E. Taylor, 2023). Bell stated that racism is structural and permanent (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ray, 2022). Furthermore, he formulated the interest convergence principle: "The interests of blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of whites" (Bell, 1980, p. 523). Bell used storytelling in legal scholarship, which was considered a novel approach to exposing racism in lived experiences and, in doing so, achieving racial justice (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Tate, 1997). Since then, storytelling has become a central element in CRT. Bell also strongly advocated for social justice in education, including equal university admission opportunities for students of colour (Ray, 2022), and embraced a student-centred pedagogy in his teachings (Lynn et al., 2013).

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) introduced CRT to education in their publication *Toward a Critical Race Theory of Education*, in which they stated that race is the main contributing factor to inequity in educational settings and visible in the school curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, school funding and desegregation. Solórzano (1998) defined CRT in education as a "framework or set of basic perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze, and transform those structural, cultural, and interpersonal aspects of education that maintain the subordination of scholars of color" (p. 123). Furthermore, CRT in education critiques racial stereotyping and deficit-based assumptions

that are built upon misguided beliefs that students of colour are to blame for their underachievement in education due to a lack of skills, cultural capital and parental apathy toward valuing and supporting education (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Yosso, 2005).

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) described a methodology for educational research utilising a CRT lens that is aimed at counter-storytelling and social justice and is grounded in the following principles:

> (a) Foregrounds race and racism in all aspects of the research process.
> (b) Challenges the traditional research paradigms, texts, and theories used to explain the experiences of students of color.
> (c) Offers a liberatory or transformative solution to racial, gender, and class subordination.
> (d) Focuses on the racialised, gendered, and classed experiences of students of color [...] and views these experiences as sources of strength.
> (e) Uses the interdisciplinary knowledge base of ethnic studies, women's studies, sociology, history, humanities, and the law to better understand the experiences of students of color. (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 24)

The critical race methodology approach guided my research as an underpinning methodology, and the notion of (counter) storytelling that shares lived experiences is particularly relevant to the aims and purposes. Chapter 4 details how critical race methodology principles were applied to the research design, data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation in my research.

3.3.3 Community Cultural Wealth Framework

Yosso's (2005) CCW builds on the concept of "cultural wealth" (Villalpando & Solórzano, 2005, p. 18), which is a reconceptualised form of Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Cultural wealth refers to "accumulated assets and resources such as students' navigational capital, social capital, economic capital, experiential capital, educational capital, and aspirational capital" that can be utilised to identify assets in People of Colour (Villalpando & Solórzano, 2005, p. 18). In addition, Yosso (2005) draws from the notion of 'resistant cultural capital', initially introduced by Solórzano and Villalpando (1998) when they examined how marginalised People of Colour use "cultural and familial resources" as a "source of empowerment" to challenge any form of oppression in pursuing higher education (p. 215). Lastly, Yosso draws from Oliver and Shapiro's (1995) work *Black Wealth/White Wealth: A New Perspective on Racial Inequality,* in which they defined wealth as "the total extent of an individual's accumulated assets and resources" (Yosso, 2005, p. 77).

Building on the premise of CRT and the concepts of cultural wealth, resistant cultural capital and wealth, Yosso (2005) created the CCW framework. As noted in Chapter 1, CCW is an empowering, asset-based approach emphasising the "knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized

by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression" (Yosso, 2005, p.77). In line with Villalpando and Solórzano (2005), Yosso (2005) developed CCW in response to the narrow definition of 'cultural capital' as described by Bourdieu (1986). Cultural capital is frequently used to explain disparities in academic performance between students of colour and white students, whereby "cultural capital is capital 'embodied' in individual dispositions and competencies that give privileged access to such capital in its 'objectified' form of cultural artefacts" (Goldthorpe, 2007, p. 4). Incorrect interpretations of Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital consider white culture as the hegemonic norm, which promotes white privilege while placing those that are considered 'lacking' cultural capital in a deficit position (Yosso, 2005; Yosso & García, 2007). However, Yosso (2005) challenged Bourdieu's standpoint and the assumption that "People of Color 'lack' the social and cultural capital required for social mobility" (p. 70). On the contrary, Yosso (2005) stated that by employing a CRT lens, the cultural capital of non-privileged groups reveals the wealth of knowledge, skills and resources available within the community, also referred to as CCW.

Yosso (2005) identified six[47] forms of capital[48] in Communities of Colour that are "not mutually exclusive or static, but [...] dynamic processes that build on one another as part of community cultural wealth" (p. 77). This interconnectedness can be visualised as a kaleidoscope, with CRT serving as the first lens through which lived experiences are explored (Yosso & García, 2007). As the kaleidoscope turns, it reveals the different forms of capital that collectively form the CCW within Communities of Colour (Yosso & García, 2007).

The following six forms of capital were identified by Yosso (2005):

1) **Aspirational capital** refers to the capacity to sustain aspirations and dreams for the future, even when confronted with actual or perceived obstacles.

2) **Linguistic capital** refers to the cognitive and interpersonal abilities acquired through engaging in communication across multiple languages and/or linguistic styles and includes storytelling and communication using visual art, music or poetry.

3) **Familial capital** refers to cultural knowledge cultivated within (extended) families.

4) **Social capital** refers to the network of people and resources in the community.

5) **Navigational capital** refers to the skills required to manoeuvre social institutions that were created without considering Communities of Colour.

[47] Yosso (2014, cited in Acevedo & Solórzano, 2023) initially identified 16 forms of capital but ended up only using six in the CCW framework.
[48] Colina Neri et al. (2023) suggest replacing the word 'capital' with 'wealth' because they "argue that the term 'wealths', like 'funds', offers strength to conceptualize *inclusive* empowerment of diverse communities while preserving 'capital' as a term for critiquing educational selection based on *exclusive* cultural inheritances" (p. 1429).

6) **Resistant capital** refers to "those knowledges and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality" (Yosso, 2005, p. 80). Resistant capital builds on resistant cultural capital (Solórzano & Villalpando, 1998) and is inspired by Freire's (1970/2017) notion of '*conscientização*' or conscientisation (the process of becoming conscious). For Freire (2021), this process was a means through which the oppressed could develop a critical consciousness when encountering a challenge and act upon it (resistance).

Resistant capital is of particular interest to the current research. It is important to note that resistant capital can be displayed in several forms and these forms can overlap (Yosso, 2005). Solórzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) described reactionary behaviour, self-defeating resistance, conformist resistance, and transformational resistance that is motivated by social justice. Furthermore, Yosso (2000) suggested resilient resistance, which refers to "surviving and/or succeeding through the educational pipeline as a strategic response to visual microaggressions" (p. 180).

It is important to consider that the CCW from underrepresented or marginalised groups might not be valued or considered capital by the dominant society and within schools that play a vital role in the overarching distribution of power (Miller et al., 2021). This aligns with the recognition of overarching systems of power and agency in relation to the implementation of FoK in educational contexts (Colina et al., 2023; Rodriguez, 2013; Subero et al., 2015) (see Section 3.2.2).

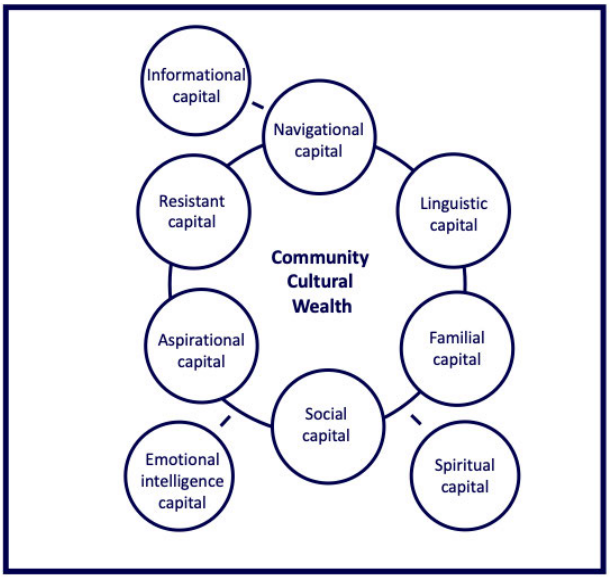
Storytelling is one of the tenets of CRT, and through storytelling—or counter-storytelling (Delgado, 1989)—People of Colour challenge the majoritarian stories or master narratives that emphasise inequity, racism, racial discrimination, white privilege, and deficit thinking (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso et al., 2001). Counter-storytelling is essential for providing contexts that challenge the dominant narratives (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). When counter-stories are shared, stereotypes can be dismantled, which consequently leads to a reduction in implicit bias. Hoffman and Martin (2020) stated that though counter-narratives are powerful, they need to be given our full attention in order to hear the songs that the students sing: "songs of pain, songs of fear, songs of independence, songs of empowerment, songs of resistance, songs of hardship, songs of resilience, songs of the real world, and songs of their future" (p. 694).

In addition to the six forms of capital proposed by Yosso (2005), Huber (2009) suggested 'spiritual capital', which was defined as "a set of resources and skills rooted in a spiritual connection to a reality greater than oneself. Spiritual capital can encompass religious, indigenous, and ancestral beliefs and

practices learned from one's family, community, and inner self" (p. 721). In line with Huber (2009), Park et al. (2020) concluded that spiritual capital as a seventh form of capital should be considered and included in the CCW framework; however, religion and spirituality can also be sources for each of the six capitals. Furthermore, Liou et al. (2016) suggested 'informational capital' as a sub-component of navigational capital. Information in this context is defined as the "knowledge derived from school adults that can be processed, stored, and transmitted into a set of actions that support and empower students toward academic and social success" (Cooper & Liou, 2007, p. 44). Liou et al. (2016) found that the development of academic strategies, informed by essential information regarding processes and skills required to be academically successful, contributed to the development of informational capital. Lastly, the addition of 'emotional intelligence capital', which is considered "the parents' ability to attend to, understand, and make choices that guide thought and behavior in positive and efficient ways," was suggested by Guzmán et al. (2021, p. 89), who explored the CCW of Latino parents living in the US. This study demonstrated emotional intelligence capital in stressful situations, such as parents with limited English literacy skills and understanding of the school system needing to deal with school staff (Guzmán et al., 2021). This proposed addition to the CCW framework is relevant to my research due to the similarities between the Latino and South Sudanese Australian parents. Figure 2 provides an adapted overview of the CCW framework, including the suggested additional concepts of spiritual capital (Huber, 2009), informational capital (Liou et al., 2016), and emotional intelligence capital (Guzmán et al., 2021) shown just outside Yosso's (2005) core dimensions of CCW.

Figure 2

Adapted Overview of the Community Cultural Wealth Framework with Suggested Additional Concepts



3.3.4 Justification for Using Community Cultural Wealth in This Research

The CCW framework, as described by Yosso (2005), was selected as a second theoretical framework for this research for the following reasons. Firstly, the frameworks' asset-based approach to community wealth—the community's knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts—challenges the negative media portrayals of the South Sudanese Australian community. Secondly, the resistant capital form of CCW aligns with the aims and objectives of this research to produce asset-based counter-narratives. Thirdly, CCW complements FoK and, therefore, FoI since FoI is embedded in FoK. Together, these three approaches are focused on challenging the deficit perspectives that so frequently frame South Sudanese Australians.

3.4 Combining the Theoretical Frameworks

The FoK, FoI and CCW approaches are linked in their recognition and practical application of skills and resources to resist cultural forms of oppression and deficit thinking and improve equity and inclusion in education (Esteban-Guitart, 2023c; Rodriguez, 2013). Utilising CRT as a starting point, Yosso and García (2007) attempted to "decenter whiteness" in research and focus on the "forms of cultural knowledge" (p. 154), such as communal FoK (Moll et al., 1992), from which Communities of Colour draw. The CCW approach builds on this asset approach that recognises community knowledge (Moll et al., 1992). Therefore, CCW can be considered an extension of FoK.

Similarly, Colina Neri et al. (2023) concluded that FoK and CCW can complement each other, stating that:

> CCW provides conceptual tools that could more forthrightly identify and challenge power-selective codings in school subject-knowledge, and so connect funds of knowledge to more valuable uses of school subject-knowledge. CCW can also support FK[49] work by mobilizing nondominant groups, in the locales of what should be *their* schools, into proactive support for curriculum and pedagogy that honors their community funds/wealths. (p. 1532)

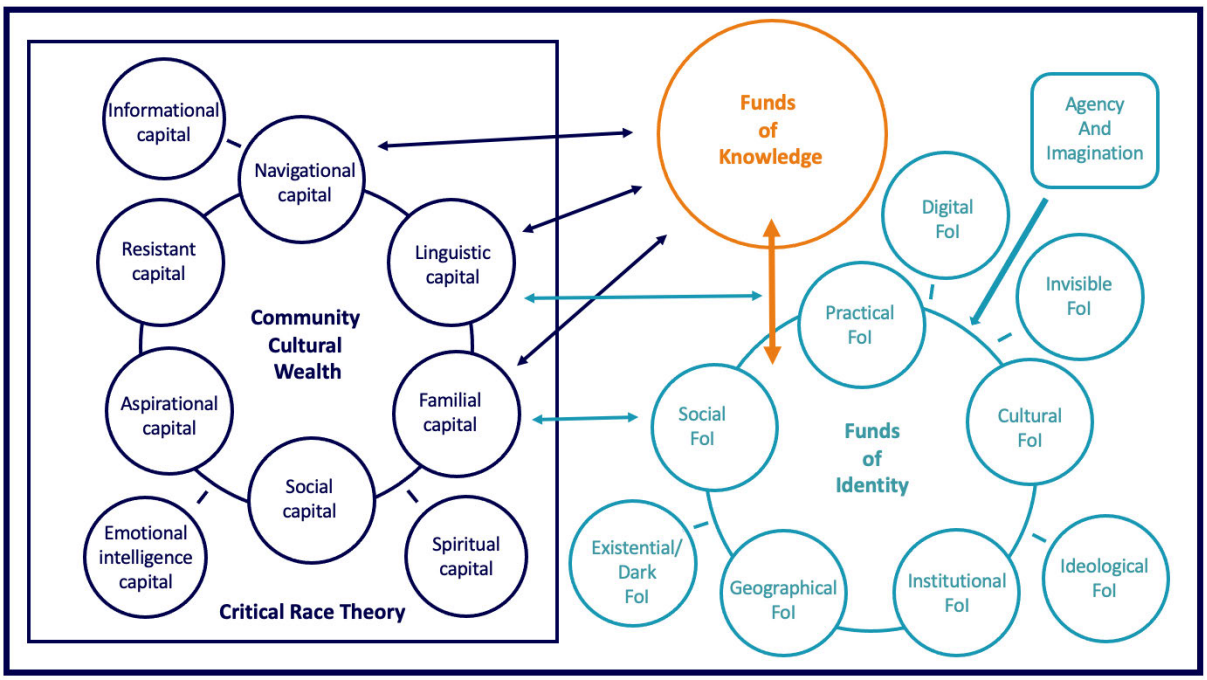
Furthermore, Llopart and Esteban-Guitart (2018) highlighted similarities between FoK and the notions of familial, linguistic and social capital from the CCW framework. In addition to these similarities, I consider overlaps between FoI and CCW, namely between familial and social capital and between linguistic capital and language as part of practical FoI (identity practices). Additionally, there is an overlap between the suggested additional concepts of ideological FoI and spiritual capital. Figure 3 provides an adapted overview of the combined theoretical frameworks and the proposed additions

[49] FK refers to FoK.

to these frameworks that inform this research The double-sided arrows between FoK, FoI, and CCW indicate the connections between the frameworks.

Figure 3

Adapted Overview of the Combined Theoretical Frameworks



3.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the theoretical frameworks that underpin this research . Firstly, the FoI approach (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a) theoretically and methodologically frames the research. This framework is centred around identity construction and builds on the FoK framework (Moll et al., 1992). Secondly, the CCW framework (Yosso, 2005), which complements the notion of FoK and therefore connects to FoI, allows for a critical examination of the different forms of capital/wealth of those participating in the research while aiming to produce counter-narratives. These theoretical frameworks are linked in their recognition and practical application of skills and resources to resist cultural oppression and deficit thinking and improve equity and inclusion in education (Esteban-Guitart, 2023c; Rodriguez, 2013), which are among the main aims of this research. The chapter also provided an overview of the concept of CRT and how this aligns with the aims, objectives and methodological approaches of this research. Lastly, justifications for employing the two theoretical frameworks were provided.

The following chapter presents the methodology employed in this research and includes an overview of the underpinning research paradigms, the research methods, the selection of the participating

schools, and descriptions of the data collection phases. The chapter concludes with an overview of the data analysis employed in the research and relevant ethical considerations.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Building on the previous chapter that presented the two theoretical frameworks underpinning this research, namely the FoI (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a) and CCW (Yosso, 2005), this chapter describes the methodology, which aligns with the aims, research questions and the theoretical framework. This chapter first provides an overview of the research design, including the qualitative research approach and the underpinning research paradigms that inform the methodology, followed by an overview of the various research methods employed to gather the knowledge. After this, the six data collection phases are discussed, including the selection procedures utilised in selecting the schools and participants, and details regarding the implemented research procedures. After this, the analytic processes are described, and the chapter concludes by describing responses to ethical considerations relevant to the research and how the trustworthiness criteria were addressed.

4.2 Research Design

4.2.1 Qualitative Research Approach

Mertens (2009) described research as "a systematic method of knowledge construction" (p. 1). In the context of this research, the knowledge construction is centred around South Sudanese Australian adolescents. Considering the aims and research questions, a qualitative research approach was deemed most suited due to its focus on socially constructed knowledge of human experiences (Leavy, 2014). Qualitative research aims to gather and construct the context and meaning of lived experiences to provide insights into and interpretations of the intricacies of culturally determined human behaviour (Merriam, 1998). Geertz (1973) referred to these gathered lived experiences, their descriptions and interpretations of meaning and context as "thick descriptions" (p. 6). Draper (2004) stated that the qualitative aspect of research refers to the quality or nature of the lived experiences and the ascribed meanings and questions of the 'what', the 'how', and the 'why'.

4.2.2 Research Paradigm

Qualitative research is guided by a philosophical intent, also referred to as a paradigm, which is defined as a "set of basic beliefs" or a "worldview" that guides the investigation (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 107). This research is a multi-paradigmatic research (P. C. Taylor & Medina, 2011), drawing from the transformative paradigm (Mertens, 1999) and critical theory (Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The following subsections describe both paradigms.

4.2.2.1 Transformative Paradigm

One of the aims of this research is to transform learning environments and outcomes for South Sudanese Australian adolescents, specifically regarding improving equity and inclusion. This aim prompted the formulation of one of the sub-questions to investigate the necessary changes to improve South Sudanese Australian adolescents' educational outcomes, engagement, and participation (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4). The philosophy of the transformative paradigm was chosen to guide this research since it aligns with this aim and research sub-question.

Mertens (1999) suggested the transformative paradigm after observing that an alternative, more inclusive paradigm was required to address the complexity of studies in communities that included marginalised people. Studies underpinned by the transformative paradigm purposely examine power structures that sustain social inequalities, taking into account historical and political factors that affect those included in the research, and utilise the outcomes of the study to enact change, particularly addressing aspects of social inequity and injustice (Mertens, 1999, 2007a, 2007b). Initially, Mertens used the name 'emancipatory' paradigm but changed this to the 'transformative' paradigm to emphasise the role of agency in research (Mertens, 2009, 2015). The transformative paradigm is predicated on, among others, Paulo Freire's work and his "dialogical conscientization" (Mertens, 2015, p. 74) (see Section 4.2.2.2.3).

Each paradigm is characterised by four philosophical assumptions: axiology, ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, 2005). The transformative paradigm's axiological assumptions, which refer to values or ethics, are guided by the notions of respect, beneficence and justice (Mertens, 2007b). Researchers respect cultural norms and values and enact culturally appropriate research that benefits historically oppressed and marginalised communities while actively promoting human rights and social justice (Mertens, 2007b). A researcher can consider the following questions regarding axiological assumptions:

> What cultural guidelines for research need to be considered in this context? How can I show respect for cultures that have been historically denigrated? How can I incorporate the voices of members of communities that have not traditionally had a seat at the table when decisions about what is ethical or not ethical were made? (Mertens, 2012, p. 805)

The ontological assumption of a research paradigm refers to the nature of reality (Mertens, 2007a), and within the transformative paradigm, the researcher considers multiple socially constructed realities (Mertens, 1999, 2007b). However, they do so while recognising that certain individuals wield greater power and that individuals with different characteristics may face a higher risk of exclusion from decisions regarding the delineation of the research focus, questions, and other methodological

aspects of the inquiry (Mertens, 2007a, 2007b). Employing the transformative paradigm requires researchers to reveal socially constructed realities and engage in personal transformation in their understanding of the origins of the different versions of reality while considering the consequences of accepting one version of reality over another (Mertens, 1999, 2017), and potentially "perpetuating oppressive social structures and policies" (Mertens, 2009, p. 81). Therefore, Mertens (2007a) suggested considering the following ontological questions:

> How is reality defined? By whom? Whose reality is given privilege? What are the social justice implications of accepting reality that has not been subjected to a critical analysis based on power differentials? How can methods be adapted for diverse groups to shed additional light on the capture and interpretation of reality? (p. 87)

The third philosophical assumption is epistemology, which is derived from the Greek word *episteme*, meaning knowledge (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Therefore, epistemology refers to what knowledge is, how knowledge is constructed in an inquiry, and the relationship between the researcher and those participating or affected by the study (Mertens, 2007b, 2017). The epistemological assumption of the transformative paradigm is that knowledge is intersubjective and historically, socially and culturally constructed and impacted by the notions of power and privilege (Mertens, 2007a, 2009, 2012). Similarly, as with ontological assumptions, there are consequences for the researcher in deciding which knowledge is considered 'real'. Mertens (2017) emphasised the importance of a transformation in the researcher's role and perceptions, especially when conducting research in a community of which they are non-members. Therefore, researchers need to be cognisant of their (potentially privileged) position that may yield certain powers and how this could impact the relationship with people participating in a study (Mertens, 2009, 2017). When researchers are reflexive of their role, perceptions, position and power, they can develop relationships with participants that are centred around respect, trust and understanding (Mertens, 2007a, 2007b). The researcher can consider questions such as:

> If I am to really know if something is real, how do I need to relate to the people from whom I am collecting data? Should I be close to the participants so I can really understand their experiences, or should I maintain distance between myself and the participants so I can be neutral? (Mertens, 2007a, pp. 87-88)

Lastly, methodological assumptions refer to the selection of the most suitable methodology to conduct a study and include the framing of the research questions or hypotheses, the setting and context in which the data are collected, and the research methods (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods) (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The methodology of transformative studies derives from the ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions and guides the researcher in all the study phases, including the research design, data collection methods, data analysis and interpretation and

practical applications of the findings (Mertens, 2012). Two essential elements of the methodology are, firstly, the process of developing trusting relationships with those involved in the study (e.g., members of a marginalised community) (Mertens, 2017). Secondly, aligning to enact change in studies underpinned by the transformative paradigm is the transformative element of the study for individuals, community groups or society, and even researchers themselves (Mertens, 2017).

The suitability of the transformative paradigm in my research is underscored by its philosophical assumptions, capacity to transform me as the researcher employing this paradigm, and the anticipated positive impact on the South Sudanese Australian community, particularly its young people, and educational stakeholders. It is important to state, however, that the transformative paradigm is a western construct, and its philosophical assumptions are guided by western interpretations (Held, 2019).

4.2.2.2 Critical Theory

4.2.2.2.1 Critical Theory as a Research Paradigm

In addition to the transformative paradigm, this research is underpinned by Freire's critical pedagogy (1970/2017), which draws from critical theory. Several scholars perceived critical theory as a theory that falls under the transformative paradigm or as being synonymous with the transformative paradigm itself (see, for example, Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006; Riyami, 2015). However, Guba and Lincoln (1994) considered critical Theory to be an official research paradigm and used 'critical theory et al.' as a combination of alternative paradigms that are centred around a "value-determined nature of inquiry", which sets it apart from the three main paradigms, positivism, postpositivism and constructivism (p. 109). Guba (1990) referred to "ideologically oriented inquiry" that includes the perspectives of "neo-Marxism, materialism, feminism, Freireism, participatory inquiry, and other similar movements as well as critical theory itself" (p. 23).

Critical theory's ontology is historical realism, which refers to "virtual reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 109). Furthermore, the epistemology of critical theory is subjectivist and transactional, meaning that values, beliefs, and social contexts influence both the *production* and the *gathering* of knowledge. It is, therefore, inherently subjective. Consequently, the outcomes of an inquiry drawing from the critical theory paradigm are "value-mediated" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 109). Critical theory's axiology, which refers to ethics or values, is democracy and egalitarianism, and researchers are guided to pursue these values in their studies (Paradis et al., 2020). Critical researchers are guided by the premise that human behaviour is

simultaneously limited by social structures and capable of challenging and altering them (Paradis et al., 2020). Lastly, the methodological assumptions of critical theory are guided by the ontological and epistemological assumptions and, therefore, consider multiple context-specific subjective realities (Paradis et al., 2020). Furthermore, Guba and Lincoln (1994) stated that the methodology is centred around dialogue, which "must be dialectical in nature to transform ignorance and misapprehensions [...] into more informed consciousness" (p. 110).

Through dialogue and engagement in the transactional knowledge production by the researcher and the 'knower' and the potential transformational impact it has on each of them, critical theory is linked to both theory and practice (Schwandt, 1990). However, Paradis et al. (2020) asserted that critical researchers are aware that language, the very essence of dialogue, is always seen as reflecting power structures, and therefore, it cannot be considered neutral. Similarly, Guba (1990) considered the absence of a neutral stance in studies employing the critical theory paradigm with the following observation:

> If values *do* enter into every inquiry, then the question immediately arises as to what values and whose values shall govern. If the findings of studies can vary depending on the values chosen, then the choice of a *particular* value system tends to empower and enfranchise certain persons while disempowering and disenfranchising others. Inquiry thereby becomes a *political act.* (Guba, 1990, p. 24)

Kincheloe and McLaren (2000), who considered critical theory as a collective referral to inquiries that are critical of and confront issues related to power and injustice, emphasised that critical inquiries become "a transformative endeavor unembarrassed by the label political and unafraid to consummate a relationship with emancipatory consciousness" (p. 300). These standpoints concerning the political notion of research align with Tuhiwai Smith's (2021) observation that research always occurs in certain political and social contexts whereby both the position and role of the researcher are critically important (see Chapter 1, Section 1.6).

Merriam (2002) also considered critical theory a paradigm, though referring to it simply as a 'critical paradigm', and employing it in educational research. According to Merriam (1998), the critical paradigm draws from critical social sciences, such as "Marxist philosophy, critical theory, and feminist theory," whereby the "knowledge generated through this mode of research is an ideological critique of power, privilege, and oppression in areas of educational practice" (p. 4). In addition to the notions of power, privilege and oppression, critical social science acknowledges and examines socio-economic, political and cultural contexts that can contribute to or exacerbate certain problems in educational settings (Merriam, 1998). Similarly, P. C. Taylor (2008) and P. C. Taylor and Medina (2011) used the

term ‘critical paradigm’ and emphasised its transformative commitment to promoting social justice, equity and inclusion. In educational settings, critical teachers (as researchers) promote emancipatory learning environments that emphasise the decolonisation of teaching practices and challenge hegemonic ideologies, instead promoting critical higher-order thinking skills and critical consciousness (P. C. Taylor, 2008). These interpretations of the critical paradigm (Merriam, 1998; P. C. Taylor, 2008b; P. C. Taylor & Medina, 2011) align with the aims and objectives of this research.

4.2.2.2.2 Critical Theory as a Theoretical Framework

In addition to a paradigm, Wandel (2001) referred to critical theory as a theoretical framework characterised by a “political commitment to delineate structures of domination and power in society, to locate points of resistance to these structures, together with outlining theoretical strategies according to which this resistance is to be carried out” (Wandel, 2001, p. 381). Wandel (2001) considered his interpretation of critical theory in line with that of Horkheimer, who was among the founders of the *Institut für Sozialforschung* (Institute for Social Research) at the University of Frankfurt, Germany (Abromeit, 2011). This institute is where Max Horkheimer and scholars such as Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse, commonly referred to as the Frankfurt School, first presented the term critical theory (Best et al., 2018). In 1937, Horkheimer wrote an essay titled *Traditional and Critical Theory,* in which he positioned critical theory as an alternative to positivism (the ‘traditional’ theory) (Best et al., 2018; Macdonald, 2017). In this essay, Horkheimer diverged from traditional theory and argued that critical theory acknowledges the subjective elements of research and focuses on examining injustice and oppression within their historical contexts (Hermann, 2021). Horkheimer (2002) also referred to the importance of knowledge gathered in “real-life processes” rather than “purely logical or methodological sources” (p. 194). This suggestion hints at employing qualitative research methods that gather lived experiences.

Since its inception, critical theory has inspired many scholars to address injustice and oppression, extending its original philosophical intentions into areas such as critical pedagogy (see Section 4.2.2.2.1). However, I concur with McArthur (2022), who argued that drawing from critical theory in studies using a decolonising lens (see Section 4.3.3) may not always be appropriate. Despite critical theory's emphasis on "critical consciousness" (Schwandt, 1990, p. 268), it was developed in a European context by predominantly Jewish white men who were selectively critical (McArthur, 2022). For instance, early Frankfurt School scholars did not critique colonialism (McArthur, 2022; Said, 1994). In the 1960s, Jürgen Habermas led critical theory in a new direction, representing the second generation of critical social theorists (Arnold, 2015). While critical theory may lack a distinct theoretical

framework, and its original objectives may not directly apply to modern contexts (Arnold, 2015), numerous contemporary theories have emerged that draw inspiration from critical theory. These theories engage critically with issues of power and injustice within specific contexts such as race, gender, and education (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000).

4.2.2.2.3 From Critical Theory to Critical Pedagogy

One of the theories that draws from critical theory is critical pedagogy, and several elements central to critical pedagogy are included in this thesis. Brazilian educator Paulo Freire is considered one of the founders of critical pedagogy (Giroux, 2017; Kincheloe, 2007). The publication of his seminal work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1970/2017) initiated an educational movement impacting teaching pedagogy, teacher training and educational scholarship (Kincheloe, 2007). Critical pedagogy, in its essence, is an anti-oppressive educational approach designed to be implemented in both theory and practice to address and transform inequalities and social exclusions both in society and educational contexts (Darder et al., 2016; Tolman, 2019). Giroux (2017) described critical pedagogy as follows:

> The educational movement guided by both passion and principle to help students develop a consciousness of freedom, recognize authoritarian tendencies, empower the imagination, connect knowledge and truth to power, and learn to read both the word and the world as part of a broader struggle for agency, justice, and democracy. (Giroux, 2017, p. xi)

Freire's critical pedagogy has several tenets. Firstly, Freire (2005) considered education a political practice and, consequently, teachers as politicians. Freire (2005) stated that, "It is absolutely necessary that educators act in a way consistent with their choice — which is political" (p. 129). Freire (2005) highlighted the importance of educators understanding their roles and responsibilities and the importance of familiarising themselves with their students' lived experiences beyond the classroom. These ideas align with the objectives of FoI, emphasising educators' exploration of their students' diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences to contextualise learning and bridging the gap between school and students' real-world lives (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a).

Secondly, Freire encouraged the development of critical consciousness, or *conscientização*, in students (Freire, 1970/2017). Critical consciousness is "the ability to reflect and critique one's thoughts, actions and motivations" (Darder, 2017, p. 141). Nurturing critical consciousness in educational settings requires proactive efforts, fostering dialogue and social connections that have the potential to alter perspectives regarding one another and the broader world (Darder, 2017). Consequently, developing critical consciousness requires praxis, which comprises reflection and action (Darder, 2017; Freire, 1970/2017). For example, critical consciousness can be used to confront social

justice issues in education stemming from colonial legacies, employing the process of decolonisation as a means to address and transform these issues (hooks, 1994). Freire's notion of *conscientização* (Freire, 1970/2017) overlaps with the objective of employing FoI in educational settings to develop a "critical understanding of reality" by both teachers and students (Esteban-Guitart, 2021, p. 169).

A third tenet of Freire's (1970/2017) critical pedagogy is the importance of dialogue in the process of growth and liberation. According to Freire, dialogue serves as a dynamic platform where all participants are challenged to critically examine their lived experiences and knowledge (Tolman, 2019). By fostering an educational environment that promotes dialogue through continual questioning and cultivating critical thinking, educators and students can critically engage with the complex social, political, and economic realities that impact their lives (Darder, 2017). Through dialogue, individuals can challenge each other's perspectives and their thought processes, leading to transformative insights (Tolman, 2019).

Implementing a Freirean critical pedagogical approach in educational contexts involves engaging students and their families in curriculum development through critical dialogue, with lessons structured around dialogue-based interactions (Mahmoudi et al., 2014). Additionally, teachers are responsible for recognising education as a tool for liberation and empowering students to become agents of change in both their personal world and the wider society (Mahmoudi et al., 2014). Lastly, educators should perceive themselves not only as teachers but also as learners, or, as Freire (2005) stated, "There is no *teaching* without *learning"* (p. 31).

My rationale for incorporating Freire's critical pedagogy, grounded in critical theory, stems from its recognition of schools as inherently political spaces where dominant hegemonic forces influence teaching and learning (Giroux, 1986). However, schools also serve as platforms for fostering dialogue among teachers and students and between students themselves, facilitating transformative processes by nurturing the development of critical consciousness in educators and learners (Freire, 1970/2017; hooks, 1994). In addition to fostering transformation, dialogue can serve as a means to explore and implement students' FoI, thereby facilitating actions to promote social justice within educational settings, especially for those who have been historically marginalised and silenced.

4.3 Research Methods

This qualitative research, underpinned by the transformative paradigm and critical theory, employed two research methods to gather knowledge. The following section describes the extended multi-

method autobiographical approach proposed by Esteban-Guitart (2012) to explore FoI, which informed the aims, objectives and research questions. The subsequent section outlines portraiture, which has been used as a method to create narrative portraits of the two participating schools and three South Sudanese Australian adolescents. Given the incorporation of arts-based elements within the extended multi-methodology approach and portraiture, the final subsection of the research methods describes the notion of arts-based research.

4.3.1 The Extended Multi-Method Autobiographical Approach

To answer the research questions and explore FoI, this research employed elements of the extended multi-method autobiographical approach developed by Esteban-Guitart (2012), which draws from the multi-method autobiography approach created by Bagnoli (2004). Bagnoli (2004) developed the multi-method autobiographical approach in a participatory study exploring the identities of young people. Bagnoli (2004) considered autobiographical tools the most suitable means to gather insights into young people's narrative and dialogical identities, thereby emphasising reflexivity that facilitates growth and insights for both the researcher and the participants. Bagnoli's (2004) approach comprised an interview, the completion of a diary containing formatted and empty spaces, writing entries centred around past experiences that could have influenced their present identity, including descriptions of future dreams and aspirations, and a second interview, during which the participant shared a photograph that was discussed.

In a subsequent study, Bagnoli (2009) proposed three arts-based methods (Leavy, 2017) (see Section 4.3.3) that included drawing based on the suitability of this medium for children (and people of all ages) and in cross-cultural research settings. The drawings comprised an identity drawing, a relational map that included significant people in the participant's life, and timelines that focused on the past, present and future (Bagnoli, 2009). Building on Bagnoli's (2004, 2009) approach, Esteban-Guitart (2012) developed an extended version to explore and capture narrative aspects of identity building within the proposed notion of FoI (Saubich & Esteban-Guitart, 2011). Initially, Saubich and Esteban-Guitart (2011) employed some of Bagnoli's (2004, 2009) arts-based techniques, such as identity drawings, to capture identities and encourage participant's reflexivity by asking the following:

> I would like you to show me on this paper who you are at this moment in your life... You can add, if you want, the people, activities, artefacts, institutions and things that are important to you at this moment in life. (Saubich & Esteban-Guitart, 2011, p.85)

Esteban-Guitart (2016) continued expanding on Bagnoli's multi-method autobiographical approach and suggested fifteen narrative and visual qualitative data collection techniques to gather reflexive

and narrative elements contributing to identity development. The proposed techniques were grouped under four headings:

> 1) Open and in-depth interviews (with three different interview models).
> 2) The revised identity drawings (the identity drawing along with a written self-definition and a task involving ten identity definitions).
> 3) Resources for analysing routines, lifestyles, and significant artefacts (the one-week diary, detection of artefacts, routines through photographs, educational routines through photographs).
> 4) Psychogeographical maps (chronograms, genograms, ecomaps, geomaps, and relational maps or significant circles). (Esteban-Guitart, 2016 p. 68)

Esteban-Guitart (2023b) underscored the flexibility of employing diverse techniques that are adaptable to both research aims and objectives, as well as the characteristics of the participants. Relevant to my research are the identity drawings and the geomaps. I selected the geomaps as Esteban-Guitart (2016) indicated that these had been useful in previously conducted studies exploring the transnational identity of immigrants (e.g., Esteban-Guitart & Vila, 2015; Esteban-Guitart et al., 2013).

Whilst the extended multi-method autobiographical method, as proposed by Esteban-Guitart (2012, 2016), includes identity drawings and geomaps, I decided to extend and add a self-selected arts-based project. The reasons for further extending the data-collecting techniques proposed by Esteban-Guitart (2012, 2016) were twofold. Firstly, although my research proposal included several elements that aligned with the proposed data collection approach (interviews, identity drawings and geomaps), I considered it essential to also include a participant-choice activity. This could be decided upon based on their interests and would align with their preferred way of self-expression and self-identification as appropriate in their socio-cultural contexts, as this would in itself provide insights into the identities of the students. Secondly, to increase the possibility of gathering finished projects, I considered it important that the students were empowered to choose an activity they felt most passionate about.

4.3.2 Portraiture

In addition to the extended multi-methodology approach, this research also employs the qualitative phenomenological arts-based method of portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Portraiture is a profound form of intimate storytelling that enables a researcher to create a portrait that is both a "scientific and artistic representation of reality." This allowed for the capture of unique life stories and lived experiences that contribute to the identity formation and FoI of South Sudanese Australian adolescents (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005, p. 13).

Portraiture as a qualitative method was first mentioned in the seminal book *The Good High School: Portraits of Character and Culture* (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983). However, Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005) stated that although she devised the term portraiture, she has been subconsciously influenced by a rich historical lineage spanning over two centuries that intertwines art and science. Since the 18th century, social scientists and novelists have been motivated to capture human experiences as narratives, considered easier to comprehend by the general audience (Lahman et al., 2021; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Based on this premise, Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) explained that the portraiture methodology was "designed to capture the richness, complexity, and dimensionality of human experience in social and cultural context, conveying the perspectives of the people who are negotiating those experiences" (p. 3). Within portraiture, the researcher employs an insider and outsider perspective as they embrace "both analytic rigor (a perspective that is distant, discerning, and skeptical) and community building (acts of intimacy and connection)" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005, p. 12).

Portraiture has five central features: context, voice, relationship, emergent themes, and the aesthetic whole (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Firstly, context refers to "the setting — physical, geographic, temporal, historical, cultural, aesthetic — within which the action takes place" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 41). During the fieldwork, the portraitist purposefully captures specific elements of the context in which the themes of the narratives are observed and uses these to create an intimate atmosphere to transport the readers to the described setting (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). However, the portraitist is selective regarding which elements of context to include and can purposely exclude aspects of the context that do not contribute to themes and the overall purpose of the narrative (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

The second tenet is voice, which refers to the researcher's perspective (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). In portraiture, the researcher's voice, as both a person and artist, has a central role (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) contended that "the voice of the researcher is everywhere: in the assumptions, preoccupations, and framework she brings; in the data she gathers; in the choice of stories she tells; in the language, cadence, and rhythm of her narrative" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 85). Despite the central position of the portraitist, it is important that their voice is not overwhelming (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) nor biassed by personal predispositions (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005). Additionally, the use of voice should not impact the research's rigour because it is "grounded in systematically collected data, skeptical questioning (of self and actors), and rigorous examination of biases—always open to disconfirming

evidence" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 85). However, the researcher also listens *to* voice, meaning the voice of the actors,[50] which includes not only the narrative but also the tone, gestures and body language (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). The researcher's voice informs the readers of their identity and position (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005). The portraitist's position is informed by "the search for goodness", which is a holistic concept that focuses on strength, yet also allows the actors to express "vulnerability, weakness, prejudice, and anxiety" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 141).

The third feature central to portraiture is the essential role of building meaningful and authentic relationships between the researcher and the participants, in which the portraitist listens *for* a story (J. H. Davis, 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Within this aim to build relationships, the portraitist considers "the actors as knowledge bearers, as rich resources, as the best authorities on their own experience" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 141). Furthermore, the abovementioned search for goodness informs the establishment of relationships and guides them once established, focusing on positivity and trust (J. H. Davis, 2003). In line with Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005), who encouraged portraitists to be reflexive and vigilant regarding their position and perspective, Travis (2020) used relationships to delineate her stance as a researcher concerning the research participants and the study contexts. This positioning is an essential element in establishing rapport with the participants (Birks et al., 2007) through which a researcher can present themself as an ally (Broido, 2000) (see Chapter 1, Section 1.7). Besides building meaningful relationships with the participants, the portraitist also builds relationships with the readers, as narrative portraits are intended for a broad audience and are, therefore, "intentionally inclusive" and "intentionally provocative" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2016, pp. 19-20). In other words, with the audience in mind, portraiture aims to "move beyond academy's inner circle, to speak in a language that is not coded or exclusive, and to develop texts that will seduce the readers into thinking more deeply about issues that concern them" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 10).

Examining the gathered knowledge for emergent themes is the fourth central feature of portraiture. Capturing the emergent themes is, according to Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997), "an iterative *and* generative process; the themes emerge from the data, and they give the data shape and form" (p. 185). During this process, the portraitist organises the data and searches for "convergent threads, illuminating metaphors, and overarching symbols" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 185) that encapsulate human experiences and presents them to readers in a comprehensible and accessible

[50] Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) refer to research participants as actors.

manner (J. H. Davis, 2003). The stories of human experiences can be narrated in a myriad of ways. Consequently, the portraitist must decide which themes to include and which to exclude, while ensuring that the nuances and complexities of the actors' lived experiences are preserved (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). This process of selecting the themes involves strategic decisions, and Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005) stated that "What gets left out is often as important as what gets included—the blank spaces, the silences, also shape the form of the story" (p. 10). However, although the portraitist expresses their voice in deciding which themes to include and how the narrative is written, the voices of the actors — the subjects of the narratives — are also visible. Cope et al. (2015) referred to the portraitist's voice as the "creative rendering", which can be represented as the brushstrokes, whereas the actor's voice is visible as the subject of the narrative portrait.

The fifth tenet is the aesthetic whole, which Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) referred to as the process of "weaving" all the elements that contribute to the creation of the narrative, including an overarching story comprising emergent themes (p. 247). J. H. Davis (2003, p. 214) referred to constructing the aesthetic whole as addressing three "how to" questions: how to combine the included themes, how to decide what themes are excluded, and how to know when the aesthetic whole is complete.

Relevant to my research is the confluence of portraiture and CRT (Chapman, 2005, 2007; Travis, 2020). Both CRT and portraiture employ narrative enquiry (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002) with a focus on "non-dominant narratives and experiences" (Travis, 2020, p. 103). The narratives emphasise authenticity, assets, resilience, goodness and strength instead of failure and deficits (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). The counter-stories in CRT can be considered the search for and expressions of goodness in portraiture, whereby the power of the portraitist's voice is central (Chapman, 2005). Several scholars have employed the portraiture methodology through a CRT lens with the intention to create counter-narratives (e.g., Chapman, 2005; Ngunjiri, 2007). Furthermore, both CRT and portraiture consider context, including, among others, historical, geographic, and socio-cultural contexts that assist in understanding and interpreting human experiences (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2016; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Lastly, both CRT and portraiture are committed to social justice, with Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005) stating that portraiture is "provocative work that can disturb the natural rhythms of social reality and encounter; this is exciting work that can instigate positive and productive change" (p. 12). In conclusion, portraiture suits the purpose of this research, which is, among others, to create (counter) narratives that explore and exhibit aspects of and contributing factors to the

identity and identity development of South Sudanese Australian adolescents. Thus, the portraits are employed as a means to present and represent identity, or as Hall (1997) concluded, “Identity is always in part a narrative, always in part a kind of representation [...] It is that which is narrated in one's own self” (p. 49).

Employing portraiture in this research is justified because, in a way, it complements the extended multi-method autobiography due to similar multimodal data collection techniques, such as interviews, observations, creative artefacts, photos, and music (Brenna, 2023; Straka, 2019). Secondly, portraiture’s strong commitment to social justice (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005) aligns with Esteban-Guitart's (2023a) recent emphasis on the transformative nature of the combined FoK/I approach and its focus on actions toward social justice (see Chapter 3, Section 3.2.4).

4.3.3 Arts-Based Research and Decolonising Research

The extended multi-method autobiographical approach (Esteban-Guitart, 2012, 2016) and portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1986) gather knowledge using arts-based methods, such as drawings and photo collages. Leavy (2015) defined arts-based research practices as “a set of methodological tools used by researchers across the disciplines during all phases of social research, including data generation analysis, interpretation, and representation” (p. 4). Leavy (2015, 2017) not only regarded arts-based research as a collection of methodological techniques but also conceptualised it as a paradigm and named it the aesthetic intersubjective research paradigm. This paradigm incorporates principles from embodiment and phenomenology and draws from interpretivism/constructivism and critical theories (Leavy, 2017). Gerber et al. (2012) suggested the following philosophical underpinnings of the art-based paradigm. Firstly, they stated that the epistemology assumptions of the arts-based paradigm are based on several forms of knowledge, including sensory, kinaesthetic and imaginal forms. The ontological assumptions are based on the notion that the intersubjective and emerging realities of art (Chilton & Leavy, 2020) can serve as a conduit for “truth or enlightenment”, offering insights into both self-awareness and understanding of others (Gerber et al., 2012, p. 41), which can be potentially transformative. The axiology of the arts-based paradigm considers the significance of the arts and artistic expressions in attaining an understanding of oneself and others, mainly through their capacity to convey meaning without using words (Gerber et al., 2012). Methodologically, the arts-based paradigm employs artistic practices and expressions, which include performance, literary and visual art practices, using data generation methods such as music, poems, dance, film, graphic novels, 3-D art, needlework, sculpting and paintings (Leavy, 2015).

In the literature, the term ‘arts-based research’ typically refers to a collection of inquiry methods that incorporate any form of art (including the creation of artistic expressions) during the research process with the purpose of gathering, interpreting or conveying knowledge (Lenette, 2019; McNiff, 2008, 2011). According to Leavy (2015), arts-based research has several strengths. Firstly, employing arts-based methodologies allows the researcher to use different means to connect with a broad audience and convey new insights that are accessible (Leavy, 2015). Secondly, arts-based research is suitable for studies centred around describing, exploring or discovering, particularly in relation to real-world problems (Leavy, 2015). Furthermore, arts-based research is holistic and can be used to create critical consciousness and awareness by “presenting alternative, emotional, evocative, attention-grabbing and/or resistive stories, images, and performances” (Leavy, 2015, p. 24). Lastly, art can be analysed and interpreted inductively, enabling researchers to present multiple meanings and interpretations; similarly, the audience can interpret and attribute meaning in various ways (Leavy, 2015).

Various terms in the literature describe arts-based research, including arts-informed inquiry, performative inquiry, art/research, and scholartistry (see Chilton & Leavy, 2020, p. 605 for an extensive list). Numerous scholars have delved into the realm of arts-based research, offering valuable insights into its characteristics and their own experiences employing this methodology. Firstly, Cooperman (2018) considered arts-based research a “dialogical performance” in which knowledge is created as a “multiplicity of presence” and where “something of who we are is exposed, made visible and representational for others to touch, construct, negotiate, imbibe, or ignore” (p. 22). This dialogical performance occurs throughout the research process, whereby the researcher's identity, the self, is constructed and deconstructed by the physical movement into unfamiliar settings in which the research is conducted (Cooperman, 2018).

Furthermore, Cole and Knowles (2008) argued that arts-based researchers are intentional in delineating both the "intellectual purpose and moral purpose" (p. 66) of their inquiry, which is invariably directed toward some form of transformation. This quality of goodness in arts-based research aligns with the philosophical assumptions of the transformative paradigm, which guides this research (see Section 4.2.1.1). In addition to its transformative potential, arts-based research is directed towards addressing and enhancing social justice, whereby researchers have “the intent of increasing a critical consciousness, promoting reflection, building empathetic connections, forming coalitions, challenging stereotypes and fostering social action” (Leavy, 2015, p. 292). Lenette (2019) suggested that due to its transformative potential and capacity to address and enhance social justice, researchers are *intentional* in utilising arts-based methods, particularly when engaging with

vulnerable and marginalised communities. In this context, arts-based research is often employed to create counter-narratives that challenge existing stereotypes (Lenette, 2019). Lastly, the transformative potential and addressing and enhancing social justice of arts-based research align with the notion of decolonising methodologies (Lenette, 2019; Seppälä et al., 2021). Tuhiwai Smith (2021) described what employing a decolonised methodology entails in the following way:

> The context in which research problems are conceptualized and designed, and with the implications of research for its participants and their communities. It is also concerned with the institution of research, its claims, its values and practices, and its relationships to power. (Tuhiwai Smith, 2021, p. 286)

According to Seppälä et al. (2021), the process of decolonisation comprises two aspects: a critique and a proposition of alternative versions. Firstly, the critique is directed towards reproducing colonial power dynamics and Eurocentric knowledge within western epistemologies, alongside their assertions of objectivity and neutrality in scientific inquiries (Seppälä et al., 2021). Secondly, since most research is underpinned by epistemological assumptions based on western conceptions of knowledge (Darder, 2019), decolonisation aims to develop alternative theories, methodologies and epistemological studies. These studies introduce less Eurocentric models of knowing (e.g., Indigenous, feminist and antiracist), which are inclusive and diverse and seek to amplify the perspectives of colonised or marginalised people (Lenette, 2022a, 2022b; Seppälä et al., 2021). Furthermore, these transformative perspectives are centred around challenging power structures, dismantling the hegemony of western epistemologies and methodologies, and purposely including subaltern voices (Darder, 2019). Similarly, Held (2019) stated that decolonising research paradigms and methodologies begins by including "Indigenous ways of knowing in academia, that is, to teach them, to use them in research, to value them as equal to Western approaches to knowing and to creating knowledge" (p. 2).

One aspect of decolonising methodologies is creating culturally safe research spaces (Browne et al., 2009; Lenette, 2022a). R. Williams (1999) defined cultural safety in the following way:

> An environment that is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for people; where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience of learning together. (p. 213)

The notion of culturally safe research spaces aligns with research aimed at equity and social justice underpinned by critical perspectives (Browne et al., 2009). Brown et al. (2009) argued that the concept of "cultural safety is open to considerable ambiguity in interpretation" (p. 172) and there is no clear method researchers can employ. However, Lenette (2022a) proposed the following questions to assist researchers: "What is your motivation for undertaking the research? What are the origins of your

method(s)? What needs changing? How do you use methods in culturally safe ways? How do you know you have achieved your aim?" (pp. 10-11).

This research is guided by the underpinnings of arts-based research, characterised by its transformative potential, emphasis on promoting equity and social justice, and contribution to decolonising research methodologies. These characteristics make arts-based methodologies well-suited for this r as it includes people from former refugee backgrounds or those growing up in families with a history of forced displacement (Khorana, 2022; Lenette, 2019).

4.4 Knowledge Collection Phases

This research sought to conduct research *about* and *with* South Sudanese adolescents (Evans, 2012) in a culturally sensitive and safe manner (Lenette, 2022a). Within this context, the South Sudanese Australian 'participants' are referred to as 'Knowledge Holders' in recognition that "the people who hold knowledge of their experiences have agency to articulate and share these (Lenette, 2019, p. 12). In a similar vein, as noted in Section 4.3.2, Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) considered "the actors as knowledge bearers" and as "the best authorities on their own experience" (p. 141). To honour this recognition of participants' expertise, 'data' will hereafter be referred to as 'knowledge.' This terminological shift reflects my commitment to respecting and valuing the lived experiences of the Knowledge Holders without de-contextualizing or distorting their insights to align with external agendas, such as those of educational stakeholders (Lenette, 2019). Furthermore, the research adopted an open approach to anonymity, ensuring that the community members' agency and autonomy were prioritised and respected (Lenette, 2019).

The research consisted of six knowledge collection phases that took place between October 2021 and November 2022. Table 1 provides an overview of the six knowledge collection phases and the time frame, in school terms, in which they occurred.

Table 1

Overview of the Six Knowledge Collection Phases

Collection phase	Time frame
One: Interviews with South Sudanese Australian community members	October-December 2021 (School Term 4)
Two: Focus group discussion with South Sudanese Australian adolescents	June 2022 (School Term 2)
Three: Individual Interviews and drawings with the South Sudanese Australian adolescents	July-August 2022 (School Term 3)
Four: Interviews with school leadership and teachers	June–September (School Terms 2 and 3)
Five: Interviews with South Sudanese Australian CLOs	July 2022 (School Term 3)
Six: Arts-based activities with the South Sudanese Australian adolescents	September–November 2022 (School Terms 3 and 4)

The interview with the community members were initially planned to take place after engaging with the schools. However, due to a significant delay in ethics approval from the Department of Education as a result of the recurrent COVID-19 lockdowns in 2021 and 2022, this phase was completed first. This change was actually beneficial to the research as the interviews with the community members meant that I gained a more nuanced understanding of the Melbourne-based South Sudanese community before engaging with the adolescents in school settings.

The focus groups (Phase 2) were planned first and occurred in June 2022. This was done purposely to create familiarity and rapport with the students. After this, the individual interviews (Phase 3) took place. The interviews with school management and teachers (Phase 4) and CLOs (Phase 5) were arranged via email and based on available time. Initially, a seventh phase of interviews with the participating students' parent(s)/caregiver(s) was planned. However, this collection phase did not occur for several reasons, such as work commitments, language barriers, assumed lack of interest (according to the students), and difficulty arranging the interviews due to lack of access (no phone numbers).

After completing each school visit, interview, and focus group discussion, I compiled notes documenting my observations, general impressions from the interviews, the overall atmosphere, and description of the participants, particularly the students. Additionally, I recorded questions requiring further clarification, personal reminders, and initial reflections on the collected knowledge. These

notes, referred to as my field notes, are “a secondary data storage method in qualitative research” and can be regarded as part of the analysis as it involves reflection and interpretation (Groenewald, 2004, p. 48).

The subsequent sections outline the six phases of knowledge collection, including the sampling and knowledge collection methods, and provide background information on the participants.

4.4.1 Phase One: Interviews with South Sudanese Australian Community Members

Research advisor Dr William Abur facilitated the participant recruitment utilising purposive sampling of “key knowledgeables” (Patton, 2014, p. 430). South Sudanese Australian community members, whom Dr Abur considered key informants with valuable knowledge concerning the South Sudanese Australian community, were strategically invited for an interview (Patton, 2014). Dr Abur compiled a list of community members he knew were currently or had previously worked in specific capacities within the community. Furthermore, it was necessary for the community members to feel at ease conversing in English to obviate the need for an interpreter. I am aware of the potential implications of this selection criterion, as it resulted in excluding a significant group of community members from the interviews. However, the requirement for online interviews due to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions in 2021 limited the feasibility of including an interpreter. The fact that I am not a native English speaker reduced potential power differences as the community members and I were not conversing in our mother tongue (Marmo, 2013).

Six community members, three males and three females, were invited for the interviews. The purposive sampling of just six key knowledgeables was considered sufficient as the interviews' purpose was not to reach data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015) but rather to obtain ‘rich’ descriptions, also referred to as depth (Patton, 2014). Additionally, the aim of selecting the six community members was not to ‘select’ representatives, also referred to as gatekeepers (Temple & Moran, 2006), as this would assume a non-differentiated makeup of the community. This stance aligns with the ontological and axiological assumptions of the transformative paradigm that underpins this research, namely multiple socially constructed realities (Mertens, 1999, 2007b) and emphasises the value of centralising marginalised voices and participation to enact social change (Mertens, 2007b, 2012).

The interview preparation process began with an email sent to selected community members, including an electronic flyer that provided a brief overview of the interview’s purpose. Those who agreed to participate were asked to suggest a convenient date and time for the interview. Once

scheduled, a Zoom invitation, Plain Language Statement (see Appendix B), and consent form (see Appendix C) were emailed to participants.

At the start of each interview, I reiterated its purpose, addressed any questions or concerns, reminded participants of the voluntary nature of their participation and their option to skip any questions, and I informed them that the interview would be recorded. The participants were asked about their preference for using a pseudonym in the PhD thesis. To establish rapport, I shared some personal background about myself and my family, helping to position myself as a social justice ally (Broido, 2000; K. E. Edwards, 2006) while remaining reflexive regarding my privilege as a white female, power dynamics (K. E. Edwards, 2006), and allyship performativity (Hesford, 2021) (see Section 1.7).

The interviews, spanning 60 to 90 minutes each, were audio recorded using the voice recording feature on an iPhone. Open-ended questions were asked (see Appendix D) and, where required, I delved deeper into specific aspects of their responses to gain further clarification and insights into essential topics. These questions were formulated based on relevant studies and focused on eliciting rich information that would assist in answering the research questions and create a foundation for the upcoming knowledge collection phases. The researcher transcribed the interviews verbatim. Table 2 presents some specifics regarding the Knowledge Holders' backgrounds.

Table 2

Background Information of the Six Knowledge Holders

Preferred names and pseudonyms	Two of the male Knowledge Holders preferred to be referred to by their chosen initials, JD and LB, whereas one of the female Knowledge Holders preferred the name Suzy. The remaining three Knowledge Holders were given culturally appropriate names, namely Atong and Nyamal for the two females and Mabor for the male.
Age	The ages ranged from the late twenties to mid-forties.
Pre-settlement lived experiences	Atong, Nyamal, Suzy, and LB had stayed in Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya as children or adolescents for a period ranging between three and nine years. During the Second Civil War, JD and Mabor lived in Khartoum, Sudan and escaped to Cairo, Egypt, in the 1990s.
Resettlement	All the Knowledge Holders were granted a humanitarian visa and left Cairo or Kakuma Refugee Camp between 2000 and 2005.
Schooling experiences in Australia	JD and Suzy arrived in Australia when they were still young and attended an English language school

	before starting mainstream schooling in Years 6 and 7, respectively. The remaining four Knowledge Holders arrived in Australia as adults, and Mabor and LB attended university to continue their studies.
Children attending school	Apart from JD, all Knowledge Holders had children attending local primary and secondary schools.
Interaction with the South Sudanese Australian Community	Suzy, Nyamal, Atong, Mabor and LB were working in a setting where they frequently interacted with other South Sudanese Australian community members as part of their job responsibilities. JD mainly interacted with other members of the South Sudanese community when playing sports or during cultural festivals.

4.4.2 Phase Two: Focus Group Meetings with the South Sudanese Australian Adolescents

In March 2022, following approval from the Department of Education to conduct research in Victorian educational settings, two schools were approached by email. Both schools, referred to as Riverwalk College and Western College, are located in the western suburbs of Melbourne. The narrative school portraits presented in Chapter 7, provide details regarding the initial interactions with these schools. It is important to note that the selection of these schools is a limitation of this research due to the minimal ethnic diversity among the students, as most South Sudanese Australians residing in the western suburbs of Melbourne are Dinka.

4.4.2.1 Selecting the Students

At Western College, a meeting was organised at the end of April 2022, and the enrolled South Sudanese Australian students who were currently attending school were invited by the Assistant Principal[51]. Seven students attended this initial meeting. During this meeting, I shared information about myself as a migrant and mother of children of African-European descent navigating the Australian school system. This information-sharing was purposely done to create a rapport and trust with the student Knowledge Holders (Birks et al., 2007). The students were given the Plain Information Sheet (see Appendix E) and the consent form (see Appendix F) and instructed to review the documents with their parent(s)/caregiver(s) and ensure the consent form was signed, given they were all under 18 years old. When six consent forms were returned to the principal, the first focus group meeting was scheduled, and one male and three female students committed to participating in the research.

[51] During my first visit to Western College, the principal asked an administrative staff member to check the total number of South Sudanese Australian students currently enrolled at the school. The total number was sixteen.

At Riverwalk College, I was assisted by CLO Deng (pseudonym), who facilitated the initial meetings with students from different year levels. In collaboration with the Years 8, 9, and 10 Year Leaders, Deng decided which students were suitable. After approval from the Year Leaders, Deng invited the selected students for the initial meetings. As per the ethical requirements of the research, students currently experiencing personal issues or who were involved with youth justice were not considered. During the initial meetings with the invited students, the same procedures were followed as those conducted at Western College. It took several weeks to establish a group of students, six females and two males.

Table 3 displays some of the students' background information. As with the South Sudanese Australian community members, I asked the students about their preference for using their real name or pseudonym. As noted earlier, this open approach to anonymity respects the students' agency and autonomy (Lenette, 2019).

Table 3

Overview of the Participating Students

Riverwalk College (6 females, 2 males)	**Year**	**Self-Identified Ethnic background**	**Birthplace**
Aduk Kept her name	10	Bor (Dinka)	She was born in Australia
Aker Kept her name	9	Bor (Dinka)	She was born in Australia
Chanel Self-selected pseudonym	11	Bahr el Ghazal	She was born in Australia
Abul Kept her name	9	Bor (Dinka)	She was born in South Sudan and lived in Kakuma for three years. She came to Australia when she was ten years old
Amiot Kept her name*	10	Bor (Dinka)	She was born in South Sudan, escaped to a refugee camp in Kenya and came to Australia in 2018
Aluat Kept her name*	9	Tonj (Dinka)	She was born in South Sudan and lived in Uganda and Kenya. She came to Australia when she was about three or four years old.
Abraham Kept his name	11	Bor (Dinka)	He was born in Australia

MJ Self-selected initials	11	Bor (Dinka)	He was born in Egypt and arrived in Australia when he was about six months old
Western College **(3 females, 1 male)**			
Abuk Kept her name	12	Aweil (Dinka)	She was born in Australia
AD Self-selected initials	12	Tonj (Dinka)	She was born in South Sudan. She also lived in Kampala, Uganda, and moved to Australia when she was eight years old
Saint Self-selected pseudonym	12	Mixed: Aweil (Dinka) and Sudanese	She was born in Australia. Saint has mixed Sudanese, South Sudanese and Egyptian ethnic backgrounds
Moya Self-selected pseudonym	12	Mixed. South Sudanese ethnic group unknown	He was born in Libya and has lived in Sudan, South Sudan, and Egypt. He came to Australia when he was nine years old

* These students specifically expressed their wish to keep their names, as this was a rare opportunity to share their opinions (voices).

4.4.2.2 Focus Group Meetings

Four focus group meetings were organised at each school in June 2022. Bagnoli and Clark (2010) stated that focus groups "can provide participants with a space in which they can define their own categories and labels, and unmask ideas and opinions through dialogue and debate with others" (p. 104). The rationale for organising the focus groups prior to the interviews is as follows. Firstly, the focus groups served as a means to acquaint the students in a culturally safe environment (Wilson & Neville, 2009) where they could feel comfortable among their peers. Secondly, the focus groups were used to build rapport, facilitating smoother one-on-one interviews in the next phase. Thirdly, the focus group meetings served as a platform to explore the topics relevant to the research in a culturally responsive manner, respecting the importance of storytelling in the South Sudanese culture (Perry, 2008), thereby considering the South Sudanese cultural norms and values. Lastly, the focus group meetings provided the opportunity to observe the students' interactions, which assisted me in forming an overall impression of the students and informing the narrative portraits of the three female students from Western College.

The topics of the four meetings were as follows:

- Meeting 1: Introduction to the Research and Our Identities
- Meeting 2: Our Identities and School

- Meeting 3: Our Identities and Our Families
- Meeting 4: Our Identities and the Community

At the beginning of the meetings, I explained that they would be filmed for the purpose of transcribing and that it was, therefore, important that the students should not speak all at the same time. Frequent reminders were given, especially in Riverwalk College, where the students tended to get excited during the meetings, though jokes and laughter were much appreciated and allowed for observations regarding their interactions. Additionally, during the first meeting, I informed the students of the upcoming activities that were part of the research. This included a self-selected arts-based project (phase 6) and an interview with a parent or caregiver (proposed Phase 7). Lastly, as with the initial meetings when students were invited to participate in the research, I shared personal information about my family to create a sense of trust and authenticity while working towards developing relationships with them (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Additionally, as stated earlier, by purposively sharing personal information I endeavoured to establish rapport (Birks et al., 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and foster a sense of shared social identity while presenting and positioning myself as an ally, or, rather, a social justice ally (Broido, 2000; K. E. Edwards, 2006) (see also Chapter 1, Section 1.7).

During the four focus group meetings, I explored the abovementioned topics using open-ended questions (see Appendix G) to initiate the sharing of lived experiences and knowledge. Prompting questions were used when more specific answers or clarifications were required. The quiet students were addressed directly to gather their experiences and opinions, but I did not press them when they seemed unsure how to respond. The meetings were filmed using an iPhone and a MacBook that were placed on either side of the table. I also made notes during the meetings, mostly referring to the provided responses or suggested follow-up questions. I transcribed the recordings from Western College verbatim. An external transcriber transcribed the focus groups from Riverwalk College, and I checked the transcripts for accuracy and added the correct names.

In line with the extended multi-method autobiographical research approach (Esteban-Guitart, 2016), diary entries were part of the research proposal. The students had been informed during the initial meetings organised to create interest among the South Sudanese Australian students that they would be asked to maintain a journal for three to four weeks concurrent with the timing of the focus group discussions. However, after observing the time it took for the consent forms to be returned (and the number of misplaced ones), I realised that journaling was perhaps unsuitable as these could easily be

misplaced. Furthermore, because the students were not yet familiar with me, I wondered whether requesting diary entries right after the first focus group meeting would be suitable as it is a highly personal experience and requires vulnerability. Therefore, after consulting my supervisors, it was decided not to include the diary entries.

4.4.3 Phase Three: Individual Interviews and Drawings with the South Sudanese Australian Adolescents

I communicated directly with the four Year 12 students at Western College using their school email to schedule the interviews. However, it took several weeks to arrange the interviews due to challenges such as students not responding to emails, being absent on the arranged interview day, or indicating they were preoccupied with exam preparations. The four interviews took place in July and August 2022. Before the interviews, I reviewed the notes from the focus group meetings and the transcriptions to guide my questions and seek clarification from the students (see Appendix H). The interviews took place at Western College during school and were voice-recorded on an iPhone. Following the interviews, I asked the students to make an identity drawing. I used the following instructions from Esteban-Guitart (2016, p. 63):

> Could you try to draw who you think you are at this point in your life? You may add, if you want to, the people, objects, institutions, and things that, for you, are the most important or the most significant.

I also included hobbies and aspirations in this list as these had frequently been mentioned in the focus group meetings. I ended the instructions with a general comment: "Anything that tells me something about who you are." Some students indicated unease regarding their drawing skills, so I suggested that they could also use words if that made them feel more comfortable and confident in completing the drawing.[52] Each student was provided with a piece of white A4 paper and a set of about 20 coloured felt pens. Once they completed their drawing, I asked them to explain it while placing sticky notes on the sheet with their responses. I also resumed the recordings.

Following the identity drawing, the students were asked to draw a geomap using the following instructions:

> Can you make a map that indicates any spaces and places that are important for you? You can draw yourself in the middle or just draw a circle and write 'Me' or your name. To give me an idea of how important these places are, can you write or draw them in various distances from the middle, whereby a short line indicates that it is a very important place, and a long line indicates that it is not too important, but still relevant for you.

[52] The identity drawings created in the studies by Bagnoli's (2009) and Esteban-Guitart (2016) also included written expressions, so I considered it suitable to allow the students to do the same. See, for example Esteban-Guitart (2016, pp. 64-65).

I amended the original instructions provided by Esteban-Guitart (2016) slightly, as he asked the participating people in his study to indicate the intensity of the places by drawing one, two or three lines, with three being the most significant. I made this amendment to facilitate the analysis, as line length would allow for more variation and could, therefore, assist me in distinguishing which places were most important to the students. I did not include places and spaces important to family members but only focused on the students. When students were unsure what to do, I created a quick sketch as an example. This was sufficient for the students, and all could complete a geomap. Each student was provided with another piece of white A4 paper and could use the set of about 20 coloured felt pens. Upon completing the geomap, we reviewed the responses together, and I asked the students for more details when required.

At Riverwalk College, I needed the assistance of CLO Deng to arrange the interviews with the students. The interviews took place between July and September 2022 at the school. I followed the same procedures with the identity drawings and geomaps. All the interviews were voice-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

4.4.4 Phase Four: Interviews with School Leadership and Teachers

The fourth knowledge collection phase was conducted for two purposes. First, the interviews were intended to gather information to provide a contextualised understanding of the educational environments in which the South Sudanese Australian students were situated. The interviews with the (assistant) principal covered several topics, including experiences with South Sudanese Australian students and their families, inclusive pedagogies and strategies implemented in the school, levels of parental involvement, and observations regarding discrimination and racism (see Appendix I). The interviews with the (homeroom) teachers focused on several areas, including their observations and experiences with the participating student(s), perceptions regarding the importance of understanding students' backgrounds, and teacher expectations (see Appendix J). Second, the interviews were intended to gather information that could inform the creation of the narrative school portraits.

At Western College, the Principal and the students' homeroom teachers were invited for an interview. In total, three homeroom teachers were interviewed: one teacher for AD, another who taught both Abuk and Moya, and a third who was Saint's homeroom teacher. The principal was also interviewed. This phase of the research occurred between April and September 2022, and each interview lasted for approximately 45 to 60 minutes

At Riverwalk College, the Assistant Principal and the Head of House, who oversaw the refugee background students and their families, were invited for an interview. They opted to conduct the interview together due to limited availability. Furthermore, the Assistant Principal provided the names of teachers who were assumed to be well-acquainted with some of the participating students. One teacher was interviewed; however, due to the limited availability of the other teachers, the Assistant Principal proposed requesting a response via email. One of the four teachers responded and shared some observations and insights, though they were somewhat limited. Interviews occurred between June and September 2022 and lasted for approximately 45-60 minutes

For this phase, semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were conducted with those invited (see Appendices I and J). The interviews were recorded on an iPhone and subsequently transcribed verbatim. Some transcriptions were completed by me, while others were outsourced to an external transcribing agency. Transcriptions completed by this agency were cross-checked by listening to the audio recordings, reviewing the transcriptions, and making necessary amendments in cases where inaccuracies were identified.

4.4.5 Phase Five: Interviews with South Sudanese Australian Community Liaison Officers

The fifth phase occurred in July 2022, during which interviews were conducted with three CLOs of South Sudanese Australian backgrounds employed at Riverwalk College using purposeful sampling (Patton, 2015). The 45 to 90-minute semi-structured interviews with the CLOs were conducted at Riverwalk College and included open-ended questions (see Appendix K). The interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed. The CLOs possessed extensive experience working in schools or community settings.

4.4.6 Phase Six: Arts-Based Activities with the South Sudanese Australian Adolescents

A range of arts-based activities was proposed for students to choose from (see Section 4.3.3). During the first focus group meeting, the students at both schools were informed of the self-selected arts-based activities and were asked if they needed any materials, such as paint supplies, as I would purchase them. During the remaining three focus group meetings and individual interviews, I regularly checked in with the students to gauge their ideas and determine what needed to be done to finalise their activities. In both schools, there was support for arts-based activities. However, this phase was impacted by several factors that prevented the collection and execution of the arts-based activities.

At Western College, one of the students, Moya, initially expressed interest in creating a photo collage; but did not complete this. He later opted to make a cooking video as he was keen to share some of his favourite African dishes. Unfortunately, despite several attempts to contact him on his school email, I received no response, and the cooking video was not submitted. Since Moya was no longer attending school in September when I completed the activities at Western College, I had no other means to contact him.

At Riverwalk College, the two male students expressed interest to participate in the arts-based activities. Abraham opted to submit photos and MJ wanted to share some of his drawing sketches. Several reminders were given, also by CLO Deng. Unfortunately, towards the end of Term 4, their arts-based artefacts were not shared with me. The six female students indicated during the first focus group meeting that they wanted to organise a fashion show and potentially including a traditional dance. We talked about the requirements to organise this exciting event during the subsequent focus group meetings. I also discussed the students' plan with the assistant principal, who expressed full support and delegated one of the CLOs to assist with the preparations. Despite the initial enthusiasm and collaborative planning, the proposed activity did not progress beyond the planning stage due to several challenges, primarily concerning logistical constraints and limited available time.

The arts-based activities would have provided valuable insights into elements that contributed to or expressed the students' identities. However, their participation was voluntary, and I had to accept their decisions to not proceed or submit artefacts. I also recognised that the timing of this phase, which coincided with the end of Term 4, made it challenging for Riverwalk College to provide me any further assistance.

Table 4 provides an overview of the planned arts-based activities, and which ones were and were not completed.

Table 4
Overview of the Selected Arts-Based Activities

School	Participants	Selected arts-based activities
Western College	AD, Abuk and Saint	Suggested: photo collages: Completed, namely: - Three photo collages including various images, short narratives (Saint), a poem (AD), lyrics of a rap song (Saint) (not included due to copyright issues).

		- Group sharing session with AD and Abuk,
	Moya	Suggested: a cooking video: Not completed
Riverwalk College	Aduk, Aker, Aluat, Amiot, Abul and Chanel	Suggested: a fashion show and a traditional dance: Not completed
	Abraham and MJ	Suggested: photos and sketches: Not completed

4.5 Analysis of the Gathered Knowledge

The following sections describe how the gathered knowledge was analysed. I will first describe how the interviews and focus group meetings were analysed, followed by the analysis of the arts-based artefacts created by the student Knowledge Holders. The final part of this section describes how the narrative portraits were created.

4.5.1 Analysis of the Interviews and Focus Group Discussions

The transcribed interviews with members of the South Sudanese Australian community members, the (Assistant) Principals, teachers, and CLOs, as well as the focus group discussions and individual interviews with the students, underwent inductive and deductive analysis. Braun and Clarke's (2021) six-phases of reflexive thematic analysis method was used to engage with the collected knowledge. Table 5 provides an overview of the six phases and an explanation of the activities during each of these phases.

Table 5
Overview of the Six Phases of Reflexive Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis phases	Explanation of analysis
Phase 1: Data (knowledge) familiarisation and writing familiarisation notes	● The interviews and focus group meetings were transcribed. ● The transcriptions made by the external provider were checked against the voice videos and voice recordings. ● The transcripts were read several times. I watched the videos from the focus group meetings and listened to the audio from the interviews several times to become familiar with the gathered knowledge while I listened for expressions of topics relevant to this research. ● The collected fieldnotes were compiled in a document and divided into observations regarding the school, participants and personal reflections. ● Notes that focused on initial thoughts regarding the collected knowledge were taken during these activities.

Phase 2: Systematic data (knowledge) coding	• The transcribed interviews with the six adult community members were coded in NVivo using an initial description (codes). A total of 38 initial codes were formulated, some being sub-codes. • A mind map was constructed in NVivo, including all 38 nodes, to search for connections and common themes to reduce the number of codes. • Deductive analysis in NVivo was conducted to analyse the interviews with the community members using the existing CCW framework to explore expressions of community capital.
	• The transcribed interviews with the (Assistant) Principals and teachers were coded in NVivo, using the questions covered in the interviews as guidelines for the codes, while also identifying any additional relevant codes to create narrative portraits of the schools.
	• The transcribed interviews with the CLOs were coded in NVivo. The questions covered in the interviews were used as guides for the coding.
	• The transcribed focus group meetings and interviews with the students were deductively analysed in NVivo using the sub-categories of the FoI and CCW frameworks. • The transcribed focus group meetings and interviews with the students were inductively analysed in NVivo and a separate code with sub-codes for expressions of identity and community wealth that were not captured by the FoI and CCW frameworks were created. • The transcribed focus group meetings and interviews with the students were inductively analysed in NVivo to search for themes and creating codes that provided important information related to the lived experiences and observations of the student Knowledge Holders.
Phase 3: Generating initial themes from coded and collected data (knowledge)	• Initial themes were generated from the generated codes and sub-codes in the analysed knowledge.
Phase 4: Developing and reviewing the themes	• Meta-themes, themes and sub-themes were developed and reviewed by identifying patterns and commonalities across the gathered knowledge. This phase helped to reduce the number of initial codes and prioritise themes that were most relevant for answering the research questions and generating new insights, particularly those that could be used the extend of the FoI framework.

Phase 5: Refining, defining and naming themes	• A visual overview of the three identified meta-themes, themes and sub-themes from the interviews with the South Sudanese Australian adult community members was created to assist with the refining, defining and naming the generated meta-themes, themes and sub-themes.
	• The identified themes from the interviews with the CLOs were grouped under the following headings: the roles of the CLOs, issues observed at the school, observations regarding teachers, the importance of having CLOs at the school, the position of girls in the South Sudanese Australian community. This information was used for the writing of the school portraits.
	• The themes from the interviews with the (Assistant) Principals and teachers were named and grouped as part of the preparation for the writing of the narrative portraits of the schools. I focused on a general understanding of the environment where the participating students in this research spent a considerable amount of their time, experiences of school leadership and teachers with South Sudanese Australian community members, and measures implemented to enhance and foster inclusive education strategies in the schools.
	• For the portraits of the three female students, I used their shared knowledge (including the arts-based artefacts) and looked for a storyline, considering that there are always several stories that emerge during and after knowledge collection (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005).
	• The explored expressions of FoI and CCW by the students in the focus group meetings were compiled into two tables (see Appendices L and M). The codes and sub-codes that were generated from the deductive analysis, which provided expressions of identity and community wealth not captured by the FoI and CCW frameworks, were grouped and analysed separately. Two new sub-categories for the FoI were identified in this process, namely resistance FoI and normative and expectational FoI.
Phase 6: Writing the report (thesis)	• This final phase consisted of creating and writing outcomes chapters that sought to answer the research questions while any additional insights important to the overall topic of this research were explored. • The school and student portraits were written. This process is explained in more detail below this table. • All the generated themes, as well as those in the discussion chapter, were approved by Dr Abur who

	checked to ensure that I had respectfully represented the participant students' voices without discrediting or misrepresenting the South Sudanese Australian community.

As an ethical researcher, it is my responsibility to ensure the benefits for and culturally responsive representation of the South Sudanese Australian community in this thesis (Tuhiwai Smith, 2021). For this purpose, direct quotes are utilised extensively, aiming to preserve the meaning and intentions of the speakers without distortions from my analysis and interpretations. In addition, I have not altered the included quotes to improve fluency and reduce grammatical errors. When I quote the parts of the conversations, I use [...] to indicate that part of the quote is not included. I sometimes explain a certain aspect by adding [text], for example, when the question is important to be included to understand the answer provided.

4.5.2 Analysis of the Arts-Based Artefacts

In analysing the arts-based artefacts created by the students, including identity drawings, geomaps, and photo collages, I was guided by the broader methodological principles of the extended multimethod autobiographical approach as suggested by Esteban-Guitart (2012, 2016), which builds on Bagnoli's (2009) work (see Section 4.3.1). However, neither Esteban-Guitart (2012, 2016) nor Bagnoli (2009) provided guidelines for analysing and interpreting visual artefacts. Given that many of the created artefacts contained written text, I employed Braun and Clarke's (2021) reflexive thematic analysis to guide my analysis. This approach allowed for a flexible and iterative process using both inductive and deductive analysis, whereby I explored the artefacts for expressions of FoI and CCW.

For the analysis of the identity drawings, I created a table and wrote all the contributions that were written or drawn in a column that I named 'descriptions and expressions of identity'. This table was deductively analysed using the sub-categories of the FoI frameworks. Anything that could not be categorised in one of the FoI sub-categories was placed separately. These could potentially be new sub-categories that add to the existing frameworks. After this, the contributions were analysed for common features and grouped under the following headings, which are considered the themes generated from the identity drawing analysis: social FoI, geographical FoI, practical FoI, cultural FoI, dark FoI, future (job) aspirations, quotes/statements, self-descriptions, and descriptions of South Sudanese. I created a visual overview incorporating all the student contributions using different colours to indicate the different headings (see Figure 33). The contributions were copied verbatim and not corrected for spelling or grammar errors. The drawings were checked for any personal information

that could compromise the anonymity of the students and their families and, where this was evident, it was crossed out using an online editing drawing tool.

For the analysis of the geomaps, I created a table with all the locations the students wrote down (see Appendix N). I also indicated the importance level according to the line length. I grouped the answers under the following headings, which are considered the themes of the geomaps: places at home, places in Australia, school environment, other homes, religious places, places in Africa, places in the world, and remaining places of interest. Additional explanations or information were added to the table if the students had provided this and when I felt it was important in assisting me in the analysis. I highlighted the places identified as important to the student Knowledge Holders. I then created a visual representation of the most significant places (see Figure 44).

The submitted creative projects, three photo collages, were analysed by documenting the visual elements depicted on the photos, and the verbal explanations provided by AD and Abuk when the photo collages were discussed together. In most cases, the photos corresponded with elements previously mentioned during the interviews and focus group meetings, thereby reinforcing and complementing the knowledge already shared by the students. For example, two female students, AD and Abuk, included images of musical artists they admired. These photos reinforced their earlier comments shared in the focus group meetings, where they indicated that music is an expression of their identity. Based on the analysis of the photos and the accompanying verbal explanations, themes were generated and subsequently integrated in the narrative portraits.

One of the students, Saint, was not able to attend the final meeting during which the photo collages were discussed. However, her collage included extensive written commentaries in which she reflected and elaborated on the importance of family, her parents, and family gatherings. The accompanying photos corresponded with these written reflections, and, therefore, no additional explanations were required. Both the written text and photos were analysed, and relevant themes were generated. These themes were subsequently woven into her narrative portrait.

The photo collage of AD included a poem. During the discussion meeting, AD explained the reason for including this poem by stating what the poem meant for her. The poem and additional explanation were analysed by identifying keywords used to express or describe identity and any elements that could be categorised using the theoretical frameworks of FoI and CCW. The interpretation of the analysis was used in AD's narrative portrait.

4.5.3 Thematic Analyses and Writing the Narrative Portraits

The narrative approach employed in this thesis draws from the portraiture methodology as outlined in Section 4.3.2. The development of the portraits began during the initial visits to the schools and through the interactions with the three female students in the focus group meetings and interviews, during which I listened *for* a story and (J. H. Davis, 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) (see Section 4.3.2). As shown in Table 5, creating the portraits was an iterative process of writing, reading, reflecting, listening, watching, and analysing. This process was guided by the portraitist's search for goodness in crafting narratives that were both convincing and authentic (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) and could serve as counter-narratives against deficit perspectives and assumptions (see Section 4.3.2). Writing the portraits, especially those of the students, required navigating ethical tensions inherent in representing stories with difficult lived experiences, such as racism, separation from loved ones, and mental health issues. I aimed to balance the need for authentic representations with the imperative to protect the students' dignity and agency while also highlighting their strength, resilience, and resistance.

Writing the portraits is a creative and iterative process and there is no step-by-step method suggested by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997). However, in writing the school and student portraits, I was guided by the five central features of portraiture methodology: context, voice, relationship, emergent themes, and the aesthetic whole (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). These features provided a conceptual and methodological framework that assisted in shaping the narratives.

The first feature, context, was based on my observations at Western College and Riverwalk College, the interviews with the (Assistant) Principals, teachers, CLOs, as well as the interviews and focus group meetings with AD, Saint, and Abuk. I collected field notes that reported on the overall settings and watched the videos of the focus group meetings and interviews multiple times. I used all this information to decide which elements of the context to include in the portraits, guided by the overall purposes of the portraits.

I employed the second feature voice to inform readers of my identity and position (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005), which are informed by my "search for goodness" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 141) within the school as an institution and the participants whose voices I used in the portraits. I considered not only the positive aspects but also purposely included elements that expressed "vulnerability, weakness, prejudice, and anxiety" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 141).

The third feature central to portraiture emphasises the importance of a meaningful and authentic relationship between the researcher and the participants. In my interactions with the participants, I listened *for* a story (J. H. Davis, 2003) and considered them as the "knowledge bearers, as rich resources, as the best authorities on their own experience" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 141). The writing of the portraits also involved creating a relationship with the readers, which required a certain intentionality in making the portraits accessible to a broad audience, while also aiming to make them provocative and compelling (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2016).

In addressing the fourth feature, emergent themes, I employed triangulation by utilising different sources of information collected during the school visits, focus group meetings, and interviews. This included information pertaining to enrolments, leadership structures, student behaviour and roles and responsibilities of the CLOs. I also drew on my observations of the individuals interviewed within the school settings, as well as the three students, AD, Saint, and Abuk. Furthermore, I analysed the collected knowledge using the NVivo software to explore elements that contributed to the three students' identities (deductive analysis) and coded the remaining knowledge (inductive analysis) under newly formulated codes (e.g., the role of girls at home and resistance).

The fifth tenet is the aesthetic whole, whereby I wove all the elements of the narrative into a completed portrait. I had to consider which themes to include and exclude and, most importantly, decide when each portrait was complete. This was an iterative process involving multiple drafts and included feedback from my supervisors and Dr William Abur.

The school portraits were not shared with the schools during the writing process, as this was not part of the arrangement made with the schools. The three female students had left school by the time I wrote their portraits, as they were all in their final months of school when I last met with them in September 2022. While I would have liked to share the portraits with the three students and receive their feedback, I did not have access to their private email addresses. Nonetheless, the portraits were developed with a sense of responsibility to represent the students' experiences in a respectful, ethical and meaningful manner.

4.6 Ethical Considerations and Trustworthiness of the Research

4.6.1 Ethical Considerations of the Research

An ethics application was submitted to the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee in April 2021 and was approved in June 2021 (HRE 21-016). The research adhered to the values and principles of ethical conduct as prescribed in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research: Research merit and integrity, justice, beneficence, and respect (National Health and Medical Research Council [NHMRC], 2023). In accordance with Chapter 2.2. of the National Statement and the guidelines of Victoria University, all participants signed an informed consent form that included the required elements. The students, aged between 15 and 18, required parental consent (NHMRC, 2023) and provided consent (assent). In addition to the ethics application, a request for permission to conduct research in Victorian education settings was submitted to the DE Strategic Research Unit and approved in March 2022 (2021_004472).

During the interviews, the participants were reminded that they could stop the interview at any time, indicate when they felt uncomfortable answering a question, and that their participation was voluntary. Furthermore, I asked the South Sudanese Australian community members and students which name they preferred to be referred to in the thesis. Participants opted to use either initials, their name, or a self-selected pseudonym. When no preference for a pseudonym was provided, I decided on a culturally relevant name. I also asked the CLOs for their name preference, and they all opted for a pseudonym since they were talking from a professional standpoint. I provided a pseudonym for the remaining school-based participants, including leadership team members and teachers, or referred to general descriptions, such as ‘the principal.’ Lastly, I reiterated that the school's name would be given a pseudonym to ensure anonymity and that only a broad description of ‘schools in the western suburbs’ would be used.

It was anticipated that, due to the personal nature of this research, students could potentially disclose sensitive information related to their mental health and overall well-being. The consent form for students and their parents/caregivers (see Appendix F) acknowledged the possibility that some questions could make the students sad or unsettled. This comment was followed by available options in such cases, including pausing or stopping the focus group meeting or interview, and accessing support from the school well-being team. These points were verbally repeated at the start of each focus group meeting and interview. When references to mental health were made, predominantly by the Year 12 students from Western College, I remained calm and listened to their stories with empathy, creating a safe space for the students to share their experiences. When the students shared

these stories, they also indicated how they managed their mental health or spoke about supportive people who helped them during these difficult times. Due to the way these disclosures were shared, I was not negatively affected by them. Nevertheless, I regularly discussed these moments with my supervisors.

The approval of the ethics application might assume that all ethical aspects of this research had been considered. However, several elements needed careful consideration before collecting the knowledge, and they required ongoing reflexivity during the PhD journey. I have been guided by the scholarship and guidelines of Tuhiwai Smith (2021). Even though her book *Decolonising Methodologies* is focused on conducting research in Indigenous contexts, it provides salient considerations and culturally appropriate protocols that can be applied to any cross-cultural study. Tuhiwai Smith (2021) stated that a decolonising methodology is:

> Concerned not so much with the actual technique of selecting a method but much more with the context in which research problems are conceptualized and designed, and with the implication of research for its participants and their communities. It is also concerned with the institution of research, its claims, its values and practices, and its relationships to power (p. 286).

The first consideration concerns the epistemological assumption of research: what is considered knowledge, by which standards, and in which contexts? There is a potential risk in using a theoretical framework, FoI, that can be considered 'western', even though its aim is to challenge deficit perspectives of underrepresented and marginalised people. Underpinning my research with a 'western' theoretical framework that has informed the research questions, methodology and analysis can potentially distort the collected knowledge and categorise it according to a 'western' application of knowledge. In a similar vein, Lenette (2019) argued that it is important to be critical of applying guidelines (e.g., related to integrity, justice, beneficence, and respect) when working with communities such as those from refugee backgrounds, given that these ethical principles have been formulated within western contexts.

The second consideration pertains to the positioning of the participants. In line with Lenette (2019) and as discussed in Section 4.4, I refer to the participants as the Knowledge Holders. Utilising this term is particularly important for the South Sudanese Australians who contributed to this research, as it acknowledges their lived experiences, expertise, and agency and addresses the power imbalances in the cross-cultural context of this research (Lenette, 2019). Similarly, as outlined in Section 4.4., I refrain from using the word 'data' but use 'knowledge' instead as it respects the experiences and expertise of the Knowledge Holders as the "knowledge bearers" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 141).

Ongoing reflexivity during the analysis of the gathered knowledge is paramount to avoid interpretations based on assumptions and misunderstandings (Smith, 2021).

The fourth consideration concerns the importance of how the research will represent and benefit the South Sudanese Australian community (Tuhiwai Smith, 2021), and ongoing researcher reflexivity is important. In addition to reflexivity, Graham Smith (cited in Tuhiwai Smith, 2021, p. 230) suggested that non-Indigenous researchers aiming to conduct culturally appropriate research employ the *tiaki,* or mentoring model, whereby an authoritative person, such as an elder, guides the research. My supervisors and I agreed to involve Dr William Abur (University of Melbourne), a South Sudanese background academic scholar, as a research advisor. During the first knowledge collection phase, Dr Abur assisted with finding suitable community members who were considered knowledgeable. Throughout the research process, Dr Abur was asked to comment on the representation of the South Sudanese Australian community by reading the thesis chapters. Dr Abur also attended the final milestone presentation, during which the emerging outcomes of the research were presented to the panel. Dr Abur confirmed the outcomes presented in the milestone presentation and addressed the importance of these outcomes for the South Sudanese Australian community in a meeting following the presentation. Lastly, Dr Abur read the final drafts of the outcomes chapters and provided feedback regarding the presented knowledge and interpretations thereof.

4.6.2. Trustworthiness of the Research

Within qualitative studies, the term 'rigour', which refers to the legitimacy, competence and integrity (Tobin & Begley, 2004), is not suitable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Rather, in qualitative research, the notion of trustworthiness is applicable, using the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Credibility refers to the plausibility of research (Lincoln, 1995) or "the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings" (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, p. 121). Prolonged engagement is one of the suggested measures to increase credibility and is aimed, among others, at learning about the culture and developing "trust and rapport" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 303). During the different phases of this research, I learned from several members of the South Sudanese Australian community, including nine adults and 12 adolescents, over 12 months. As previously mentioned (see Chapter 1, Section 1.7, and Sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2), I shared relevant information about myself and my family at the start of the interviews with the adult community members and the focus group meetings with the adolescents. This assisted me in positioning myself as a social justice ally (Broido, 2000) whilst being reflexive regarding my privilege as a white female, power (K. E. Edwards, 2006) and allyship

performativity (Hesford, 2021) (see Section 1.7). In addition to prolonged engagement, “method triangulation” (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, p.21) was employed using several data-collection methods, including interviews, focus group meetings and arts-based activities. Lastly, the interpretations, discussions and conclusions pertaining to the analysis of the gathered knowledge were checked by Dr William Abur to enhance the credibility of this research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and to ensure the South Sudanese Australian community was represented respectfully.

The second criterion of trustworthiness is transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Due to the subjective nature and multiple interpretations of the outcomes of this qualitative research, the outcomes cannot be generalised (Tobin & Begley, 2004). However, through providing “thick descriptions” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316) concerning all aspects of this research, including the sampling of the participating people, inclusion criteria, research process and context, I have endeavoured to increase the transferability of this research (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

The third criterion, dependability, concerns data stability (Korstjens & Moser, 2018) and is closely linked to credibility. Korstjens and Moser (2018) stated that the interpretation of data should not reflect your own personal preferences and perspectives. I have addressed the criterion of dependability by providing detailed descriptions of the research activities completed during the six phases of knowledge collection (see Section 4.4). I have also provided overviews of how the knowledge has been analysed (see Table 5), included the identity drawings, geomaps (see Appendix N) and included overviews of multiple quotes grouped under the FoI and CCW sub-categories (see Appendices L and M). Potential bias in the interpretation and presentation of the gathered knowledge, particularly through insufficient insights into particular cultural norms, values and customs, can impact the overall trustworthiness of this research. While I have endeavoured to address this by including a “member check” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 314) by asking Dr William Abur to examine my findings chapters, it is not possible to affirm that this research is free from personal bias.

Lastly, the criterion of confirmability in qualitative research pertains to whether other researchers can confirm a study's outcomes (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Strategies such as data triangulation and researcher reflexivity can enhance confirmability during the research inquiry (Lincoln, 1995). From the onset of this thesis, I have presented my positioning and motivation for undertaking this research (see Section 1.7). Furthermore, reflexivity, which refers to ongoing critical self-reflection concerning my biases, preferences and assumptions that can impact the research process and outcomes and the relationship with those involved in the research (Korstjens & Moser, 2018), has been an ongoing part

of this research. Lastly, maintaining transparency regarding the entire research process has been a consistent approach to addressing the confirmability of this research.

4.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the research design, including the qualitative research approach and the underpinning research paradigms that inform the methodology. I have provided an overview of the various research methods employed to gather the knowledge in this research, including elements of the extended multi-method autobiographical approach, portraiture and arts-based activities. The six knowledge collection phases have been discussed, including the sampling procedures utilised in selecting the schools and participants and details regarding the implemented research procedures. I have also described the analytic processes, and the chapter concluded with my responses to ethical considerations and how the trustworthiness criteria have been addressed.

The following chapters present the findings of this research, starting with Chapter 5, which centres around the narrative portraits of three female students.

Chapter 5: Introducing the Student Voices: Student Portraits

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the narrative portraits of three students from Western College who are key Knowledge Holders in this research.

The narrative portraits are of three female Year 12 students from Western College: AD (self-selected initials), Saint (self-selected pseudonym) and Abuk. The portraits are informed by the five central tenets of portraiture — context, voice, relationship, emergent themes, and the aesthetic whole (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) — and draw from the knowledge and experiences shared in the four focus group meetings, the individual interviews, the identity drawings and geomaps, the arts-based projects, personal observations, fieldnotes, and the homeroom teachers' observations (see Chapter 4, Section 4.3.2).

The decision to focus on these three students was influenced by practical space limitations and their role as key knowledge contributors to this research. They were the only students to complete and share an arts-based project (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.6), which offered deeper insights into their lived experiences and FoI. Furthermore, the group of participating students at Western College was smaller than at Riverwalk College. During two out of the four focus group meetings, only AD, Abuk, and Saint were present, which allowed for more openness and personal responses. This small setting allowed me to develop meaningful relationships with the girls while listening for a story in the sharing of their lived experiences (J. H. Davis, 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). The smaller group size also facilitated more direct engagement and opportunities to seek clarifications, which was more challenging at Riverwalk College, where an average of eight students attended each meeting. Lastly, the girls' familiarity with one another, which was demonstrated through insider jokes and finishing each other's sentences, facilitated further sharing of insights and sometimes evoked strong emotional responses.

I acknowledge that these portraits present a gendered perspective by solely focusing on female experiences. It is likely that males face different challenges, cultural and societal expectations and norms, which may lead to differing levels of educational engagement and outcomes. Lenette (2019) emphasised the importance of gender perspectives and noted the problem of "persistent gender blindness" in refugee studies that "leads to a *partial* exploration and understanding of forced migration concerns" (p. 9).

While some of the lived experiences of the three males are included in Chapter 6, future research can include additional perspectives and lived experiences of male adolescents to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of gender on FoI and educational experiences. Lastly, it is important to note that although the portraits cannot be generalised to all young female South Sudanese Australians, the emerging themes woven into the narratives align with a number of themes that emerged from the analysis of the knowledge gathered from the female student Knowledge Holders at Riverwalk College (presented in Chapter 6).

The three students created photo collages incorporating significant individuals in their lives and elements representative of their identity or self-expression. Saint's collage featured short written explanations alongside the photos, whereas I discussed Abuk's and AD's collages in person and wrote down their responses. Facial images on the photos are excluded in this chapter to safeguard the students' privacy and that of their families and friends; comprehensive descriptions are provided instead. A selection of their drawings, photos, and literary contributions are integrated into the portraits.

5.2 Portrait of AD: "It's Better to be Where you Belong, Where you Feel Comfortable"

AD has a welcoming personality and a warm demeanour. She is well-articulated and confident in her communication. She is bubbly and described herself as "outgoing and loud." Despite her outgoing character, AD initially remained quiet during the meetings, opting to observe rather than actively participate. However, when she did speak, her contributions were substantial, often dominating the conversation with personal insights and experiences that were quite elaborate.

AD is the youngest in her family, and all her siblings, apart from her eldest brother and older sister, live with their mother in South Sudan. AD was born in South Sudan, but her mother took the children to Kampala due to the ongoing issues in South Sudan. AD did not share much about her life in Kampala, though she mentioned that she always felt safe on the streets and that even though they were not Ugandans, they were not treated as outsiders. This aspect of belonging is essential to AD, and going back to South Sudan is something she seriously considered, saying, "You know, it's better to be where you belong, where you feel comfortable at. Somewhere where you can be you; no judgement, people accept you for who you are." She shared one precious memory about her mother, who would give her money in the mornings before school, and she would buy something small for herself and her nephew. She cherished this memory and said it was like a special "mother-daughter thing" they would do together.

AD's ethnic background is Tonj, a sub-group of the Dinka. She has forgotten much of her mother tongue, though she is keen to keep speaking and learning the language as it is the only way to communicate with her mother. AD travelled with an older sibling to Australia when she was about seven or eight years old. She has not seen her mother for ten years; however, she calls her from time to time. Most often, AD communicates via social media with her younger siblings, who share messages and photos with their mother. AD indicated that language, as is the South Sudanese culture, is an integral part of her identity. However, she said, "Coming here, you forget about your culture. In Australia, I'm in a different place." When I asked AD how she would identify herself, she expressed a strong affiliation with her South Sudanese heritage and said, "Even though I lived here for ten years, I don't identify myself as an Australian [...] I identify as South Sudanese, and I belong where I belong, which is back home."

AD shared her struggles with being treated differently, both at school and in public settings such as shops. She feels that she is constantly being judged by both the members of the South Sudanese Australian community and the broader Australian society, who seem to categorise all South Sudanese background people as either 'good' or 'bad'. AD explained:

> They assume that you're a criminal. It's either I'm a criminal or the good South Sudanese daughter. The daughter that goes out every day and does criminal stuff, or I'm the one that stays home with the parents and goes to school every day. It's like, why do I have to fit into those categories? Why can't I just be South Sudanese and be what I wanna be?

AD considered being 'Black' the reason why they are being criminalised and concluded:

> It's gonna follow us till the day we die, you know. Just being Black, in general, will follow you till the day you die, and there's like you can try to change it. You can try to put your whole heart and chest out, but nothing will ever change. 'Cause this is how it is, this is what's been given, like the views has been given to people. I can be a better person; I can prove that I'm not like these people, but that will not change anything. It will still be the same.

AD shared how, in Year 10, she struggled with certain subjects she was not interested in and started skipping classes. She requested to change subjects but was told that this was not possible. However, she observed that white students were able to change their classes. It was during this time that several of her teachers told her, "Oh, you're not going to make it, like, you're gonna fail. You're not gonna make it to Year 12." These negative assumptions from some teachers affected her greatly. Being in Year 12 is, therefore, a huge achievement for AD, and her Class of 2022 jacket was a symbol of how far she had come.

Interestingly, AD also referred to negative attitudes about her academic capabilities from some South Sudanese Australian community members; however, she said that she proved them wrong and

proudly shared her accomplishment: “I've done what half the community says that, you know, girls can't do, like some girls can't make it to year 12, let alone graduate!” AD is driven, has a clear plan for her tertiary education, and aspires to become a youth worker. A female career advisor at the school found a suitable pathway for AD after she decided not to do VCE. AD talked fondly of the career advisor and considered her the only person in the school who actively assisted her and seemed to care about AD’s tertiary education options. The lack of support from some of the teachers impacted AD and made her feel her future plans did not matter to them.

AD recounted another experience at school where she felt she was treated differently. During a heated argument with a white female student, the situation escalated and ended up involving the police and a senior member of the leadership team. While the white student received a two-day suspension, AD faced a harsher penalty of four days and additional restrictions upon her return, including bathroom access and school canteen use limitations. She struggled with the harsh punishment and considered it a racist act by the school leader. Despite grappling with the repercussions of this incident, AD remained focused on respecting her teachers, emphasising that “we just wanna give them respect because they’ve seen the bad; we wanna show them the good.” She acknowledged that in previous years, there had been instances where South Sudanese Australian students had caused significant issues at the school and subsequently left the school. This has made some of the current South Sudanese Australian students, including AD, very much aware of their position. AD shared her thoughts:

> Just because a group couldn't do it last year doesn’t mean that we can’t. So, I wanna show them that nothing is stopping us; we don’t have limits [...] We’re trying to show the teachers that not all of us are the same.

AD also recounted experiences of being subjected to differential treatment in public settings, particularly regarding bag inspections. She said:

> When you go out, people are going to ask you for receipt, ask you to open your bag, giving you looks because of your skin [...] I can be black, and I can be the nicest person! Like, it’s not, it always depend on white people, it’s always around your skin, it’s not about what you bring to the table.

Consequently, AD is specific about her clothes, consciously avoiding wearing black due to its association with gang affiliation within Australian society. She also always carries her ID in case she gets asked for it. She considers the impact of a generalised opinion regarding South Sudanese Australian young people as the reason for the distinctly different treatment, characterising it as racism. AD passionately exclaims, “I can be black, and I can be the nicest person! [...] Not all of us are thugs, not all of us are gangs, not all of us are part of something that someone else did!” However,

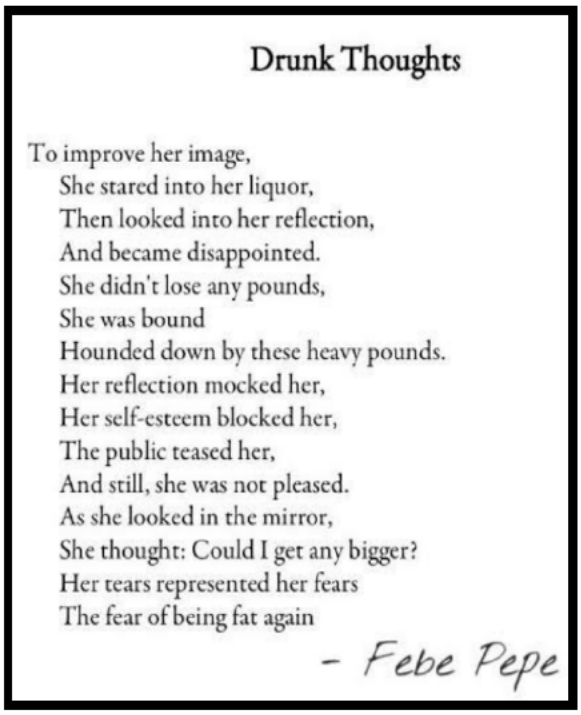
she reluctantly concludes, "Your skin will always have something against you!" The experience with discrimination and racism is mentally draining for AD, and she considers that,

> You're trying to prove something, that you're not that person thinks you are. You're trying to prove to everyone in the world that you are a good person, but it's draining. Cause, like, they're gonna keep saying the same things.

It was confronting hearing AD's negative lived experiences and her expression of frustration that people will always consider the worst of her just because of her skin colour. Despite these challenges, AD displayed resilience and a mature demeanour in remaining respectful to teachers and those confronting her publicly. However, in our final meeting, during which we discussed her collage, AD disclosed a particularly distressing aspect of herself — her struggles with mental health and suicidal thoughts in the previous year. While she did not provide specific details regarding the timing or triggers of these struggles, in her collage she included a photo of a close friend who had experienced similar feelings and had been a great comfort to her during that difficult time. She also pointed out another photo featuring her young nephew, adorned with little angels, symbolising the comfort and joy he had brought her during that challenging period. AD revealed her struggle with a negative self-image, mainly stemming from not conforming to the stereotypical portrayal of South Sudanese individuals as tall and slim, characteristics neither of which she possessed. She expressed how the message of a poem titled *Drunk Thoughts* (see Figure 4) encouraged her to accept and liberate herself from feelings of shame about being overweight, which is deemed as negative by some South Sudanese Australian community members.

Figure 4

The Poem Drunk Thoughts by Febe Pepe, Included in AD's Collage



Drunk Thoughts

To improve her image,
She stared into her liquor,
Then looked into her reflection,
And became disappointed.
She didn't lose any pounds,
She was bound
Hounded down by these heavy pounds.
Her reflection mocked her,
Her self-esteem blocked her,
The public teased her,
And still, she was not pleased.
As she looked in the mirror,
She thought: Could I get any bigger?
Her tears represented her fears
The fear of being fat again

- Febe Pepe

AD used to play footy and shared that she would have loved to play for the AFLW but realised that she would have to make many "sacrifices". Also, her brother, who is her caregiver, considers footy unsuitable for girls. The topic of girls and their gender-assigned roles and responsibilities, as well as the restrictions placed upon them, was something AD spoke passionately about. Her bold statements revealed her strong opinions on this matter and high frustration levels. AD exclaimed, "In our culture, girls should not have freedom [...]. The only freedom we have is school, our work, get married, get kids." She commented that there is considerable pressure from certain South Sudanese Australian community members to have girls marry at a young age, and that "getting married is about proving that you're good." Marriage is often arranged by members of the community. However, AD and her friends stated that enrolling into tertiary studies usually functions as a safeguard, and parents use this as a reason to turn down any offers that come their way, saying, "My daughter is going to go to uni; she can't get married, wait for her to graduate."

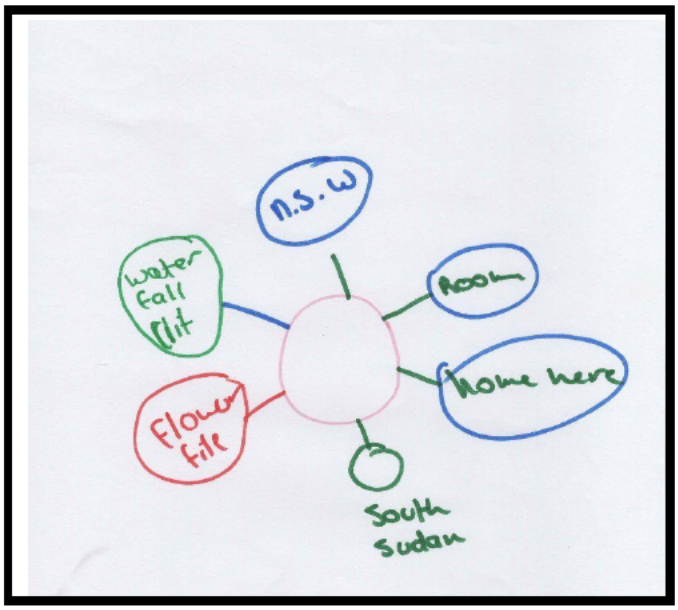
When the girls talked about who would get married first, Abuk commented that AD is very motherly and buys them snacks at school daily. AD hastily responded, "So, because I'm caring, I need to get married?" AD expressed her frustration regarding the focus on marriage and wondered, "Why can't I stay single the whole of my life until I'm ready to get married?" The topic of polygamy was brought up briefly during one of the focus group discussions, and AD explained that "the more wives, the more

respect you get. And if you don't have a lot of wives, it's like you don't have a lot of money in your pockets; you're broke." In her eyes, polygamy is useless and inappropriate.

AD mentioned the restrictions imposed on her social activities and indicated that while she is permitted to work, she is often not allowed to socialise with friends because "work is necessary; going out isn't necessary." She works weekend shifts at McDonald's and during the week as a babysitter. Most of her time is spent at home, where she often cares for her nephews. On weekends, she frequently organises movie marathons to entertain her nephews, indulging them with snacks. In her spare time, she also enjoys watching movies alone. AD's geomap (see Figure 5) depicted only six places of importance to her, and during our discussion, she mentioned that she was not going out much. Hence, there was not much to include.

Figure 5

AD's Geomap



South Sudan takes up a central position and is connected to the centre with the shortest line, signifying its importance. Additionally, two places she had visited during a school camp were included. Though she could not identify where these places were, it was evident that they held significant emotional value for her. While it remains unclear how these places contribute to AD's identity or formation, her remarks and my observations suggest that these locations hold specific significance due to their associated memories.

AD is sometimes allowed to attend friends' parties, albeit with strict curfew guidelines. She shared insights into the protective nature of many South Sudanese Australian parents, particularly towards

their daughters, stemming from concerns about the risk of unwanted pregnancies. AD highlighted instances of teenage pregnancies within the South Sudanese Australian community, which have contributed to parental apprehension and the imposition of stringent rules. She acknowledged the parents' intent to safeguard their children while expressing frustration due to these restrictions. She stated, "They're protecting you, but it gets kind of, they're suffocating me. I wanna breathe. But you say that, and you've disrespected your parents."

Boys do not receive the same restrictions as girls, and AD blames the South Sudanese Australian parents for the issues caused by some of the boys. She stated, "Parents don't care about their kids until you do something horrible." When something horrible happens, AD explained that the parents:

> Blame the friends instead of blaming themselves. Instead of going, it's my fault that I was at a party. I came back at 3 am in the morning and do not go to my son's room to make sure he's in his bed. Because that's the issue; they care so much about their friends and the outside, not what's inside their house.

AD clearly articulated her disapproval of parents' behaviour and negligence towards their children. The other girls echoed this critical perspective and commented affirmatively on AD's remark. They further contributed their own observations, which were quite similar to AD's initial statement.

Besides this observed parental lack of care towards sons, AD also complained about a general lack of responsibility towards raising children and leaving young children in the care of the daughters. She frustratedly stated, "You don't force your kids to raise your other kids because you're too lazy!" According to AD, the absence of parental attention and the lack of a role model at home significantly contribute to the issues caused by young people in the South Sudanese Australian community. Despite being mindful of values concerning gender-prescribed roles, AD is resolute about adopting a different approach in the future, even if it diverges from cultural norms and expectations. She referred to her elder sister, who is currently expecting her second child, as her role model and source of inspiration due to her autonomy in making decisions regarding her child's upbringing. AD is adamant that she too will decide what's best for her children, and said, "That's what I want to change; I want my kids to know that they don't have to do things because I did it."

Family holds significant importance in AD's life, as is evident from the numerous names of her family members in her identity drawing (see Figure 6). AD said that her mother "is the reason I keep going." AD's young nephews and nieces are most precious to her. The identity drawing also included AD's interests and hobbies, including her love of AFL and shopping, which helps her mental state when she is stressed or feeling down. She also included "go-karting, dancing, fun activities and fashion"

(preferably bright colours as these make her feel happy and confident). AD included a photo of a shop in her photo collage (see Figure 7).

Figure 6

AD's Identity Drawing

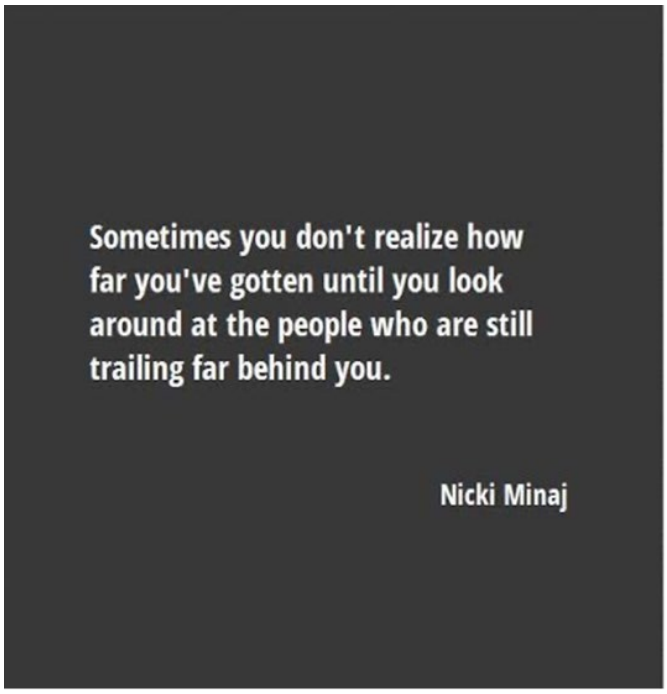
Figure 7

Image from a Shop in AD's Photo Collage

Music is an essential aspect of her identity, which AD shared in the first focus group meeting. AD creates playlists, which she plays according to her mood. In her photo collage, AD included images of playlists and her favourite artists, such as Nicki Minaj, whom she regards with reverence akin to a pastor. One of Nicki Minaj's expressions, "Barbs, stay in school," deeply resonated with AD, motivating her to complete her secondary education. AD included a quote by Nicki Minaj in her photo collage and explained that these words mean a lot to her (see Figure 8).

Figure 8

Image of a Quote from Nicki Minaj included in AD's Photo Collage



Beyoncé holds a special place in AD's heart as her all-time favourite artist; with the song *I Was Here* being her all-time favourite song. AD also admires Summer Walker, particularly her neck tattoos, and included a photo of this artist in the collage (See Figure 9).

Figure 9

Image of Summer Walker in AD's Photo Collage

AD also has tattoos with the names of her parents on each of her arms. Among the content of the collage, which had been put together with much thought and consideration, was a photograph of AD that her mother had recently sent. The photo captured AD when she was just five years old, a serious-looking young girl with big eyes that looked straight into the camera. I am glad that she has this precious memory of her childhood. The collage also included several photos of the Year 12 formal with some of her friends. A short video was included in the collage displaying a very confident AD, all glammed up with stunning makeup and a beautiful dress. She commented that she felt so pretty that night, and while she talked about it, the memories made her eyes light up. This night out in the city with her friends was a precious memory for AD.

Since concluding my meetings with AD, I have met her twice while I was out. The first time was in a shopping centre where I was shopping with my eldest daughter. AD was with a group of friends, and to my surprise, she gave me a big hug and seemed genuinely happy to see me. I introduced my daughter and enquired about her family and studies. She proudly responded that everything was going well and mentioned that Saint and Abuk were both studying at university; this was wonderful to hear. The second time I saw her was at Footscray train station, and again she greeted me warmly. AD told

me that she was going out with friends, and it made me happy to see her enjoying herself, knowing how she longed to have the freedom to engage in activities she loved doing.

5.3 Portrait of Abuk: "I'm South Sudanese 'Cause I Relate to that Part of Myself More"

Abuk's journey throughout her participation in the research was a fascinating exploration of her character and the nuances in the expressions of her identity. Initially reserved in the first focus group meeting, she demonstrated remarkable courage by openly sharing her struggles with her mental health and disclosing her doctor's recommendation to maintain a diary. During the subsequent sessions, Abuk gradually shared more facets of her identity and expressive side, articulating her opinions confidently and clearly, often using hand gestures to affirm her points. Abuk was positioned across from me and sat next to my phone, which recorded the focus group meetings. Upon looking back on the video recordings, I caught Abuk looking into the camera a few times while fixing her hair or making a sassy facial expression. These occasional interactions with the camera made me smile, and such spontaneous moments revealed a playful and confident aspect of her personality, hidden beneath her initial quiet demeanour.

My observations regarding Abuk's quiet and, at times, withdrawn demeanour were shared by her homeroom teacher, who mentioned that Abuk tends to be somewhat reserved in class. When Abuk was in Year 11, the homeroom teacher observed her struggling with mathematics and offered her additional support, but Abuk did not accept the offer. However, towards the end of Year 11, Abuk approached her homeroom teacher, acknowledging her struggles, and requested to drop mathematics for Year 12 and select another subject instead. This proactive decision reflects Abuk's agency and ability to advocate for herself effectively, which is particularly impressive, considering that her parents could not help her because "they didn't do schoolwork and stuff like that." Abuk acknowledged that although her parents encourage her to work hard, they do not understand her struggles. This confession highlights Abuk's independence and self-reliance in navigating her educational journey. Abuk has high aspirations for her future and works hard in the hope of getting into her preferred nursing course at university. However, she is not too concerned about her final grades as she will use special consideration in her university application.

A part of Abuk's identity is expressed through music, preferably R&B and Trap music (see Abuk's identity drawing, Figure 10), and included images of one of her favourite artists, Jhene Aiko (see Figure 11) in her photo collage. Abuk also indicated that reading is part of an expression of her identity, and she likes mainly action and adventure books with a female lead (see Abuk's identity drawing, Figure 10). Reading is also a vital coping mechanism for regulating her mental health, as she explained, "If I'm having a bad day, I go to a quiet place and start to read."

Figure 10

Abuk's Identity Drawing

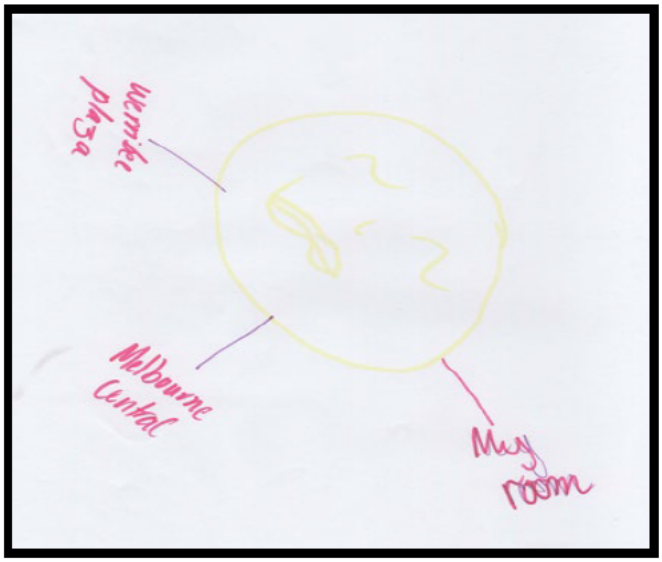
Figure 11

Image of Jhene Aiko included in Abuk's Photo Collage

Abuk finds solace in her room, one of her most important places, as indicated on her geomap (see Figure 12). Abuk works on the weekend and spends the rest of her free time at home, which she prefers as she has "a very short social battery" and "after a long day of social interaction", just wants to be alone. During the holidays, she enjoys occasional social interactions with her friends and loves shopping, particularly at Melbourne Central or Werribee Plaza (see Abuk's Geomap in Figure 12).

Figure 12

Abuk's Geomap



Unlike some South Sudanese Australian female friends, Abuk is allowed to socialise, which she considers a form of freedom. However, she also indicates that compared to her brother, she faces more restrictions. Abuk expressed her frustrations at the differential treatment her brother receives and shared the following thoughts:

> I have a little brother; I think he's twelve or something. He gets so much swag. Some days, he's not even going to school. Mum's OK with it. Doesn't want to go to school? Doesn't have to. Once he comes home, he drops his bags and goes to his friends. Comes back, like, twelve or something.

Abuk also shared that she is sometimes not allowed to visit her elder sister, but once she mentions that her younger brother is coming along, her mother grants permission. She is visibly frustrated at her mother's reasoning and relaxed attitude towards her brother, which, according to Abuk, is based on the assumption that boys "don't get into trouble [...] they don't get pregnant."

Abuk also shared her frustrations regarding her responsibilities at home and how she has been conditioned and prepared for her anticipated future role as a mother. Abuk says, "That's all what we've been told when we were younger. You're gonna be a mother; pop out ten kids." When we talked further about this topic, Abuk did not say much, but when she commented, she did so firmly, and I noticed a certain bitterness in her voice. Like her older sisters, Abuk has always had to help raise her younger siblings and says, "I've had a kid on my hip ever since I was like, what, six years old? I'm tired!" When I asked how many siblings she had, Abuk was unsure and started counting. Saint and AD were helping her, and they burst out laughing when Saint knew the order of the siblings and their names better than Abuk. It lightened the mood, and it was good to see Abuk's sense of humour despite her visible anger and bitterness.

Though Abuk did not share much during the focus group meetings, her contributions did reveal that she has a significant responsibility placed on her shoulders in caring for her seven younger siblings. One of her older sisters, whom Abuk considers her role model, moved out of the house because she did not want to have the responsibility of looking after the younger siblings anymore. Consequently, Abuk is now in charge of her siblings, though some are quite independent. When Abuk and I sat down together, she shared more details about her situation at home. Abuk expressed her anger towards her mother's approach to parenting and felt overwhelmed by the constant caregiving duties entrusted to her, leaving her with little time for herself or her schoolwork. She said, in a hesitant voice,

> My mom's like, you know, she only wants to look after the child for a few months when they're born and just hand it off the next person, like, to look after them [...] Why me? [...] I'm sick of it!

She continued saying that she suffers from anxiety and depression and started seeing a therapist who prescribed her medication. Abuk considers “stress, as well as having to grow up so quick; to, like, not being seen as a child all of my life,” the main reasons for her mental health problems. Despite these challenges, Abuk’s resilience is evident in the proactive steps she took to seek help to address her declining mental health. Writing in her diary helps Abuk, and she often writes daily, mainly about the “good stuff” [...] So, when I'm in a good mood, I can look back at it and be like, wow!” Abuk says that although her mother does support her, they hardly sit down together to talk “unless it's about my siblings.” Luckily, she has an aunt who understands her mental health struggles and with whom she can freely talk. Abuk would like to speak to her parents one day and share her feelings so that she can eventually forgive them.

Abuk's journey of identity development and expression is complex. Although she was born in Australia, she self-identifies as South Sudanese and says, “Because I relate to that part of myself more than I do saying, like, I might be born here, but this is just where I was born. I don’t have any connection to it other than being born here.” She shared how her mother used a South Sudanese decorating style in the living, which reminds her of home. This linkage to South Sudan gives Abuk a sense of tradition and cultural awareness, which is particularly important as she feels these aspects are not integrated elements in her upbringing. Navigating her identity in Australia is a complex interplay of cultural belonging and societal perceptions. When we talked in the first focus group meeting about what it means to be South Sudanese in Australia, Abuk remarked, “There’s, like, two types of categories you fall into. When you tell people you’re South Sudanese, you’re either that type of good South Sudanese or the criminal South Sudanese.” The stereotypical categorisation based on prejudiced assumptions is not only perpetuated by broader Australian society but also by South Sudanese Australians, who have certain expectations regarding what constitutes a South Sudanese identity. Abuk explains:

> That’s how they [South Sudanese] see South Sudanese people, they’re like, they assume like, “Oh, you relate to more, like, whiteness than you do with South Sudanese.” I've been labelled like that all the time.

The term ‘white-washing’ was used by Abuk and her friends, denoting the labelling of young people who were perceived as not adhering to certain cultural values or expectations and were, consequently, considered as ‘white’.

Abuk started at Western College in Year 11 after her family moved to another suburb. She is much happier at Western College due to its multicultural character. Abuk recounts a negative experience at her previous school where South Sudanese Australian students were not allowed to hang out together in a group during recess as this was perceived as a threat. Abuk struggled with the criminalisation of

South Sudanese Australian students and said that teachers always treat them differently. She mentioned, "In a way, teachers view South Sudanese students older than they are; you're not really a child, you're an adult, you should deal with the consequences as an adult." Abuk said that because of her experiences, she considers it a must that there is culturally diverse staff in schools, just "someone we can identify with" who has experienced what they have and can relate to them. An essential part of this is someone who can advocate for them and hold teachers accountable so that the teachers "acknowledge that they treat us differently [...] because your [our] skin colour is black."

Abuk's photo collage provides further insights into the aspects of her life that are important to her and through which she expresses herself. Abuk values her appearance very much, and she included a picture of three shelves packed with skin care products, predominantly Korean skincare items that she purchases online (see Figure 13).

Figure 13

Image of Abuk's Collection of Skin Care Included in her Photo Collage

She is against skin bleaching and wants to be a role model for her younger siblings by showing them to care for and take pride in their skin. She loves using shea butter because "it signifies black women." She has several wigs and prefers wearing these over braiding her hair. She pays for the wigs with the earnings from her weekend job, and she takes great care of them. She also added a photo of her make-up collection (see figure 14). Although she does not wear make-up to school, she loves wearing it on other occasions, such as the Year 12 formal. The formal was the highlight of Year 12, and Abuk included two photos showing a confident young woman in a beautiful red dress and high heels. Though Abuk had initially not included any of her family members in her identity drawing, she included photos of her younger siblings in her collage. She remarked, "They're a part of me because I raised them." This statement underscores her role as caretaker and the connection to her younger siblings resulting from the responsibilities assigned to her by her mother. While this comment may convey a sense of affection, it also reveals Abuk's underlying pain stemming from the loss of her childhood. It served as a poignant reminder of Abuk's sacrifices since a young age and its impact on her identity and identity development.

Figure 14

Image of Abuk's Collection of Make-Up Included in her Photo Collage

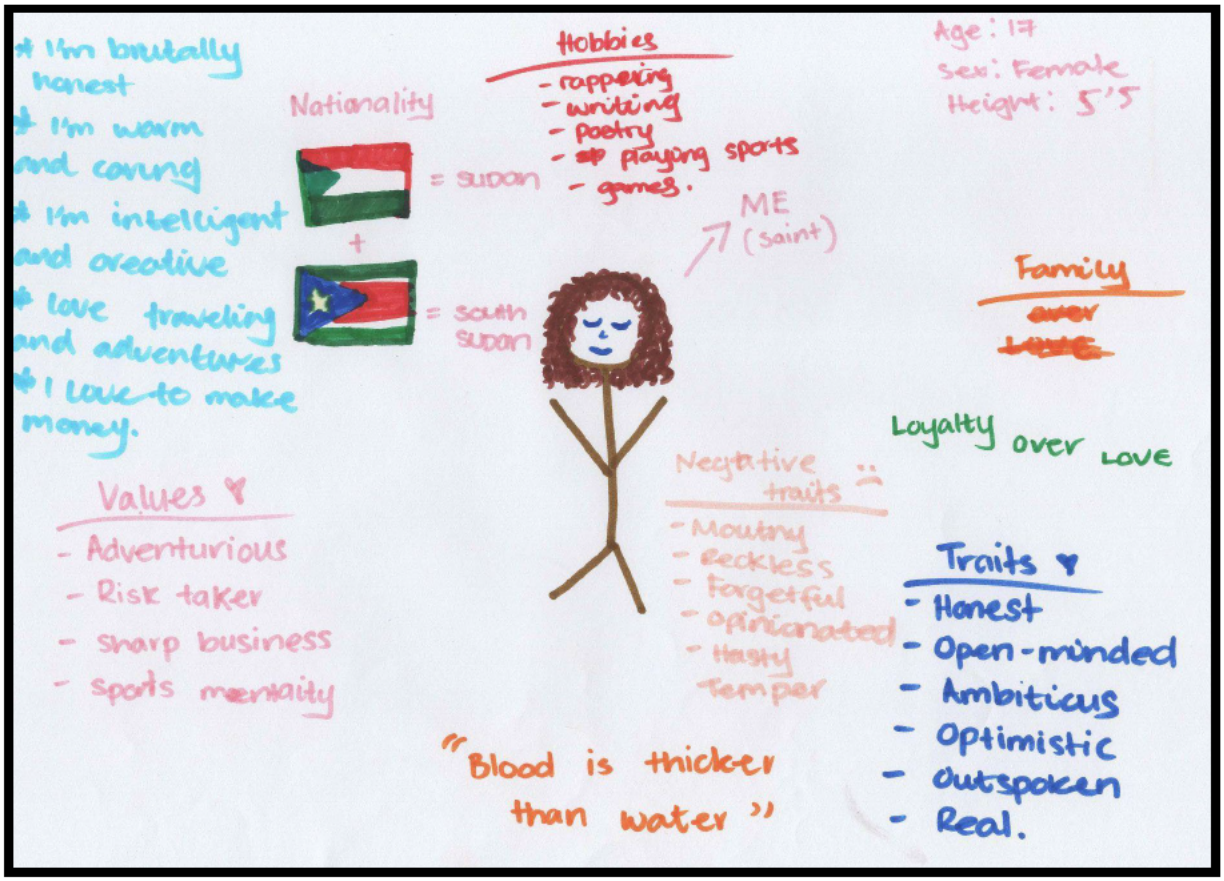
5.4 Portrait of Saint: "I'm not Gonna Change Myself When Someone Has an Opinion About Me"

Saint's lively presence added a lot of enjoyment to our focus group sessions, and her straightforward responses often sparked laughter among the other participants. Though she was sometimes quiet and seemingly deep in thought, she nearly always affirmed the input of others by saying "100%" or just a simple "Yeah" while nodding her head. Saint always seemed to be 'hiding' inside her clothes and often covered her hands with the sleeves of her Year 12 jacket. I never saw her whole face since she always wore a face mask during the interviews, even though wearing one was no longer mandatory. I wonder if Saint wore one out of fear of getting COVID-19 or to conceal her identity in the video recordings. When Saint shared her photo collage with me, I noticed that she had not included a photo of herself. It took some careful observation for me to spot her in the family photo she had included — a young lady with a lovely smile. I wished I had seen that smile during our focus group meetings and the interview.

Saint described herself as "independent" and "talkative" when she is "comfortable around people." She also pondered, "I guess I'm funny; I like to make jokes." When I asked Saint to elaborate on descriptions of her identity in the form of an identity drawing, she spent considerable time creating a beautiful and colourful overview (see Figure 15).

Figure 15

Saint's Identity Drawing

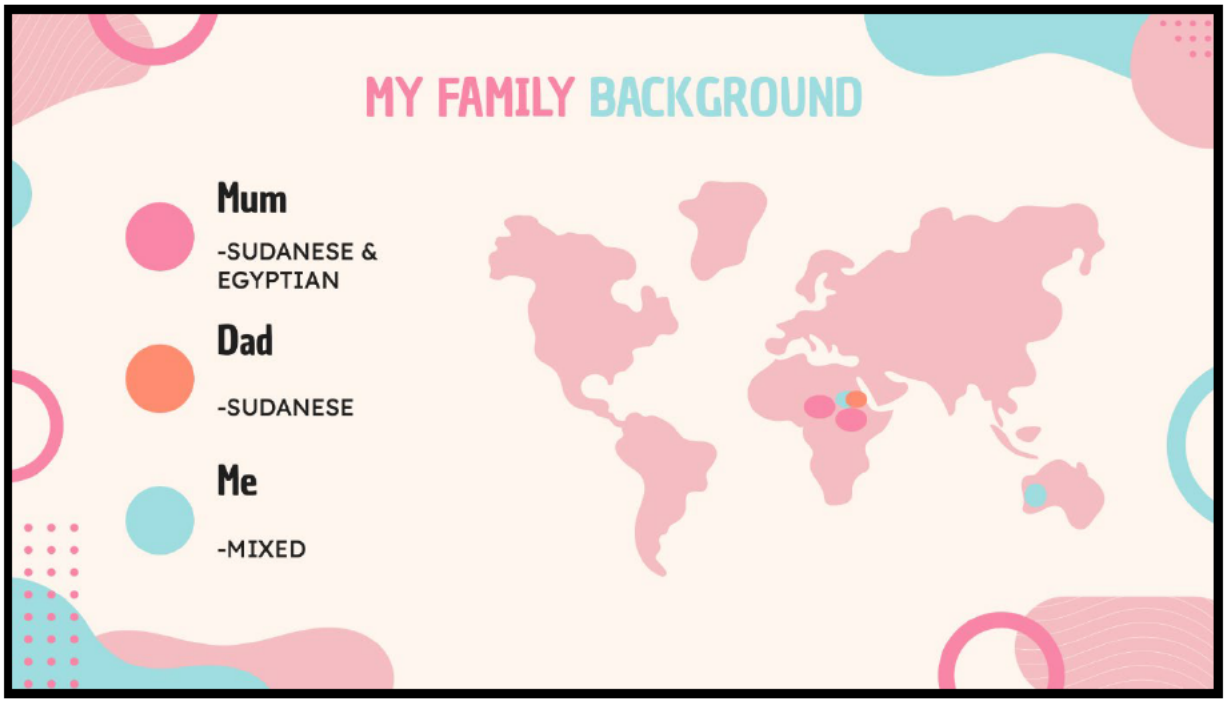


She included both the Sudanese and South Sudanese flags, indicating that she is from a mixed ethnic background. She also indicated this in her photo collage (see Figure 16).

In the identity drawing (see Figure 15), Saint divided her identity descriptions into sections, some of which were given headings. Under "traits", she wrote, "honest, open-minded, ambitious, optimistic, outspoken, real." Saint reflected on her "negative traits" by including "mouthy, reckless, forgetful, opinionated, nasty temper." She continued writing descriptions of her identity on the other side of the paper: "I'm brutally honest, I'm warm and caring, I'm intelligent and creative, love traveling and adventures, I love to make money." She also added some "values," which are "adventurious, risk-taker, sharp business, sports mentality", which actually resembled more descriptions of her identity. When I asked her what she meant by 'sharp business', she responded that this refers to having a "business mindset". The 'sports mentality' did not refer to being competitive but rather to liking sports in general, and she shared that she used to play basketball and netball but stopped playing during the COVID-19 lockdowns and never rejoined her teams.

Figure 16

Image from Saint's Photo Collage



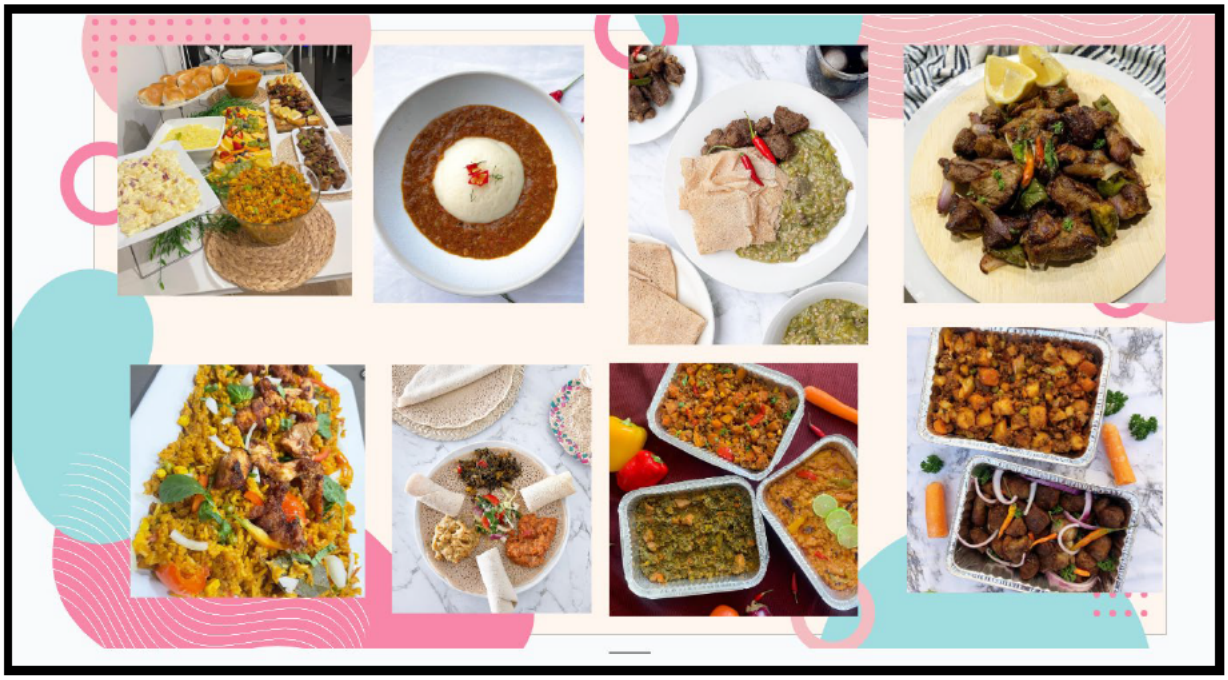
Saint also included a quote on her identity drawing: "Blood is thicker than water," which referred to the importance she placed on her family. She wrote in her photo collage, "I was taught from a young age that family was everything and not just the nuclear family." Family gatherings play an important role during which they "share stories, cook, eat lots of food, listen to music, dance and laugh" (see Figure 17). Saint also included a photo of several dishes in her photo collage (see Figure 18).

Figure 17

Description of Family Traditions in Saint's Photo Collage

Figure 18

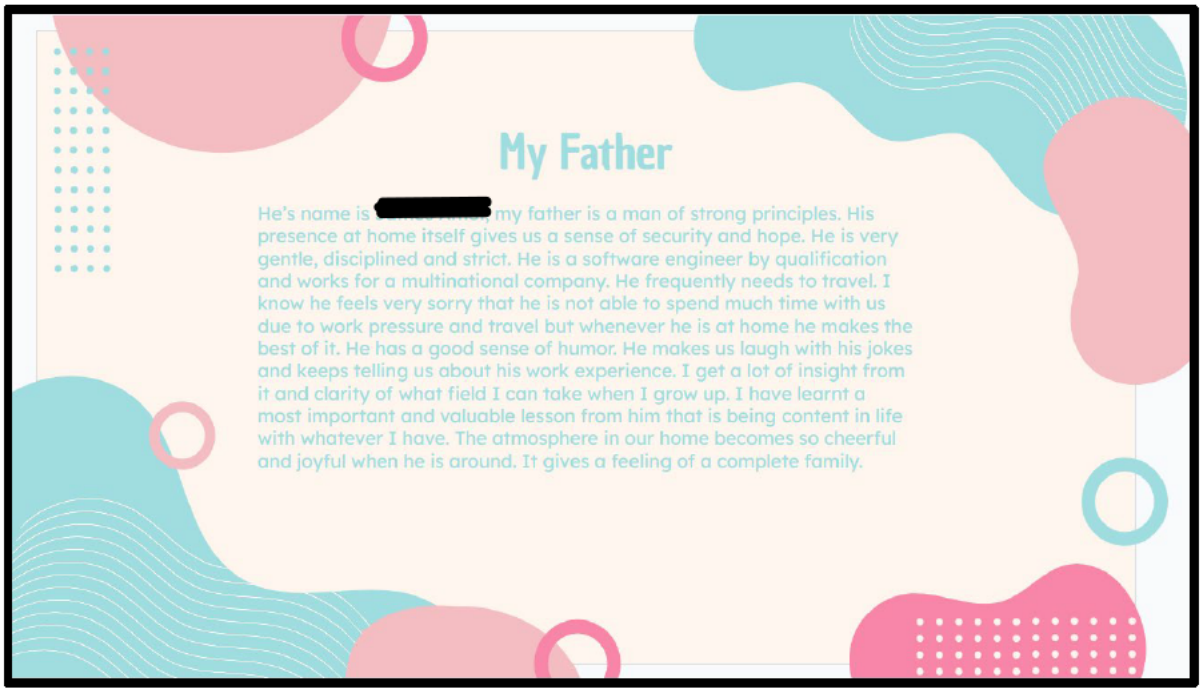
Images of Food in Saint's Photo Collage



Saint lives with her mum and younger siblings and sees her dad from time to time, though she talks frequently with him by phone. He plays an important role in her life, and in her photo collage, she wrote a beautiful description of her dad, referring to the valuable insights he has taught her (see Figure 19).

Figure 19

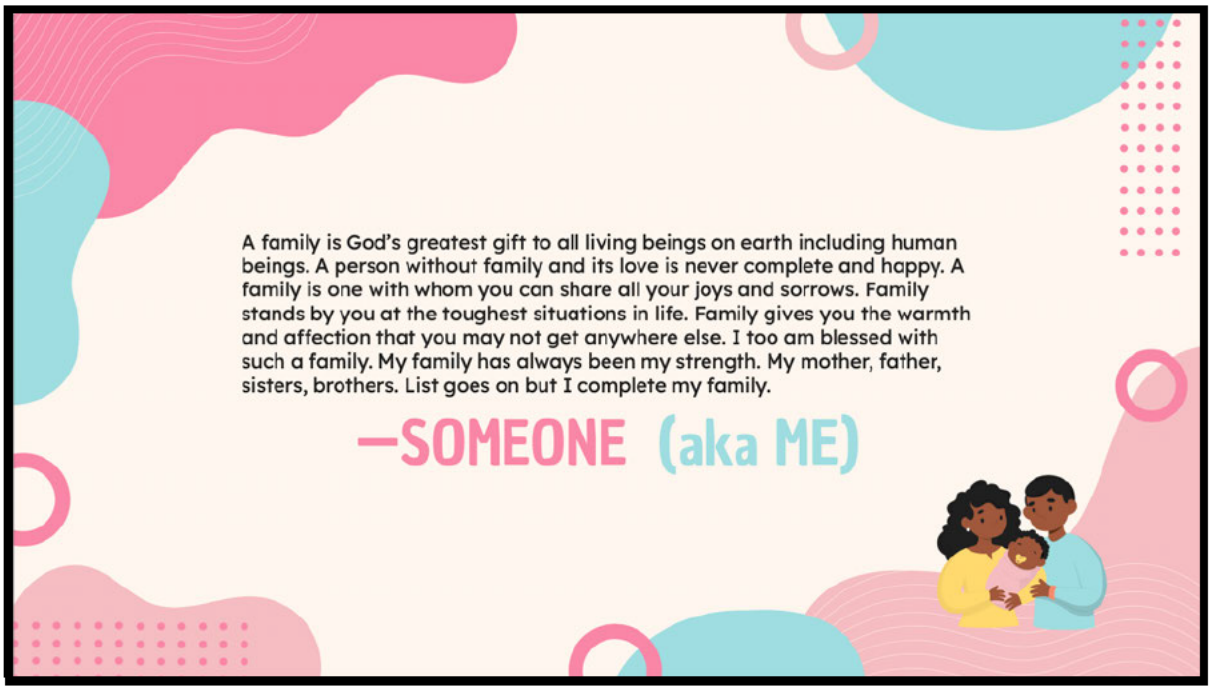
Saint's Description of her Father in her Photo Collage



She also has three older half-siblings who came to Australia with their mother just before Saint was born. Saint included a beautiful reflection regarding the importance of her family (see Figure 20).

Figure 20

Saint's Reflection on the Importance of Family



Saint also described the important role her siblings play in her life (see Figure 21).

Figure 21

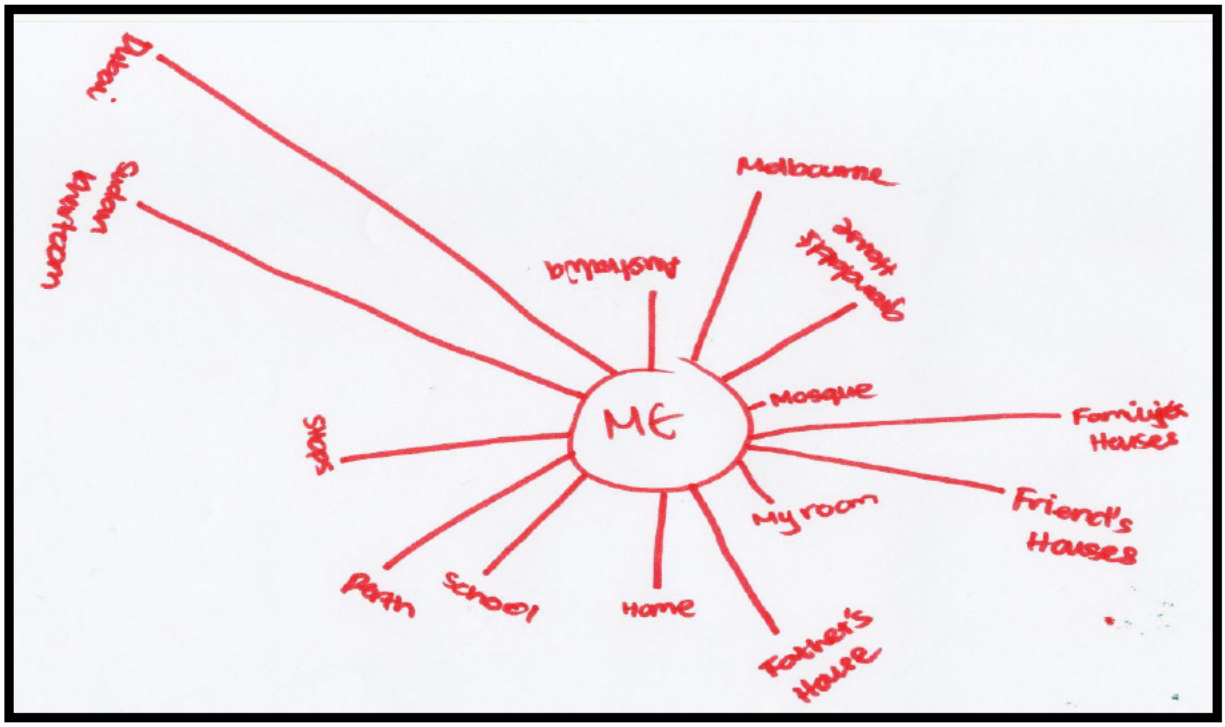
Saint's Description of Her Siblings

Saint spoke with much admiration about her mother, recounting how she was married off at a young age and then made the courageous decision to seek safety for herself and her children during the war. Eventually, they travelled to Egypt, from where they were able to travel to Australia. Saint is visibly inspired by her mother's independent choices and says, "That's why I always look up to my mum." She also proudly shared how her mother advocates for her nieces living in Sudan and encourages her younger brothers not to give their daughters away in marriage at a young age. Saint said that her mum would "give them [nieces] a voice so their voices can be heard because her [mother's] voice wasn't heard back then."

Saint identifies as Australian and South Sudanese; however, she included Sudan and Khartoum in her geomap (see Figure 22). She recalled, "Since I was born here, and like, growing up, I was always surrounded by white people. And, like, I just used to think we're all the same." However, as she got older, she became aware of prejudiced opinions towards South Sudanese Australians.

Figure 22

Saint's Geomap



Saint recounted an incident with a teacher who commented that being South Sudanese meant either 'good' or 'bad':

> I had that teacher one time. I was just doing my work, and he comes up to me and goes, "Oh, where are you from?" And I said, "I'm from South Sudan." And he goes, "Oh, so you're one of the good ones?" Like literally! What do you mean, the good ones?

Saint asked the teacher what he meant by this comment but received no response. The underlying assumption of the teacher that the South Sudanese could be grouped into either 'good' or 'bad', with 'bad' being associated with those who did not do their work in school, was very confronting to Saint. Saint was well aware of the injustice in the teacher's comment and expressed resistance by stating, "I'm not gonna change myself when someone has an opinion about me."

Although Saint presented herself as strong and quite resilient, she indicated that the labelling and stereotypical assumptions affected her mentally. She spoke reminiscently about South Sudan, saying, "It's better there because everyone knows each other." However, she also realised that living in South Sudan would be challenging because she is not accustomed to the lifestyle, and said, "So, I would want to go back, but at the same time, I feel like I've adjusted to the western life." This exemplifies Saint's struggle with her developing identity and feelings of belonging growing up in Australia; she often feels treated poorly based on stereotypical assumptions but recognises that life in South Sudan would present its own challenges and she could potentially be considered an outsider.

Saint also shared that growing up within the South Sudanese Australian community has its own challenges. She stated that she feels pressured to behave in a way the community expects her to behave. She said:

> And that's where it doesn't add up to me 'cause obviously I have been raised in a western life, western culture. And that's where it clashes because I can't do that. What do you mean I have to act in a certain way to show some people, you need to keep a good name to yourself?"

Saint highlighted the judgemental nature of community members and said, "We get judged consistently, like, for my own people; how? Are we not supposed to stick up for one another?" Saint illustrated her awareness of being judged by sharing how cautious she is about her attire when going out, emphasising the potential repercussions when her clothes are not deemed appropriate. She said, "Because what if an auntie drives by? It's literally one phone call, and it's around the whole community!" She is visibly frustrated by the gossip and judging based on whether she is well dressed, which seems to equate to being well-raised and clever, and says, "Why does my looks define who I am? I can be the smartest person and dressed like a homeless person!"

The topic of the position and roles of girls was brought up several times during the focus group meetings. Saint stated that community members are "very overprotective over females," mainly out of fear of them falling pregnant. Because "if a girl goes out and she gets pregnant, that would be, like, very shameful. But if a guy goes out and gets a girl pregnant, that wouldn't be so, like, it would be normal." According to Saint, this reasoning goes against all logic, and she generally considers parents' mindset as "still stuck in the old century." Saint shared how she has a tendency to defy her parents' restrictive instructions and sometimes intentionally exhibits the behaviour they warn her about. Saint said, "You assume that I'm doing that, and now I'm doing it. I'm reckless; I'm not gonna lie. But, like, it's just like, don't test me!" She was visibly frustrated when she shared how she dislikes the assumptions from her parents, who, she said, are convinced that she would misbehave if she were allowed to go out. When I asked Saint if she would not do things behind her parents' back if they were to approach her differently and express more trust in her discernment, she responded affirmatively, stating that, "I wouldn't be tempted." This remark seems to suggest that Saint highly valued being trusted by her parents. Sometimes, Saint is allowed to go out, and she attends parties hosted by her schoolmates rather than those of other South Sudanese Australian adolescents. She tends to avoid the latter because they often result in people arguing with each other, further exacerbated by alcohol consumption. She ensures that she is back "10 minutes before the curfew" and says she can be "100% responsible" if she feels that her parents trust her.

In Year 11, Saint struggled in school and felt she was not well prepared for her final years. Year 10 had been very challenging for her due to the online learning during the COVID-19 lockdowns in Melbourne. Saint and the other girls in the group said that they received very limited support from the school during online learning, and the teachers never contacted them to check how they were coping with their schoolwork. During this time at home, the girls were placed in charge of their younger siblings, which left them with little time to focus on their studies. Upon returning to school, the girls were met with a lack of sympathy and understanding from their teachers, who "blame it on us" when they indicated they had not kept up with their work. Saint frustratedly stated, "The consequences are not the same, compared to a white student, like, it's completely different for a South Sudanese student."

Saint commented that her parents also showed little understanding when she shared her frustrations regarding the teachers' responses; they placed the responsibility back on Saint by saying, "But you can control the kids." In total disbelief, Saint exclaimed, "I'm just like, they're your kids!" Like, you guys are relying on me to look after the whole house!" Despite her dismay, Saint reluctantly said, "I just allow it", and stated that she has accepted the responsibilities placed on her because "it's just something we're brought up with." Her role at home and the expectations placed on her do affect her mental health, but again, she finds little sympathy from her parents. She said:

> Sudanese people don't understand what's mental illness; they don't know what's mental health or anything. They'll be like, "How are you stressed in life? You're in Year 12, you know? And then they'll be like, "Oh, what are you stressing about? It's just looking after the house or whatever.

Discontented with both her teachers and her parents in Year 11, Saint decided to start "skipping school and then meeting other people outside" during school hours and returned home once school was finished so her parents would not suspect anything. Saint admitted that she "got caught up in the wrong crowd" and was "doing the wrong stuff" because she was "just very easily influenced back then." She ended up failing most of her Year 11 subjects, and Saint recounted, "It got to the verge where they wanted to kick me out, but obviously I was like to them, 'No, you guys, let me show you my real side. I'll actually pattern up.'" Saint did not want to leave the school or repeat Year 11, so she requested a transfer to VCAL but was told that "VCAL is full." However, she recounted, "I'm not buying this. So, then I talked to another teacher and she said we have a couple of spots in VCAL." Saint found out that she could do "a different pathway to get to nursing" and decided that this would be her best option. Although Saint's attendance was still low in Year 12, she passed all the required subjects and just a few months after the interview, she graduated from high school.

Saint has found ways to look after her mental health and said:

> I always like to write about how I feel on notes and everything. That's how I get my feelings across [...] I write the negatives and goods that happen in the day, or the day or whatever. And then I would highlight the goods and go back when I'm at my lowest and read them and, like, be grateful of stuff.

She also writes lyrics, mainly for rap songs, as "a way to express" how she feels. The lyrics are mainly about "the obstacles and journeys" and the friends with whom she spends time. She would love to become a rapper and wonders, "What if I could be the first Australian South Sudanese female to make it out and just put our name on the board? I just want to do that. But obviously, it's just a dream."

Saint expressed a desire for her parents to be more understanding, particularly regarding her identity as a South Sudanese Australian who is "influenced by the western life," and remarked that "it's hard to have parents that don't understand." Saint reluctantly stated that there are certain customs that are "not good, but we can't change it" and that many young people "have just given up." However, she is optimistic about the future and confidently stated, "We'll change it for our kids! Yeah, 100%; I'm changing it!" Despite grappling with the conflicting cultural norms and expectations at home and the contrasting values prevalent in broader Australian society, Saint expressed pride in her cultural heritage. She criticised South Sudanese Australians who do not embrace their culture, questioning, "What happened to claiming your culture and embracing it?" and concluded, "I'll take all the good things but not the bad."

5.5 Reflecting on the Portraits

The three portraits provided insights into the lived experiences of AD, Abuk, and Saint, which were shared in the four focus group meetings, the one-on-one interviews (during which the identity drawings and geomaps were created), and the photo collages. Throughout my interactions with the three students, I endeavoured to "listen for a story" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 13), considering the students as "knowledge bearers, as rich resources, as the best authorities on their own experience" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 141). While I listened 'for' a story, I also searched for "goodness" and weaved the students' strengths, but also their vulnerabilities and weaknesses into the portraits (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 142). The inclusion of arts-based components further strengthened the students' portraits and explored their personalities, values and key aspects contributing to the development of their identities. Some themes woven into the portraits delved into deeply personal struggles, including those related to gender-based and mental health challenges. All these emerging themes, as well as an overview of the exhibited FoI and CCW, are presented and elaborated on in the following sections, where all student participant findings are presented.

Portraits can be crafted through a CRT lens aiming to create counter-narratives by emphasising their transformative character and action towards social justice (see Chapter 4, Section 4.3.2). The portraits of AD, Aduk and Saint are presented as counter-narratives, challenging existing stereotypes regarding South Sudanese Australian young people, including those present in educational settings, such as an academic deficit perspective. On the other hand, the portraits also challenged existing South Sudanese norms and values and expressed the tensions that the students are experiencing growing up in Australia. Lastly, the transformative character is evident in the explored FoI and CCW, both asset-based frameworks emphasising the students' strengths and capital (resources).

5.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the narrative portraits of three female South Sudanese Australian students, AD, Abuk and Saint, who were Year 12 students at Western College. The knowledge gathered during four focus group meetings, one-on-one interviews, and arts-based activities was utilised in crafting the portraits. Critical responses to the topics discussed during the focus group meetings indicated considerable comfort for the students in conversing with the researcher, with several students commenting that they valued the opportunity to express themselves freely. The portraits of AD, Abuk, and Saint blended the researcher's voice with those of the students while emphasising the students' goodness, including both their strengths and weaknesses (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). The portraits are presented as counter-narratives challenging existing stereotypes regarding the South Sudanese Australian community, particularly its youth.

The next chapter presents the knowledge gathered from the twelve student Knowledge Holders in the focus group meetings, interviews and created artefacts and explores expressions of FoI and CCW. The chapter will also present recommendations suggested by the student Knowledge Holders.

Chapter 6: Student Perspectives: Exploring the Funds of Identity and Community Cultural Wealth Frameworks

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the outcomes of the inductive and deductive analysis of the knowledge collected from all twelve student Knowledge Holders' activities: the focus group meetings, interviews, and created artefacts. The research questions and several themes from the interviews with adult South Sudanese Australian community members (see Chapter 8) guided the questions and topics discussed in the interviews and focus group meetings. Topics such as racism and discrimination, educational deficit perspectives, online learning during the COVID-19 lockdowns, teacher support, cultural values, and relationships with parents were intentionally woven into the discussions with the student Knowledge Holders to seek their perspectives.

This chapter first presents an overview of the expressed FoI based on the original five categories introduced by Esteban-Guitart (2012): geographical, practical, cultural, social, and institutional FoI. I also explored and analysed the gathered knowledge for examples of digital FoI (Poole, 2017a), invisible FoI (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a, 2023c), ideological FoI (Poole, 2017b), existential/dark FoI (Charteris et al., 2018; Poole, 2017b), as well as agency and imagination (Hedges, 2021). Next is an overview of the expressed CCW, including aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capital (Yosso, 2005). The deductive analysis also explored the suggested concepts added to the CCW framework, including spiritual capital (Huber, 2009), informational capital (Liou et al., 2016), and emotional intelligence capital (Guzmán et al., 2021). The last part of this chapter presents the recommendations expressed by the student Knowledge Holders.

During the focus group meetings and interviews with the students at both schools, I noticed that critical rather than favourable responses to certain topics were given, indicating their comfort in conversing with me. Some students disclosed that it was uncommon for them to converse with their parents or caregivers about emotions, frustrations and concerns. One student specifically expressed how participating in this research provided her with an opportunity to articulate her opinions and have her voice acknowledged freely. This feedback affirmed that the meetings and interviews were conducted culturally safely and responsibly while simultaneously underscoring the expressed desire for open conversations with their parents. At times, while seeking further clarifications or examples from the students, I was cautious not to be intrusive. When the students did not offer any additional responses, I refrained from further prompting, interpreting their silence as an indication that they felt

no further input was necessary. In doing so, I respected their agency and autonomy in the conversations and potentially avoided topics that could be psychologically challenging.

As previously stated in Chapter 1, Section 1.7, the extent to which the students shared their lived experiences and insights was ultimately influenced by their perceptions of whether I shared a social identity with them or contributed to enhancing their identity through my research (Harrington, 2003). In conclusion, while it is challenging to pinpoint the precise factors that prompted the students to share personal responses, they felt comfortable and entrusted me with their lived experiences and insights. I am aware that some of the topics presented in the portraits are specific to South Sudanese cultural norms and values. Consequently, readers unfamiliar with South Sudanese cultural aspects could misinterpret the presented themes woven into the portraits. As an ethical researcher, it is incumbent upon me to present the gathered knowledge in a manner that does not perpetuate stereotypes or exacerbate existing issues faced by the South Sudanese Australian community. Therefore, this thesis, particularly the chapters that present the analysed knowledge, have been reviewed by South Sudanese Australian scholar and research advisor Dr William Abur. Several meetings were held with Dr Abur, during which the themes were examined and the importance of including the potentially controversial themes in this thesis was discussed.

6.2 The Funds of Identity of the South Sudanese Australian Student

The knowledge gathered from the focus group meetings, the individual interviews, and arts-based activities was deductively analysed to explore the FoI of the student Knowledge Holders. FoI are the "historically accumulated, culturally developed, and socially distributed resources that are essential for people's self-definition, self-expression, and self-understanding" (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a, p. 37). As previously mentioned in Chapter 3, Section 3.2.3, the different types of FoI can intersect (Esteban-Guitart, 2012), are subjective and significant to each individual, and are not static, as identity in itself is dynamic and constantly evolves (Esteban-Guitart, 2021, 2023b). Moreover, identity "does not reside within objects or people, but rather is the product of the significations which individuals ascribe to and associate with objects and people" (Poole, 2020, p. 406). Furthermore, Subero et al. (2018) concluded that anything you consider or recognise as part of your own experience can be regarded as an aspect of your identity. Therefore, I refer to *exploring* the knowledge for expressions of FoI or examples where FoI was *exhibited* or *expressed,* thereby implying that it is temporal, based on the constructivist interpretation of identity as a subjective process (Poole, 2020).

While some of the topics discussed in the focus group meetings and interviews are profoundly personal and could cast a negative light on the South Sudanese Australian community, it is important to mention the students themselves raised these topics. Through analysis, it became evident that these 'difficult' topics are pivotal in the student's identity development, self-expression, and self-identification. Within the analysis and interpretation of the gathered knowledge, it is crucial to recognise that the student Knowledge Holders articulate their opinions and observations within their cultural contexts and from their perspectives. Although I have endeavoured to amplify the students' voices without imposing extensive deductive interpretations, it is important to acknowledge the potential biases inherent in my role as a white researcher, my limited cultural understanding, and my substantially different lived experiences.

The following sections explore the FoI expressed during the four focus group discussions, four at each school, and the individual student interviews. After this, an overview of the FoI expressed in the students' identity drawings is provided, followed by an exploration of the geographical FoI derived from the created geomaps.

6.2.1 Exploring the Funds of Identity Expressed in the Focus Group Meetings and Interviews

As previously noted, identity is not inherently located in places, artefacts, or people; instead, it is the meaning derived from one's subjective experiences with these elements that shapes and contributes to identity and its development (Poole, 2020). Furthermore, the ascribing of meaning to experiences is not fixed and changes continuously depending on the contexts in which these experiences take place ((Poole, 2020). At times, the student Knowledge Holders explained why certain elements such as items, practices, and places held significance for them. These explanations assisted in allocating these elements to a relevant FoI sub-category. However, where explanations were not provided, deductive analysis and personal interpretations were utilised to allocate the shared knowledge. While these allocations are inherently subjective, I have included verbatim quotes from the students to support and substantiate my interpretations, ensuring transparency.

The following subsections present the findings of the specific FoI sub-categories. Appendix M contains an extensive table, including exemplar quotes taken verbatim from the transcripts of the focus group meetings at Western College and Riverwalk College (FGM 1, 2, 3 or 4) and individual interviews.

6.2.1.1 Geographical Funds of Identity: “Because That's my own Country; I was Born There”

Geographical FoI encompasses the places that hold significant meaning for individuals, shaping their sense of identity and belonging (Esteban-Guitart, 2012). For the student Knowledge Holders, these geographical connections span multiple regions, reflecting their diverse lived experiences. Most of the student Knowledge Holders were born in Australia; however, some were born in South Sudan, Egypt, or Libya and had moved through several other African countries before settling in Australia (see Table 3 in Chapter 4). Amiot said, “I’m pretty sure you know I’m from South Sudan; I was born in Bor.” Abul, also born in South Sudan, explained South Sudan’s importance: “Because that's my own country; I was born there. That's where my dad was buried.” Other students had lived in various places in Africa, including in refugee camps in Kenya, and shared memories of their time there. Several students mentioned that some of their family members, such as mothers and siblings, still reside in South Sudan, with some indicating that they frequently communicate. However, some shared that they do not know the exact whereabouts of their family members and have minimal contact. We also discussed the differences between Australia and South Sudan and whether their families travel to visit their remaining relatives. AD, whose mother and siblings still live in South Sudan, spoke longingly about returning and mentioned the ease of fitting in back home compared to the struggles faced in Australia, stating, "Back home, you just be like a free bird."

Schools, which can also be considered an institutional FoI, are important geographical FoI for the student Knowledge Holders, mainly for the social interactions with their peers. For some, school is also where they can express themselves differently from at home. Aluat mentioned that she can be “silly” at school and explained, saying, “Since I'm the oldest, I have to be more mature and, like, teach my siblings; be a role model.” Aker stated that she is “more confident” at school compared to at home.

Abraham noted that school is where he speaks English, as he primarily speaks Dinka at home due to his mother's limited English proficiency. Conversely, other students found school to be the place where they speak Dinka with fellow South Sudanese Australian students. For these students, school is an important place for their linguistic capital (see Section 6.3.2).

Aker expressed feeling “united” at school, referring to the presence of other South Sudanese Australian students. Abraham also mentioned that he tends to socialise with students of other African backgrounds at school, as he feels more comfortable with them. This sentiment was echoed by other students who indicated that they relate more to peers of African backgrounds, particularly other South Sudanese Australians. Aluat shared her experience as the only Black student in her former primary

school, stating, “I tried to fit in with my friends and the other people that I was around because there was actually no one that was like me.” At Riverwalk College, Aluat feels more at home as there is a large cohort of South Sudanese Australian students. The created geomaps confirmed that schools are important places for the student Knowledge Holders (see Section 6.2.3).

6.2.1.2 Practical Funds of Identity: “I Would Just be Blasting my Playlist, Like any Playlist I Feel Like That Day and Just Write”

Practical FoI refers to the everyday activities and routines that shape individuals' identities (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a). For the student Knowledge Holders these activities span diverse interests and hobbies that reflect their preferences, while some link to their cultural backgrounds. Sports play a significant role in some students’ lives. Abul, for instance, said, “I'm really into sports, and my favourite sport is volleyball. I do like running long distance and short distance.” However, assumptions from peers that they must be interested in sports such as basketball due to their ethnic background and height can be frustrating. Aluat stated, "At first, it's like, 'Okay,' and then, when it starts getting too much, it's annoying." Aduk echoed this sentiment, noting that hearing such assumptions "every single day, it's just annoying."

The students frequently mentioned music as an essential expression of their identity. AD shared that she creates extensive playlists and selects specific music depending on her mood. The students indicated that they do not listen to music played in South Sudan, but their family members do, and they hear it played at home and during meetings. When I asked which type of music they like to listen to, Aluat said, “Because we're in Australia now, we're teenagers; we listen to rap, R&B; anything that we find interesting, just like any other person.” Several students mentioned watching TV, specifically Netflix series such as Korean dramas, in their free time. As noted earlier, Abuk considered reading an important activity, especially when she is having a bad day. For Abuk, reading is both a pastime and a way of coping with and processing the difficulties she’s experiencing. Abuk also mentioned that she writes in a journal as a way of managing her mental health (dark FoI). She said, “So, I would just be blasting my playlist, like any playlist I feel like that day and just write.” Similarly, Saint writes to reflect on her daily activities and uses her phone (digital FoI) for this. Saint also indicated that talking is part of her self-expression and said, “I can let it out instead of bottling up my emotions and, like, letting it sit within myself and then, it drains me, it’s better to talk it out.”

Language is also considered an expression of practical FoI. Aluat shared, “We not only speak Dinka, but we can also, like, speak Swahili and Arabic [...] because when I was in Africa, I also went to Uganda,

Kenya, and Nairobi." Some students indicated that they speak Dinka to communicate with their family members. For instance, AD and Abraham said they speak Dinka with their mothers because they do not speak English. As mentioned earlier, Abraham noted that school was the place where he could speak English with his friends, making school a geographical FoI where he expresses a practical FoI. For AD, speaking Dinka is essential for communicating with her mother, who still lives in South Sudan. She indicated that she has "forgotten half of my language" since she came to Australia. She stated that Dinka is important not only as a means to communicate with her mother but also to connect to her culture. AD explained that she looks for "people who are, like, in my little circle, they can teach me the language, they can teach me words again, and that connects me to my culture. Coming here [Australia], you forget about your culture." For AD, this dark/existential FoI promotes the development of linguistic capital (see Section 6.34.2).

The student Knowledge Holders also mentioned other expressions of practical FoI, such as shopping, hobbies, working, praying, and visiting the mosque and church (see Appendix L).

6.2.1.3 Cultural Funds of Identity: "I Feel That's Something I'll Always Have; I Would Always Want Cultural Food"

Esteban-Guitart (2012) considered artefacts, national flags, and social categories cultural FoI. Bonfiglio et al. (2024) applied this sub-category in a broader sense and considered any cultural knowledge and skills that people exhibit. Examples of cultural FoI shared by the students are South Sudanese food, jewellery, knitting, accessories, and dancing, all of which express their connection to their ethnic heritage.

South Sudanese food holds a special place in the hearts of the student Knowledge Holders, particularly for the three female students from Riverwalk College who were born in South Sudan, symbolising not only their cultural roots but also evoking strong emotional connections. For instance, Abul mentioned how food connects her to South Sudan: "I feel that's something I'll always have; I would always want cultural food [...] I can never forget about my country." Aluat added, "Yeah, it's also part of who I am. Not only tastes better, but I just, I'm missing without it." Amiot recalled fond memories associated with food when she was in South Sudan, stating, "After school, my mom would cook, and then I would just smell it from far away. Then I would run and then just go eat [...] It's, like, it's a memory that can never be erased in my mind."

Language is an expression of practical FoI (see Section 6.2.1.2) but can also be considered a cultural FoI as it connects the students to their South Sudanese ethnic heritage (see also Section 6.2.1.3).

Language transmission is particularly important for students whose parents or caregivers have limited English proficiency. Generally, cultural transmission is often passed down within family settings (see also Section 6.3.3 Familial Capital). For instance, Chanel used to attend Dinka classes that were organised by community members.

Artefacts as expressions of cultural FoI mostly referred to South Sudanese-specific elements such as food, music, and jewellery. The students exchanged stories about the specific living room allocated for guests, which always needed to be kept tidy. Aduk and Abul shared that they could only go in to greet their guests, which is considered "respectful". The students also shared how knitted accessories from South Sudan are displayed during specific visits from community members in this 'special' living room. The conversation of guests visiting the house was accompanied by laughter and recognition of similar practices in the students' homes. For example, when special guests were expected to come over, the students were instructed to clean the house, even the places where one would not expect visitors to come. Similarly, the burning of *bakhoor,* which, according to Aduk, is "like, this normal air freshener, but African version", was considered a common practice in the students' homes. The students discussed in great detail how *bakhoor* was prepared by their mothers and aunties and kept in special jars. It was wonderful to hear them talk about their observations and their eagerness to share this part of their cultural FoI with me. It was most interesting to observe the similarities in cultural practices in the students' homes and how much fun they had discussing it.

When we talked about other examples of how they could express themselves, Amiot mentioned that "the way we dance" is an important part of South Sudanese culture. Aduk confirmed this by saying, "Yeah, it's Dinka dancing and stuff." Amiot explained the importance of cultural dancing and why it is important to her and the community:

> It's actually more about how we feel, you know? If there's something going on in the community, right? And then they invite people to go there and dance; it's, like, they're celebrating something. But at the same time, it represents our culture and background.

When I asked how they learned about the different dances, Amiot said they learned it from their family or members of the community. For instance, Chanel said, "We would, like, put a video on or something, and my mom would just show us [dancing], and we'd just copy her or my grandma sometimes." Abul told me that they dance at weddings, and Aduk and Amiot talked about the beads they wear around the neck and waist while dancing. Chanel later told me during her interview that she was teaching herself to make jewellery from beads. She explained that she finds the beads "pretty" and wants to learn how to make them because,

> I want to represent my culture. And since I was born here, yeah, I kind of look, like, I'm a bit whitewashed. So, I want to find ways that I can be still seen as I love my country and all this stuff. So, it doesn't look like I'm kind of pushing away my country.

Lastly, another example of a significant artefact was the Year 12 jacket worn by the three female students at Western College. This jacket symbolised how far they had come, with AD stating, "The jacket is a big thing for me. It's, like, you've made it."

These artefacts underscore how the students' cultural practices and symbols from their South Sudanese heritage play a crucial role in shaping their identity and maintaining cultural connections.

6.2.1.4 Social Funds of Identity: "I Love my Mum; I go to School for her, 10% for Myself"

Social FoI refers to any significant people in the student Knowledge Holders' lives. There was a certain overlap with expressions of social FoI, cultural FoI and familial capital. For example, some students mentioned how their family members (social FoI) would teach them cultural FoI, such as South Sudanese cooking and dances, which expressed the transmission of cultural knowledge and skills present within the family, thus referring to familial capital. Section 6.3.3 explores this in more detail. The students also expressed social FoI when referring to their family members, including extended family members, those living in Australia or overseas, and their friends. The students mentioned hanging out with other South Sudanese Australian students or students from African ethnic backgrounds at school (geographical FoI and institutional FoI), whereas other students indicated having friends from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Some female students indicated their closeness to each other and spending time together outside of school, especially if they were related. For instance, some girls would braid each other's hair.

Several students expressed admiration for their parents and the significant roles they play in their lives. For instance, Saint mentioned in her interview that her mum is very vocal about opposing forced marriages for teenage girls and actively advocates for her nieces. Saint proudly said, "That's why I always look up to my mum." Moya also spoke of the importance of his mum, confidently stating, "I love my mum; I go to school for her, 10% for myself." Nearly all student Knowledge Holders included 'home' on their geomaps, with some indicating the importance of home because of their families.

6.2.1.5 Institutional Funds of Identity: "I Love Going to School"

Institutional FoI refers to social institutions that play a significant role in someone's life (Esteban-Guitart, 2012). As mentioned before, schools are considered both geographical and institutional FoI. The value placed on school as an institution varied among the students. When asked about the school

and its importance in their lives, Amiot simply said, “I love going to school”, while Aduk firmly stated that she “hates school.” Most students mentioned in their personal interviews that school was manageable; however, Aker shared, “Sometimes I struggle, like, learning. I'm like a slow learner. I daydream, like, way too much.”

School as a social institution is where they interact with mentors, some of whom are South Sudanese Australian CLOs. Aker mentioned meeting with a mentor weekly and talking about “anything.” The South Sudanese Australian CLOs and Educational Support staff were viewed both positively and negatively. MJ stated, “I feel, like, I'll be more open speaking to them.” Similarly, Aduk pointed out that,

> If you are just explaining a racist situation, they [teachers] might just be like, "That's not being racist; they're just being mean," or whatever. Then, if you explain to an actual black teacher who might have experienced it, they would understand.

However, Abul expressed concern, saying that,

> Sometimes, I'm scared they [CLOs] know my parents. So, if I do something wrong, I feel like they'll tell my parents. Even if the other teachers wouldn't do it, I’m scared because I'm related to them.

Aluat also mentioned that she feels uneasy speaking with a South Sudanese Australian CLO because they tend to behave like a parent, often repeating advice such as the need to listen to the teacher. Aduk emphasised the importance of adults genuinely listening to them and trying to understand their behaviour, rather than constantly offering advice.

Besides schools being a significant place for fun, social interactions, and relief from responsibilities, school is also where the student Knowledge Holders encounter differential treatments from teachers, which are considered dark/existential FoI (see Section 6.2.1.7). Aluat remarked, “Sometimes it feels racist the way they treat you, but it depends on the teacher.” When asked to elaborate, she responded, “Just the way that they act around you. Sometimes, I could see a teacher treat me differently than other students.” Other students could identify specific instances where they felt they were treated differently than their white peers. These experiences included lacking teacher support when required, fewer opportunities to change classes, and harsher punishments. In addition to differential treatment from teachers, the students indicated observing deficit assumptions. For instance, Aduk stated, “Some teachers think that we're dumb” and “They probably won't expect anything from you.”

When discussing the students' identities at school compared to at home, several students at Riverwalk College acknowledged a significant difference. Chanel specifically pointed out variations in "the way you talk and the way you behave." Aduk elaborated on exhibiting different behaviours, explaining that their behaviour at home often differs because their parents have specific expectations regarding their conduct:

> There's expectations at home to, like, being a Sudo.[53] Like, say, yeah, being a Sudanese kid, there's expectations, as, especially when visitors comes. It's, like, different expectations. And then when you're outside, at school, it's, like, you can, no one is going to really tell you what expectations you need to have. Like, no one's going to judge you. In Africa, it is all based around what people think about you.

Aduk's explanation highlights the different expectations the students face at home versus in public. At home, there are cultural expectations about behaviour, whereas in places such as school, the students experience more freedom and no judgement from their parents or community members. This contrast shows the pressure experienced by the young people within the South Sudanese Australian community to maintain a certain image. This element of tension between elders and the young people was also mentioned by the adult Knowledge Holders (see Chapter 8, Section 8.2.2.2).

Other expressions of institutional FoI include references to the church and the mosque. For instance, Moya stated in the first focus group meeting that his faith is an expression of his identity, and he attends the mosque where he does his "prayers and stuff." Praying and visiting the church and the mosque are also considered practical FoI (see Section 6.2.1.2).

6.2.1.6 Digital Funds of Identity: "I Watch Netflix Movies, and I Watch Anime on Netflix and Online Websites"

Poole (2017a, 2017b, 2021) proposed the concept of digital FoI, which refers to using digital methods to collect data, incorporating literary and visual artefacts that provide insights into young people's identities. Although my research did not focus on using digital FoI to gather knowledge, students integrated digital elements into their arts-based projects using their phones and laptops. The three female students from Western College used their phones to take photos and collated these into a collage, and Saint made a digital presentation on her laptop using pictures and written explanations.

[53] The student Knowledge Holders used this term, which is slang for South Sudanese. At times, they also referred to Sudanese instead of South Sudanese.

Digital FoI can also refer to digital identities, such as avatars in online games (Poole, 2017a). While this aspect was not explored in this research, students likely have digital identities expressed through gaming or social media platforms like Instagram and YouTube.

The student Knowledge Holders made several references to digital devices, which can be expressions of digital FoI. For instance, they mentioned using their phones to write notes to create a digital diary, listen to music, communicate with friends and family, and take photos. They also referred to using laptops to watch their favourite shows. For instance, Abul shared in her interview, "I watch Netflix movies, and I watch anime on Netflix and online websites." These examples indicate how the students' digital FoI are used for relaxation, self-expression and self-understanding.

6.2.1.7 Dark/Existential Funds of Identity: "Because Your Skin Colour is Black, They Punish you Differently"

Dark FoI (Charteris et al., 2018) draws from the notion of dark FoK or the "difficult lifeworld knowledge" described by Zipin (2009, p. 323). Existential FoI refers to both the positive and the negative experiences that contribute to identity development and self-definition (Poole & Huang, 2018). Both FoI acknowledge the difficult lived experiences that contribute to one's identity development and self-expression (Charteris et al., 2018; Poole, 2017b; Poole & Huang, 2018). To be more specific, Poole and Huang (2018) explained that the positive aspect of this additional sub-category refers to a positive outcome, such as personal growth or improved educational engagement, resulting from a negative experience. Similarly, Poole (2020) explained, "Seemingly negative experiences from the past are refracted through the prism of the present and transformed to become strategies for negotiating the future" (p. 407). Since dark FoI and existential FoI overlap to an extent, I refer to them as dark/existential FoI.

Dark/existential FoI was identified as the most prevalent sub-category for the students based on the number of associated quotes. It is important to acknowledge that the categorisation of these experiences within this FoI sub-category reflects my analysis and interpretation of the context in which they were shared. This allocation is subjective, meaning that while I interpret these lived experiences as 'dark' and 'difficult', they might not necessarily be considered the same way by the students. However, there were instances when the students provided additional context or displayed visible signs of irritation or frustration, which suggested that these experiences were indeed 'dark' or 'difficult'.

Upon analysing the gathered expressions and observations of dark/existential FoI in NVivo (see Appendix L), I grouped the various quotes into 18 distinct descriptions, which can be considered themes. These 18 themes are presented in Table 6.

It is important to note that all students, except for MJ, mentioned aspects that have been grouped in this category. However, MJ attended only two focus group meetings and was rather quiet. Therefore, it cannot be readily assumed that MJ did not have lived experiences that can be considered dark/existential FoI.

Table 6
Overview of the 18 Themes Generated from the Expressions of Dark/Existential Funds of Identity by the Student Knowledge Holders

Experiences with discrimination and racism at school
Experiences with stereotypical assumptions about South Sudanese people
Experiences with teachers' assumptions regarding the 'good' and the 'bad' South Sudanese
Experiences with losing the ability the ability to communicate in their mother tongue
Experiencing mental health issues of students, including depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts
Experiences and observations of divisions in the South Sudanese Australian Community
Experiences with negative attitudes and restrictions towards girls from parents and community members
Experiences with having to grow up too quickly due to responsibilities at home
Experiences with sickness and passing of family members
Experiences with a lack of parental involvement and interest in education
Experiences with differential treatment and assumptions/negative attitudes from teachers regarding abilities (deficit approach)
Personal or familial experiences of war, including escaping to safety, displacement, life in a refugee camp, and living with family members who have trauma or PTSD
Experiences with parental unemployment and its impact on family life
Experiences of being separated from mother and/or siblings
Knowledge of the custom of arranged marriages for teenage girls
Experiences of being considered 'whitewashed' by family or community members

Experiences with being targeted and racially profiled when out in public, e.g., in shops
Experiences with and/or knowledge of gangs and/or gang-related violence

The following paragraphs present two themes in this sub-category: Experiences with being considered 'whitewashed' by family or community members and experiences with losing the ability to communicate in the mother tongue. Additional quotes can be found in Appendix L.

The term 'whitewashing' was mentioned several times by the students regarding their positionality within the South Sudanese Australian community. For Moya, the term referred to purposely staying away from other South Sudanese young people who are considered "negative", which he interpreted as someone who is not doing the right thing. However, not interacting with other South Sudanese Australian young people can be interpreted negatively by community members as being whitewashed, as AD explained, "It's like, if you're Black and you're hanging out with white kids, then you're whitewashed." Several other students added a deeper meaning to the term whitewashing. Abraham explained that "when you can't speak our language, they'll call you whitewashed." And Aduk noted that they call you whitewashed when "you don't cook your cultural food," or when "you don't like your cultural food." According to Aduk, Amiot and Chanel, being considered whitewashed is "sad", an "embarrassment", and a "disgrace." There was one final element to the notion of whitewashing and that concerned Chanel's comment regarding her desire to "represent my culture", which was particularly important to her as she was born in Australia. She purposely engaged in activities, such as beading and stated, "So I want to find ways that I can be seen as I love my country and all this stuff. So, it doesn't look like I'm kind of pushing away my country."

Linked to the notion of 'whitewashing' is the experiences with losing the ability to communicate in the mother tongue. Language is considered both practical and cultural FoI (see Sections 6.2.1.2 and 6.2.1.3) and was mentioned by several students as being an important part of their identity. The concerns expressed regarding losing the ability to communicate with family due to the loss of their mother tongue were mentioned by AD and Abraham, who need to communicate in Dinka with their mothers. This is particularly challenging for AD as her mother lives in South Sudan. AD explained that she is not able to communicate regularly with her mother because "there's not much mother tongue anymore because I've been in Australia for, like, ten years." Abraham's mother only speaks Dinka, and this forces him to actively keep up with maintaining his mother tongue. He mainly does this at school with fellow South Sudanese Australian students. Similarly, AD is encouraged to maintain and improve her ability to speak Dinka and converses in her mother tongue with her South Sudanese Australian

friends. These are examples how dark/existential FoI are transformed and contribute to the development of linguistic capital (see Section 6.3.2).

It is evident from the multiple themes presented in Table 6 that dark/existential FoI are the most prominent sub-category. Therefore, it can be inferred that these FoI are likely to have the most significant impact on the students' identities. The dark/existential FoI sub-category is explored in more detail in the next chapter (see Chapter 9, Section 9.2.1).

6.2.1.8 Agency and Imagination: "That's What I Want to Change"

The students expressed their agency (Hedges, 2021) in several ways. First, the three female students at Western College sought alternative pathways for tertiary education and acted on this by requesting changes to their subjects. The students highlighted the vital role of the career counsellor at Western College, noting how they felt genuinely listened to and supported, which enabled them to exercise their agency effectively.

Furthermore, Abuk, Saint and AD expressed their agency when they adamantly indicated their plans to adopt different parenting approaches, particularly regarding the roles and expectations of girls in the family. Although these plans represent an anticipated use of agency, they demonstrated the students' critical reflections on parenting practices and their intention to implement changes based on their lived experiences. AD articulated this sentiment clearly, stating, "That's what I want to change; I want my kids to know that they don't have to do things because I did it" (Interview with AD).

Lastly, two students expressed their agency regarding their financial plans. Abraham shared how his brother assisted him in making a solid financial plan for his earnings in preparation for future plans. Since Abraham was expected to contribute to the household expenses, he said, "I split it [earnings] in half, and then I keep my savings for the house and for my future." Similarly, during the interview with Aker, we talked about work. Aker indicated that she is not yet working but that she hoped to do that very soon. When I asked whether she had any specific plans on what to spend her anticipated income on, she confidently said, "To pay for my braces." Aker told me she needed to save $6,000 to pay for her braces. This knowledge of expected expenses also indicates Aker's financial agency in enquiring about the costs.

6.2.1.9 Invisible Funds of Identity: "Girls are Mostly Expected to Know how to Cook, Clean; Boys Don't do Cooking"

Invisible FoI (Esteban-Guitart, 2023c) can relate to gender and race (Marsh & Zhulamanova, 2017). In the context of dark/existential FoI, female student Knowledge Holders described negative attitudes and restrictions imposed by parents and community members. These attitudes and restrictions can also be categorised as invisible FoI since they are hegemonic cultural practices within the South Sudanese Australian community.

Related to this are the expectations regarding the roles and responsibilities of girls at home. I did not include these in the dark/existential FoI sub-category, even though they are mostly experienced as something negative. This choice was intentional, recognising that there is more complexity to these expectations than simply their negative aspects (Poole & Huang, 2018). The gender-assigned roles and expectations can be considered invisible FoI because they are part of the South Sudanese cultural hegemonic discourse. During the first focus group meeting at Riverwalk College, when we talked about how dancing is an important expression of the South Sudanese identity, one of the female students, Abul, suddenly mentioned, "Also, girls are mostly expected to know how to cook, clean. Boys don't do cooking." Aduk added that this differs for each household, saying, "Me and my mom cook and my older sisters, and then my little brother and my older brother, like, help clean around the house and stuff." Chanel immediately responded, "Mine is completely different; my brothers don't do anything!" When asked if Abraham had to help at home, he said, "We clean our own stuff." This response seemed to impress the female students and initiated more sharing of personal experiences regarding this topic.

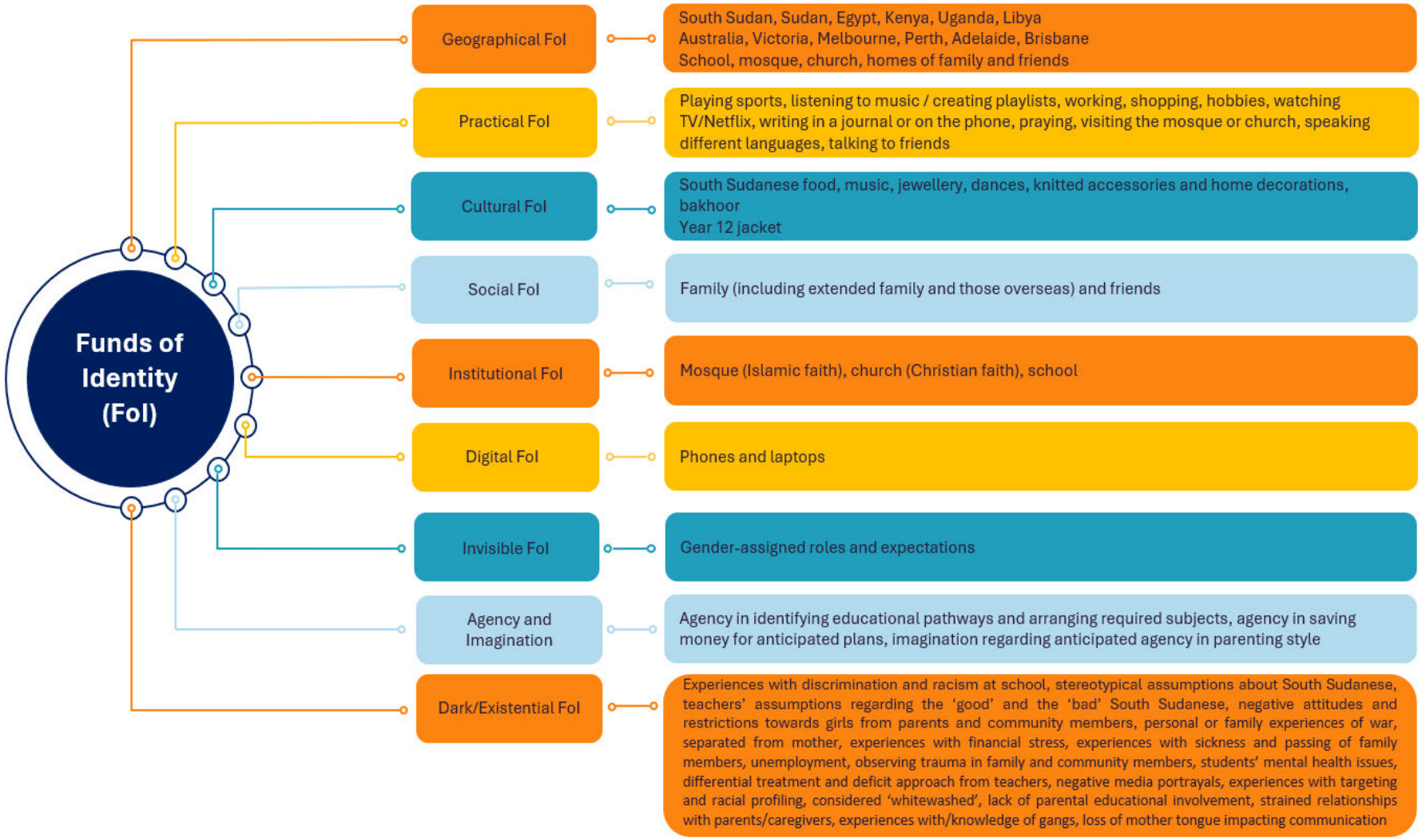
It was interesting to observe that Abul deemed it essential to include gender roles in the discussion about South Sudanese identity, sparking responses that either supported or highlighted differing experiences. This conversation about the different roles between boys and girls recurred multiple times at both schools. Several female students, particularly those at Western College, expressed strong opinions on these gender-specific expectations. Therefore, although gender-specific expectations regarding the roles and responsibilities could be considered invisible FoI due to their roots in South Sudanese cultural discourse, the resistance against these assumed invisible norms warrants further exploration, which can be found in Section 6.3.7.

6.2.1.10 Visual Overview of Explored Funds of Identity

Figure 23 displays the nine different types of FoI presented in the previous sections. Appendix L provides additional quotes from the student Knowledge Holders.

Figure 23

Overview of the Explored Funds of Identity Expressed in the Focus Group Meetings and Interviews



6.2.2 The Funds of Identity Expressed in the Identity Drawings

The identity drawing was part of the individual interviews, allowing the students to express themselves using paper and felt pens (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.3). Some students had been quiet during the focus group meetings, so I was eager to see their identity drawings and whether they would reveal insights into the aspects contributing to their identity, identity development, self-definition and self-expression. All twelve students participated in the drawing activity (see Figures 24 -32 and Chapter 5, Sections 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4). The students were more comfortable writing descriptions of themselves rather than drawing them, though a few included small illustrations. Nearly all students drew a basic stick figure to represent themselves; however, three students created more detailed drawings.

Figure 24

Amiot's Identity Drawing

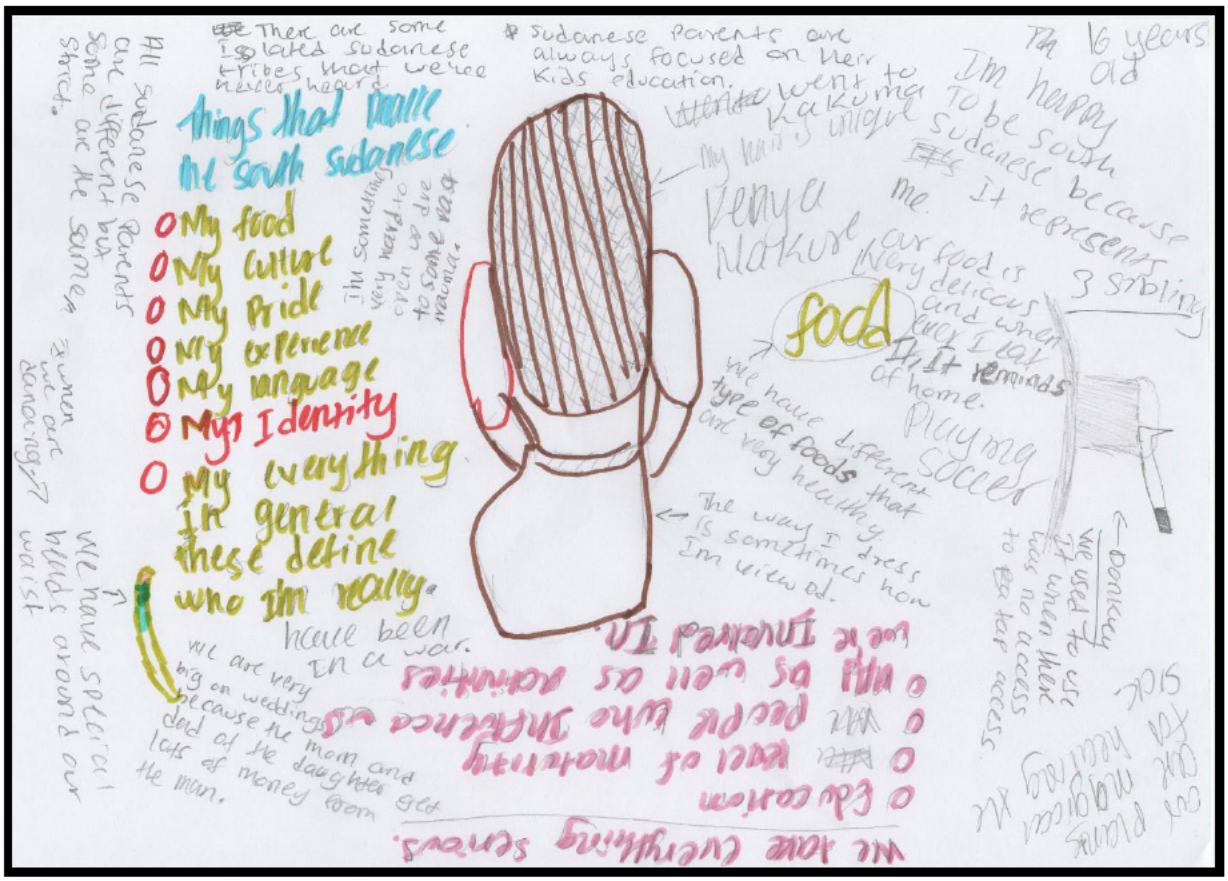


Figure 25

Abul's Identity Drawing

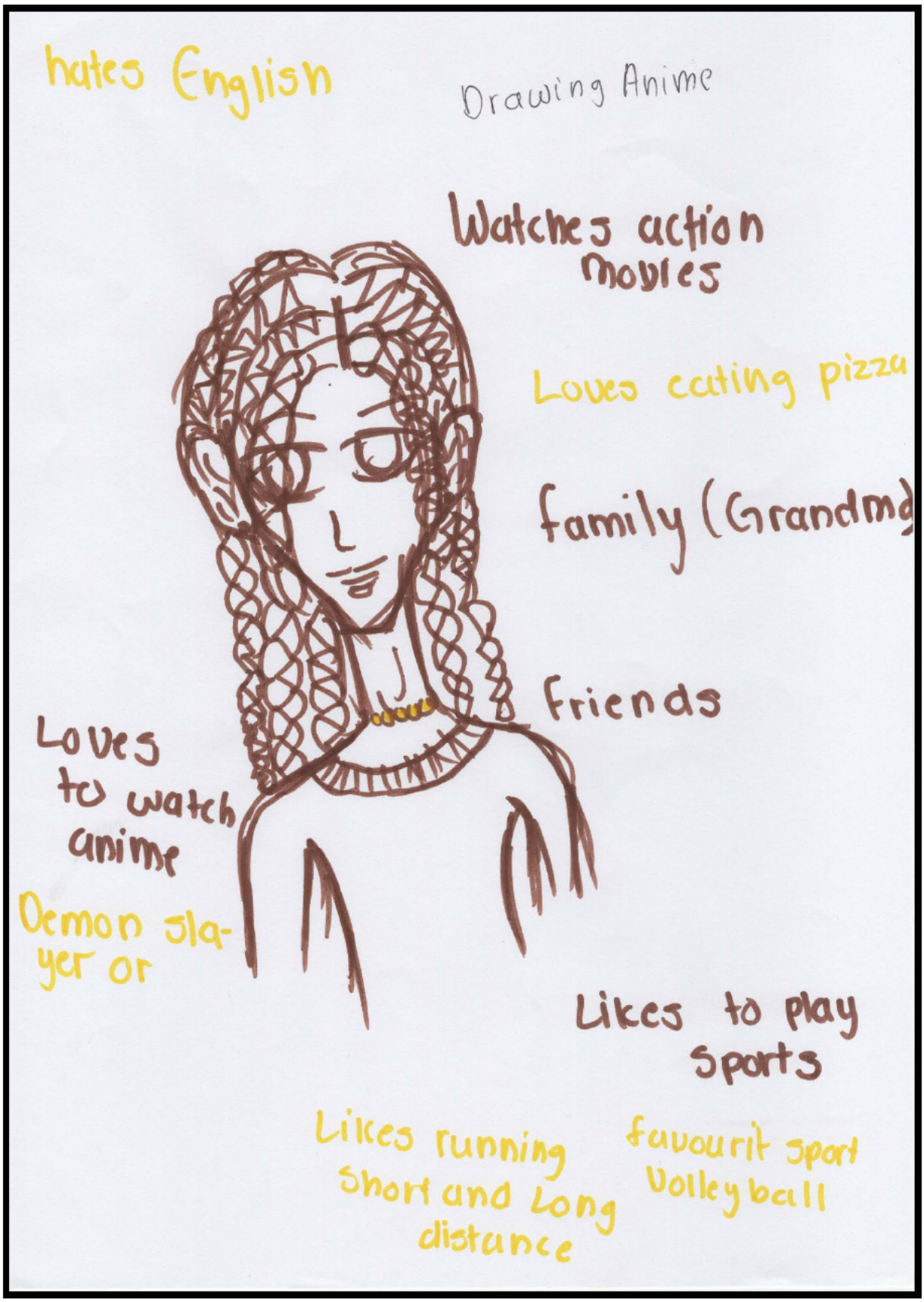


Figure 26

Abraham's Identity Drawing

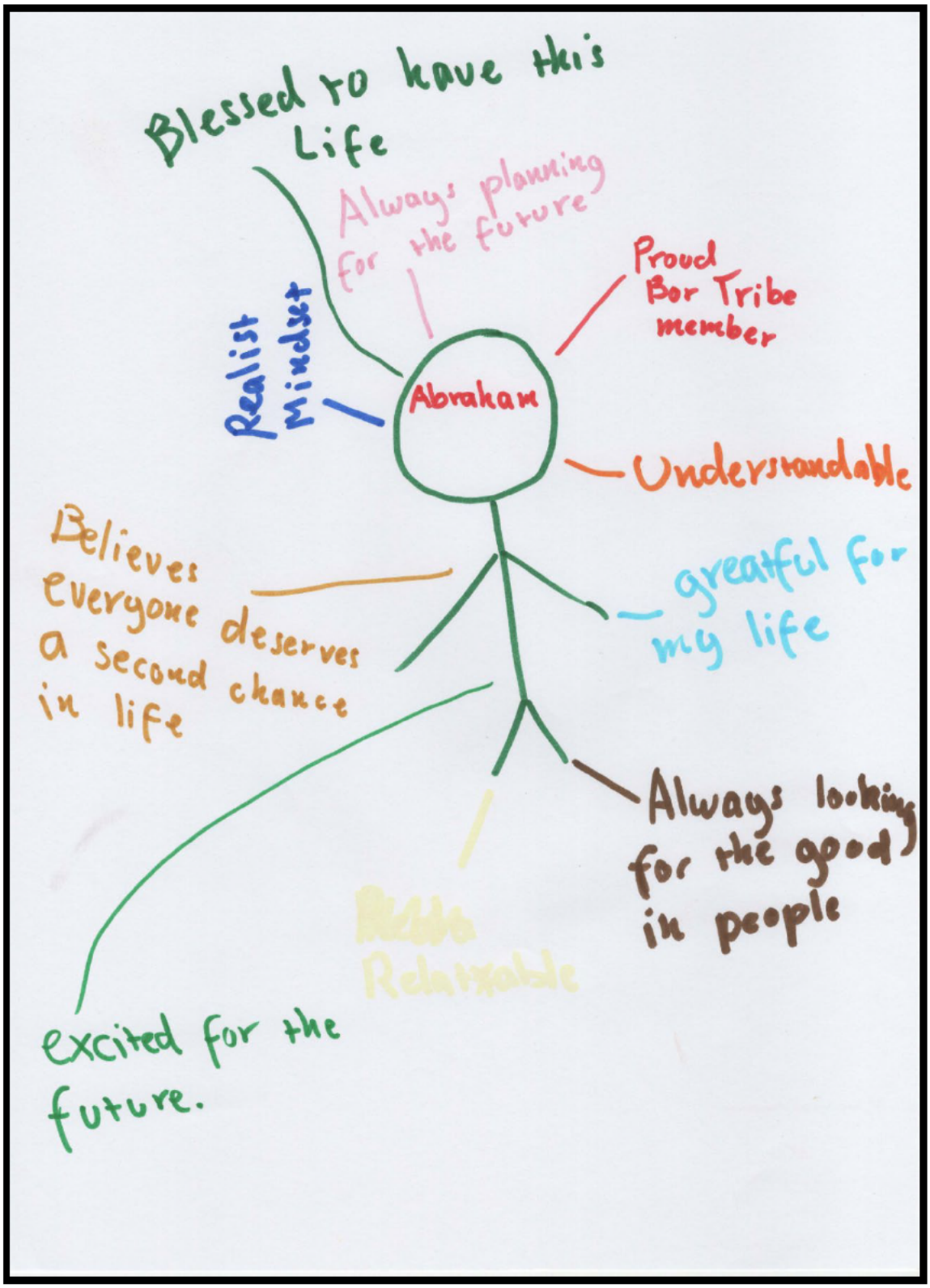


Figure 27

Chanel's Identity Drawing

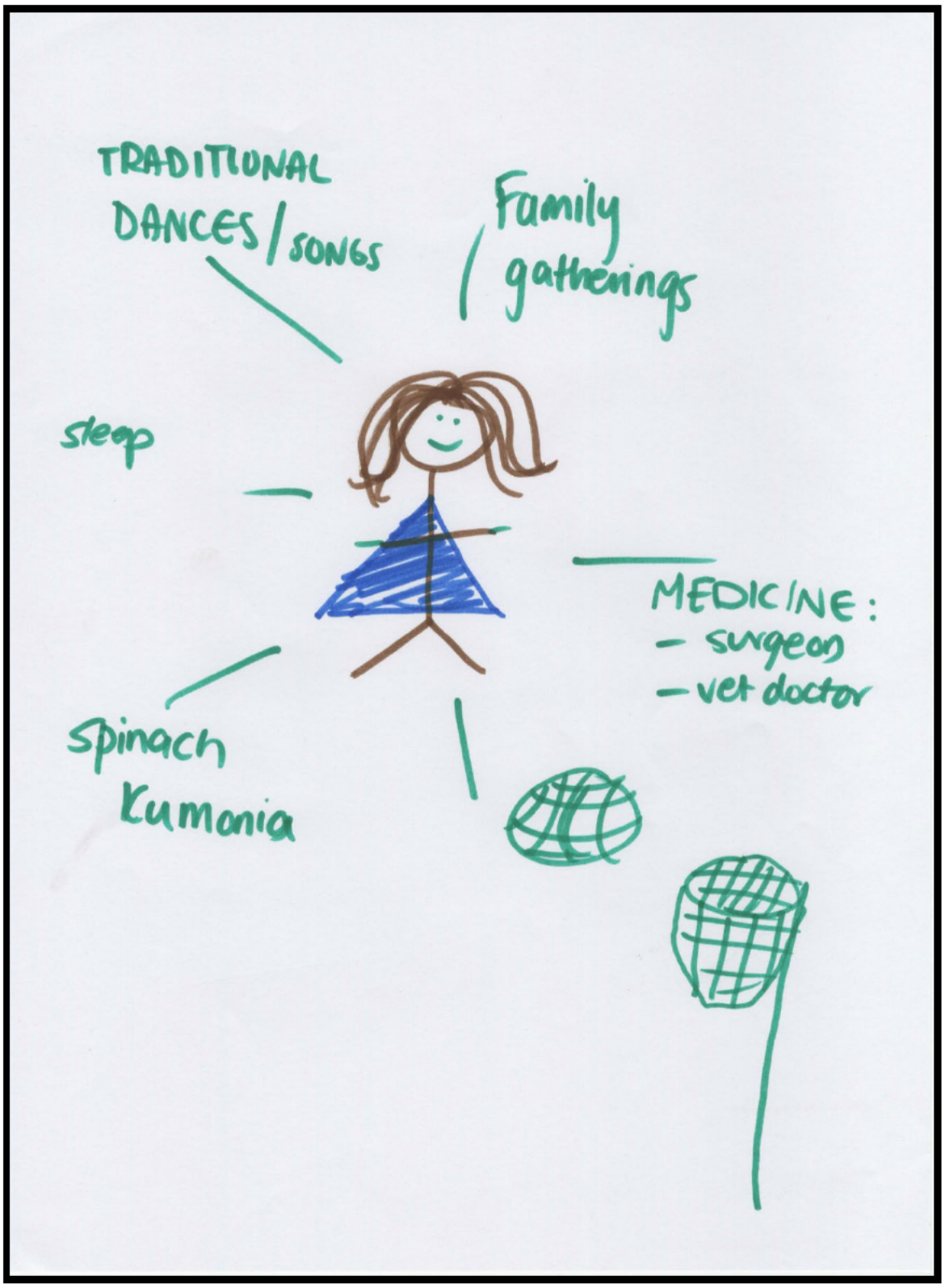


Figure 28

Aluat's Identity Drawing

Figure 29

Aker's Identity Drawing

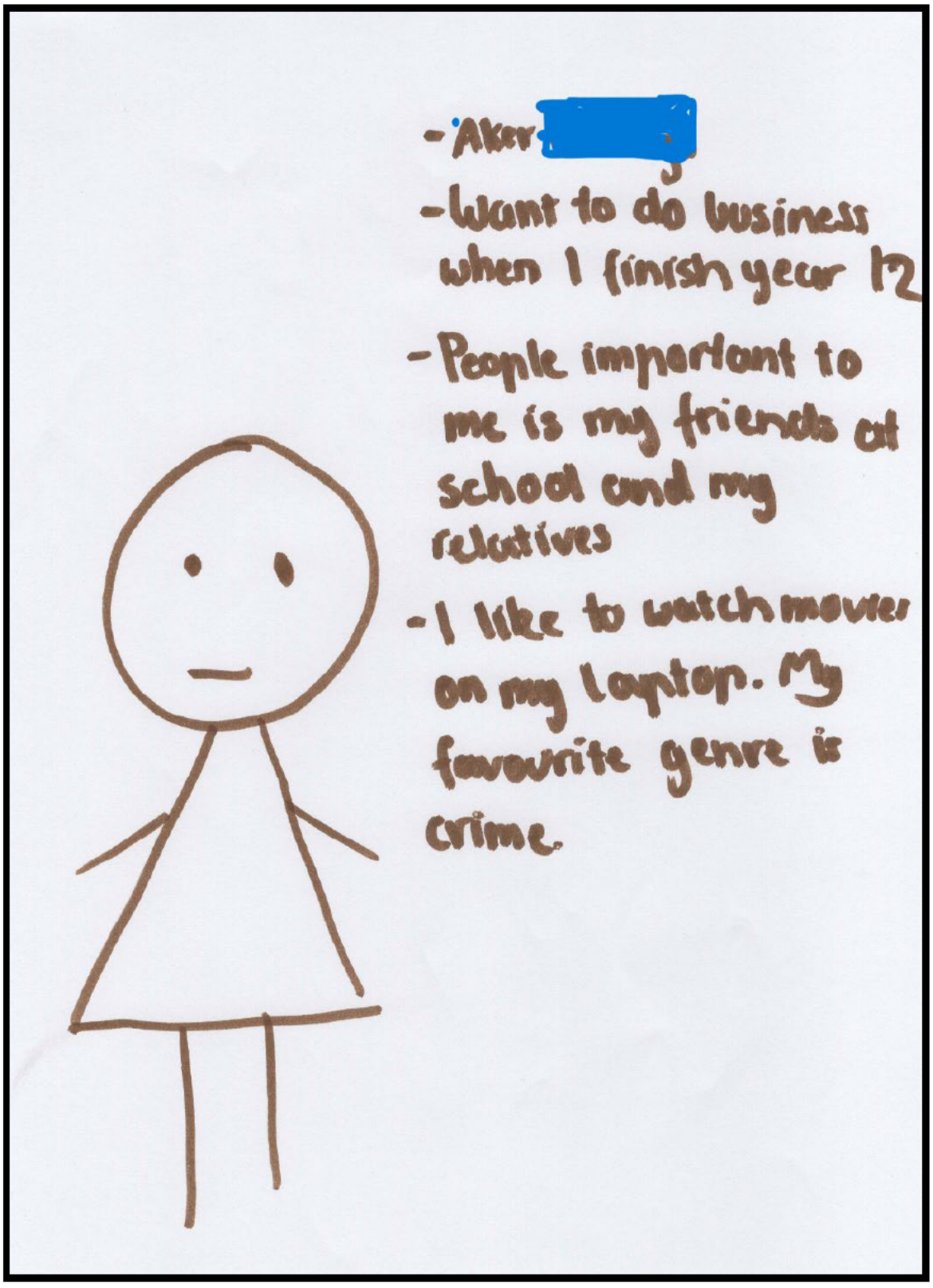


Figure 30

Moya's Identity Drawing

Figure 31

Aduk's Identity Drawing

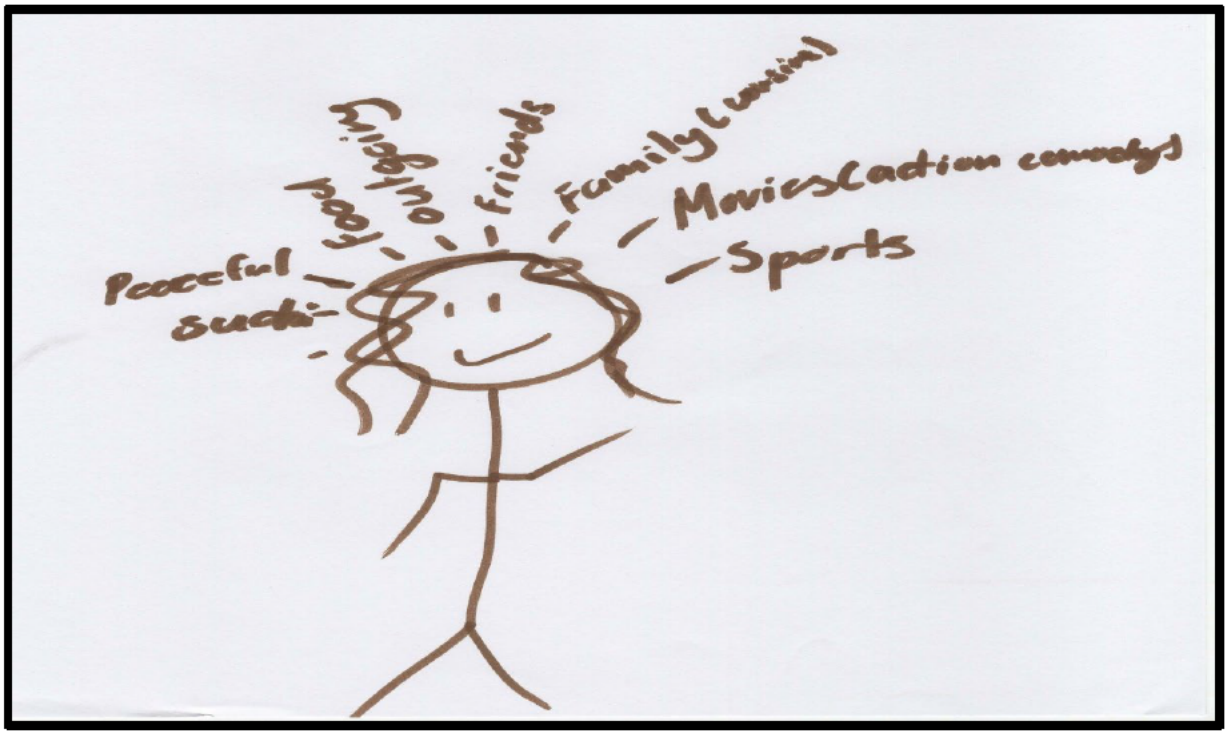
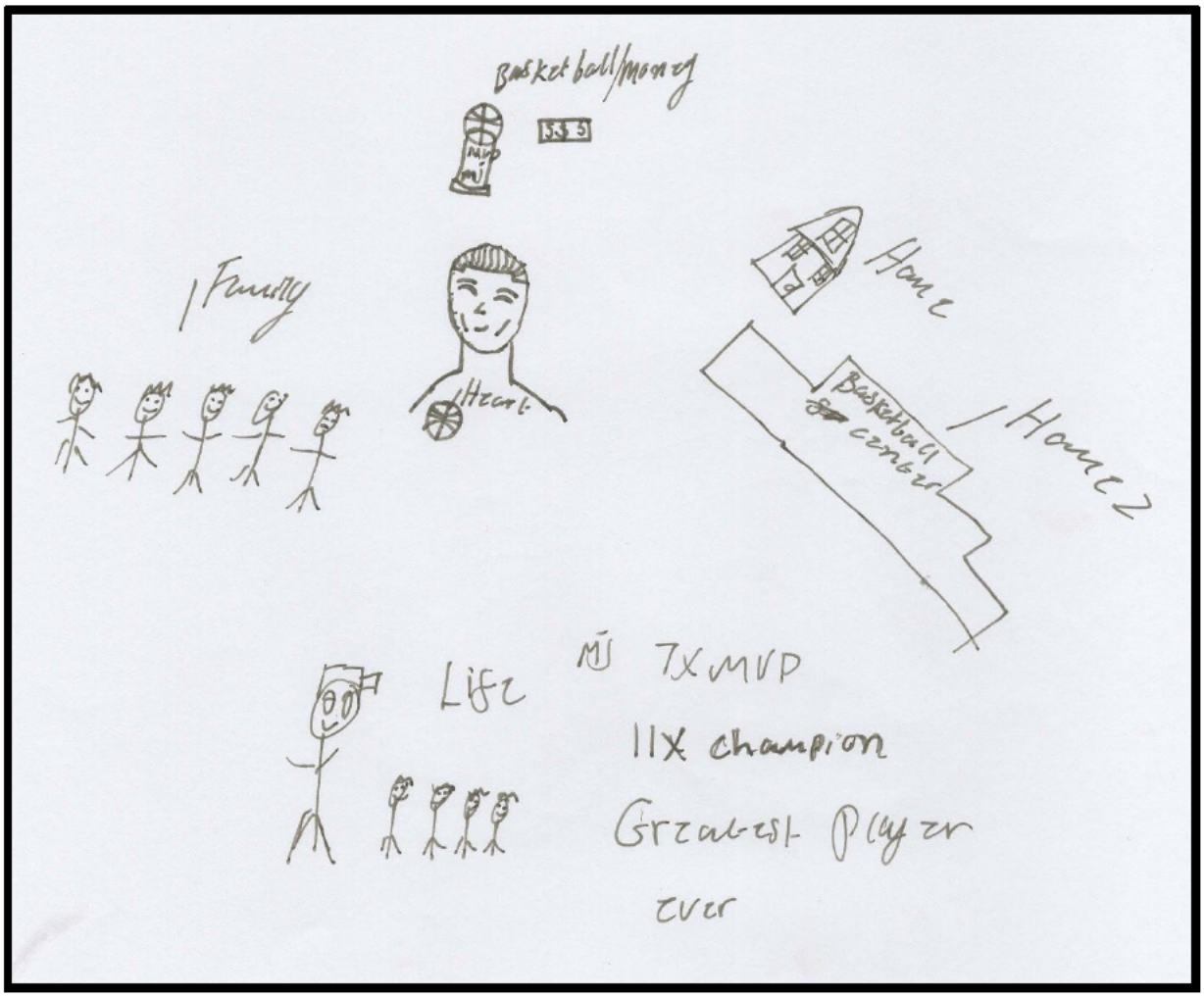


Figure 32

MJ's Identity Drawing



As explained in Chapter 4, Section 4.5.2, the deductive analysis of the identity drawings generated nine themes. Figure 33 provides an overview of these nine themes and the accompanying written elements (copied verbatim) or drawn on the twelve participants' identity drawings. The identity drawings of two female students, Saint (see Figure 15) and Amiot (see Figure 24), were extensive and accounted for many elements in the visual overview. The self-description category contained the most contributions, with the descriptions in the two columns in the left bottom corner being from one female student, Saint (see also Section 5.4). The remaining descriptions are from several other students.

The descriptions of South Sudanese under the cultural FoI heading and the general descriptions of South Sudanese were all provided by Amiot, a female student from Riverwalk College. Her descriptions are elaborative and refer to many aspects of her identity as a South Sudanese and her perceptions of

the identity of South Sudanese people in general. Amiot's extensive identity drawing (see Figure 24) exhibits her love of her country, its culture and people while explaining which elements contribute to her South Sudanese identity.

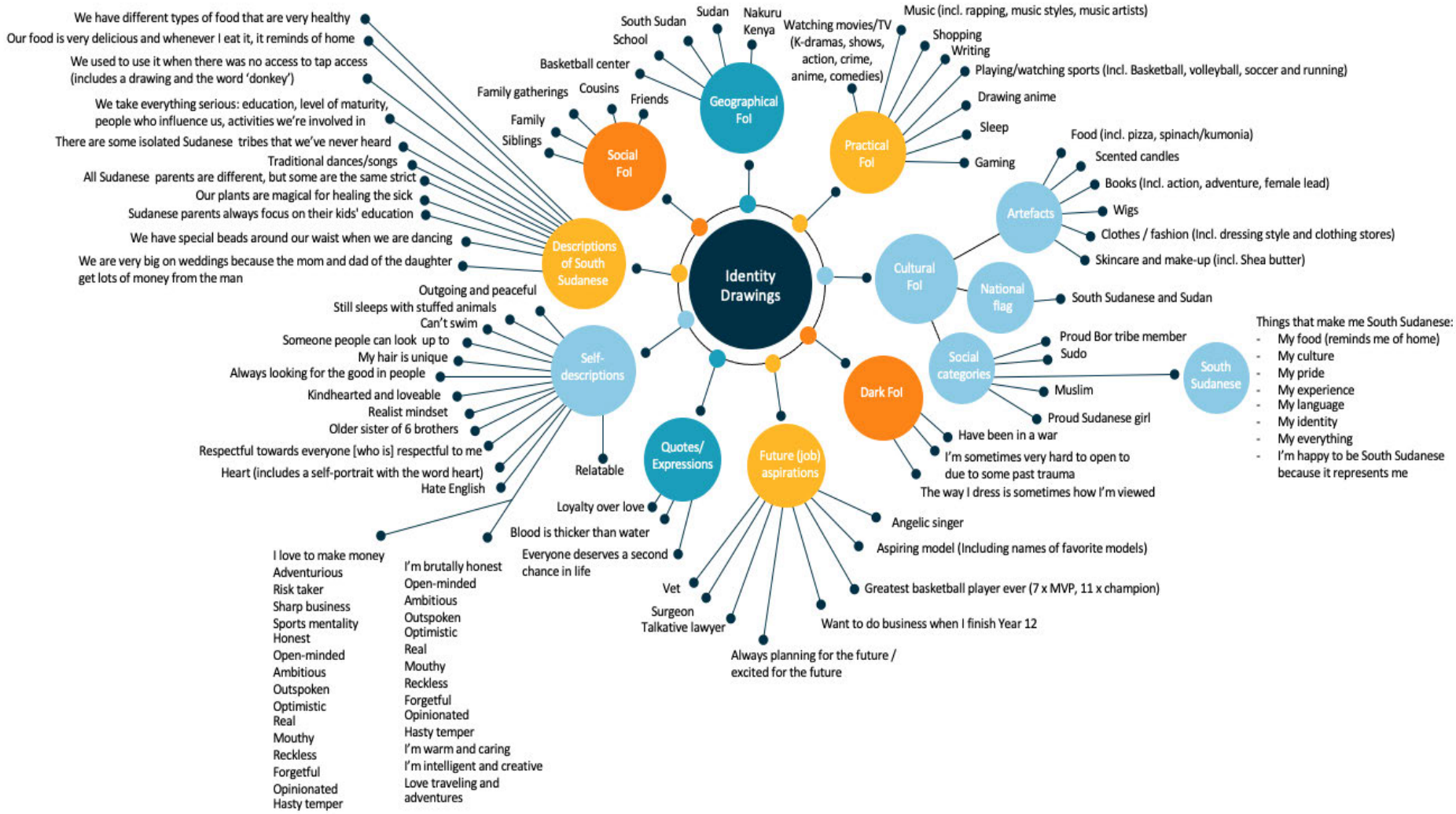
Compared to the multiple experiences shared in the focus group meetings and interviews that were grouped under dark/existential FoI (see Section 6.2.1.7), the identity drawings only contained three elements in this sub-category. These three elements came from Amiot, with two referring to her experiences with trauma while living in South Sudan. Amiot arrived in Australia in 2018 and has vivid memories of the civil unrest in South Sudan, some of which she shared in the focus group meetings. The third element under dark FoI, "The way I dress is sometimes how I'm viewed", aligns with comments made by AD and Saint (see narrative portraits in Sections 5.2. and 5. 4). I grouped it under dark FoI because it has a negative connotation and refers to being judged by adult South Sudanese Australian community members.

The future (job) aspirations heading contains eight contributions that either describe future aspirations or dreams, an association with thinking about their future, or an actual job aspiration. The practical FoI incorporates several activities, such as playing and watching sports, listening to music, and reading. Several students mentioned in their interviews how they love watching Netflix series on their laptops when they relax after school or at the weekend. Some female students mentioned K-dramas (Korean TV series), and I asked which ones they enjoyed as I am familiar with some of them. However, I did not inquire why they preferred K-dramas over US-based series. Although I did not ask the students to include important places in their identity drawings, some of them did, and these are grouped under geographical FoI (see Figure 33). The place Nakuru in Kenya was included by Amiot, who shared that she had lived there with some of her extended family. MJ included 'basketball center', which aligns with the 'basketball court' on his geomap (see Figure 11).

Abuk contributed nearly all the elements under the artefacts category, which is part of the cultural FoI. Abuk's artefacts included scented candles, books, wigs, clothes, skincare, and make-up. When we discussed Abuk's identity drawing, she shared detailed information about where she purchases her clothes, skincare, and make-up. She also elaborated on her preference for wigs, including where she buys them and how she maintains them to ensure they last for many months. This conversation with Abuk provided additional insights into her style and her agency in saving her wages to buy the things she likes and needs.

Figure 33

Overview of the Elements Included in the Identity Drawings



The identity drawings offer a rich, multifaceted glimpse into the students' self-perceptions, lived experiences and aspects that are important to them, as is evident from Figure 33. Furthermore, the drawings explore the students' expressions of identity, identity practices, and future aspirations, revealing layers of their identities that were not as apparent during the focus group discussions and interviews. The diversity in their expressions—ranging from simple stick figures with a handful of words to detailed drawings and elaborate written descriptions—underscores the varied ways in which they engage with and articulate their identity and elements expressing or representing their identity. The categorisation of their contributions into social FoI, geographical FoI, practical FoI, dark FoI and cultural FoI, along with emergent themes like future job aspirations, quotes/expressions, descriptions of South Sudanese, and self-descriptions, highlights the richness of the elements that the students considered important and contributing to their identity and self-expression. Additionally, certain elements of the identity drawings can be interpreted as challenging the dominant narratives about South Sudanese Australian students and their families, particularly through their self-descriptions. The authentic self-descriptions provide a more complex and nuanced picture of the students' identities compared to the often negative and one-sided media portrayals. The students also expressed their agency and individuality by sharing various experiences, interests and aspirations in their drawings. Lastly, the descriptions of the South Sudanese community members provide insights into their rich cultural heritage, experiences and aspirations, thereby challenging negative stereotypical portraits and contributing to a more positive understanding of the community.

6.2.3 The Funds of Identity Expressed in the Geomaps

All twelve students participated in drawing a geomap that displayed places that were important to them. All the places indicated on the geomaps were analysed and recorded in a table, including the ranking (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.) (see Appendix N). Some students clearly distinguished which places were more significant, whereas others did not (see Appendix N and Figures 5, 12, 19, 34-43). The places were analysed for common themes and grouped under the following headings: places at home, places in Australia, school environment, other homes, places of worship and prayer, places in Africa, places in the world, and remaining places of interest (see Appendix N). Some student responses are also included in the table when they added comments to their geomap, and occasionally, I included their verbal comments for additional context (see Appendix N).

Figure 34

Abraham's Geomap

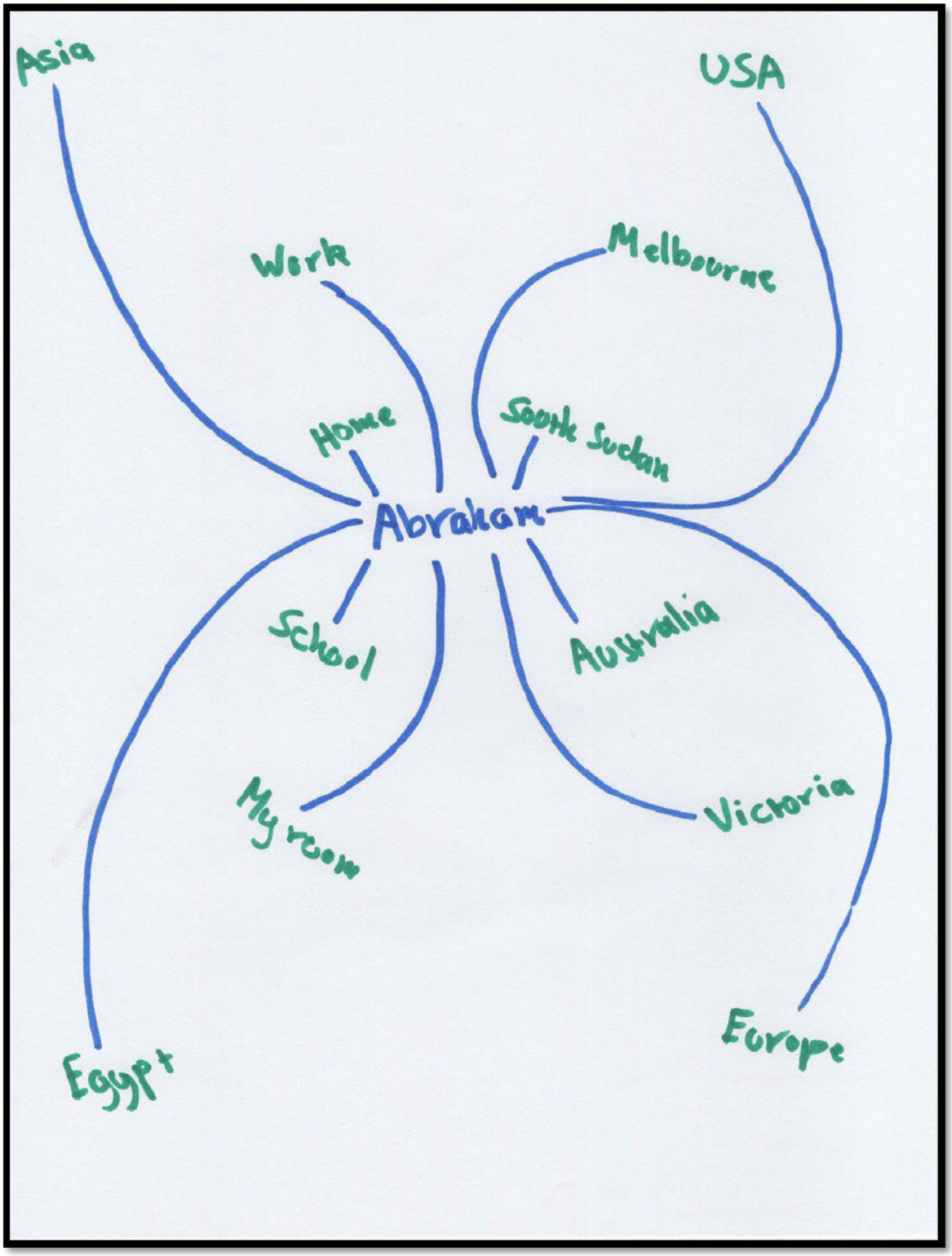


Figure 35

Abul's Geomap

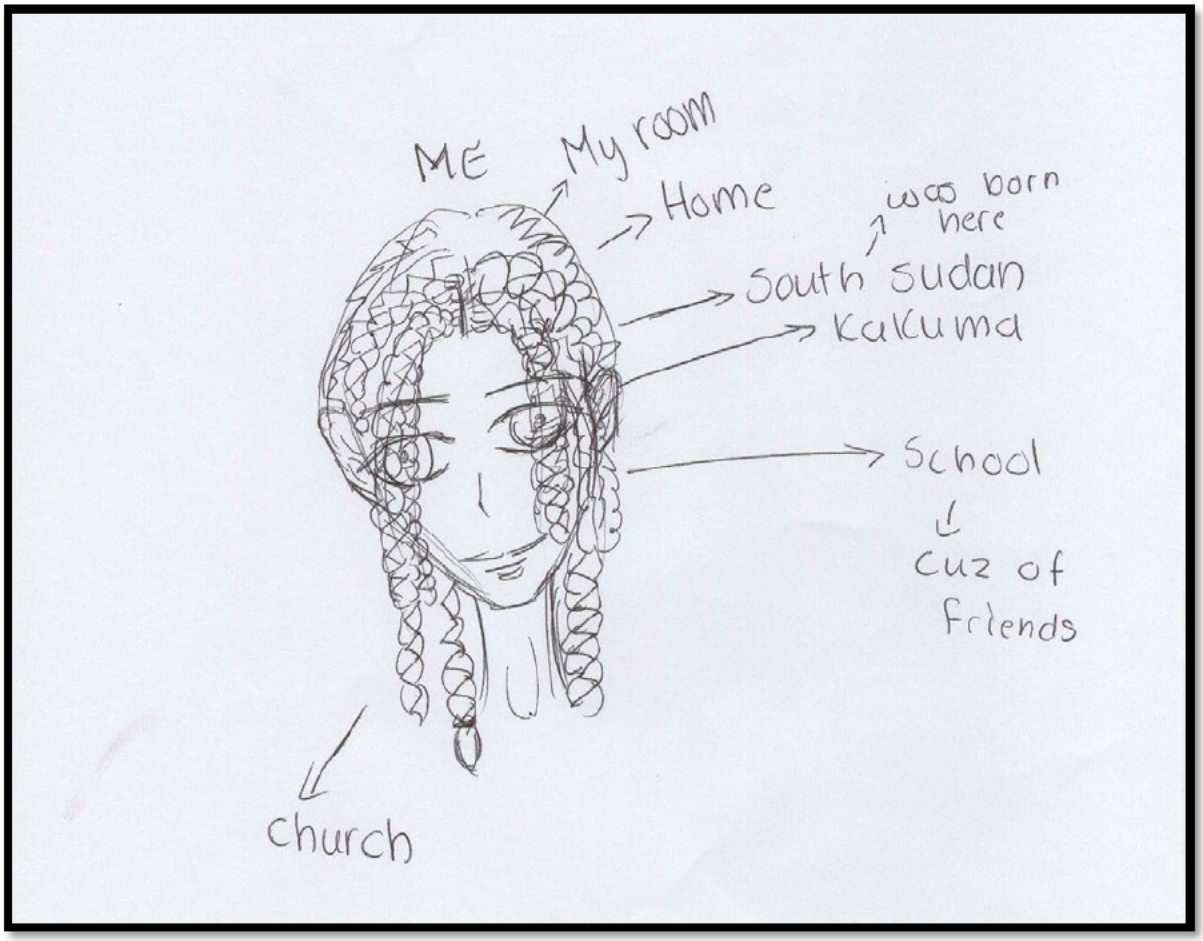


Figure 36

MJ's Geomap

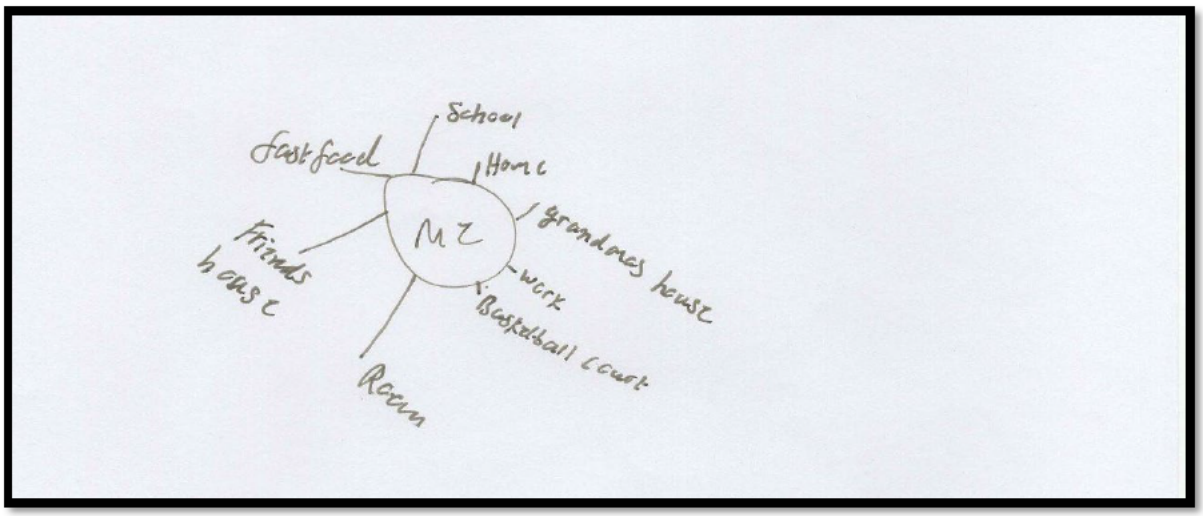


Figure 37

Aduk's Geomap

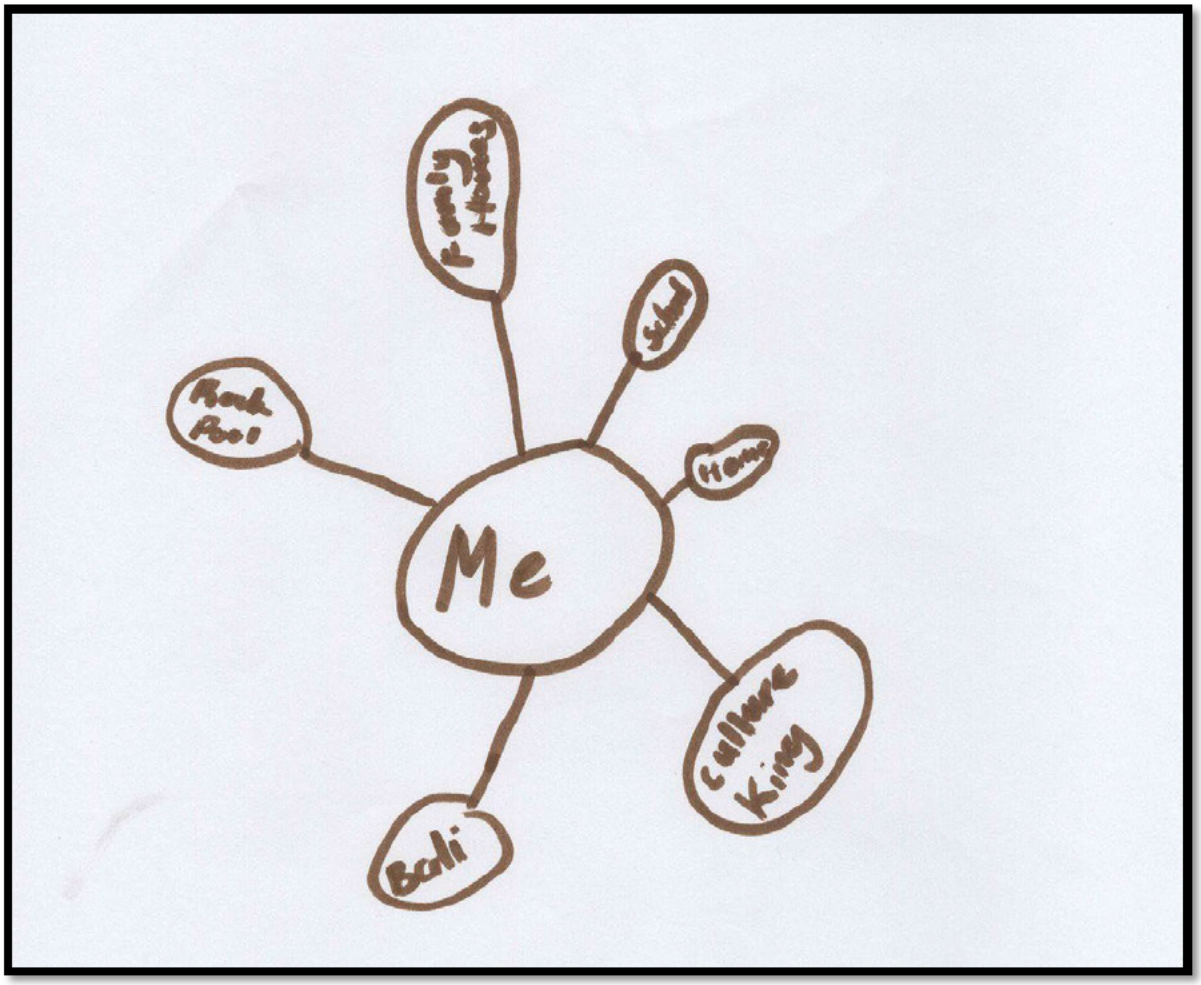


Figure 38

Aker's Geomap

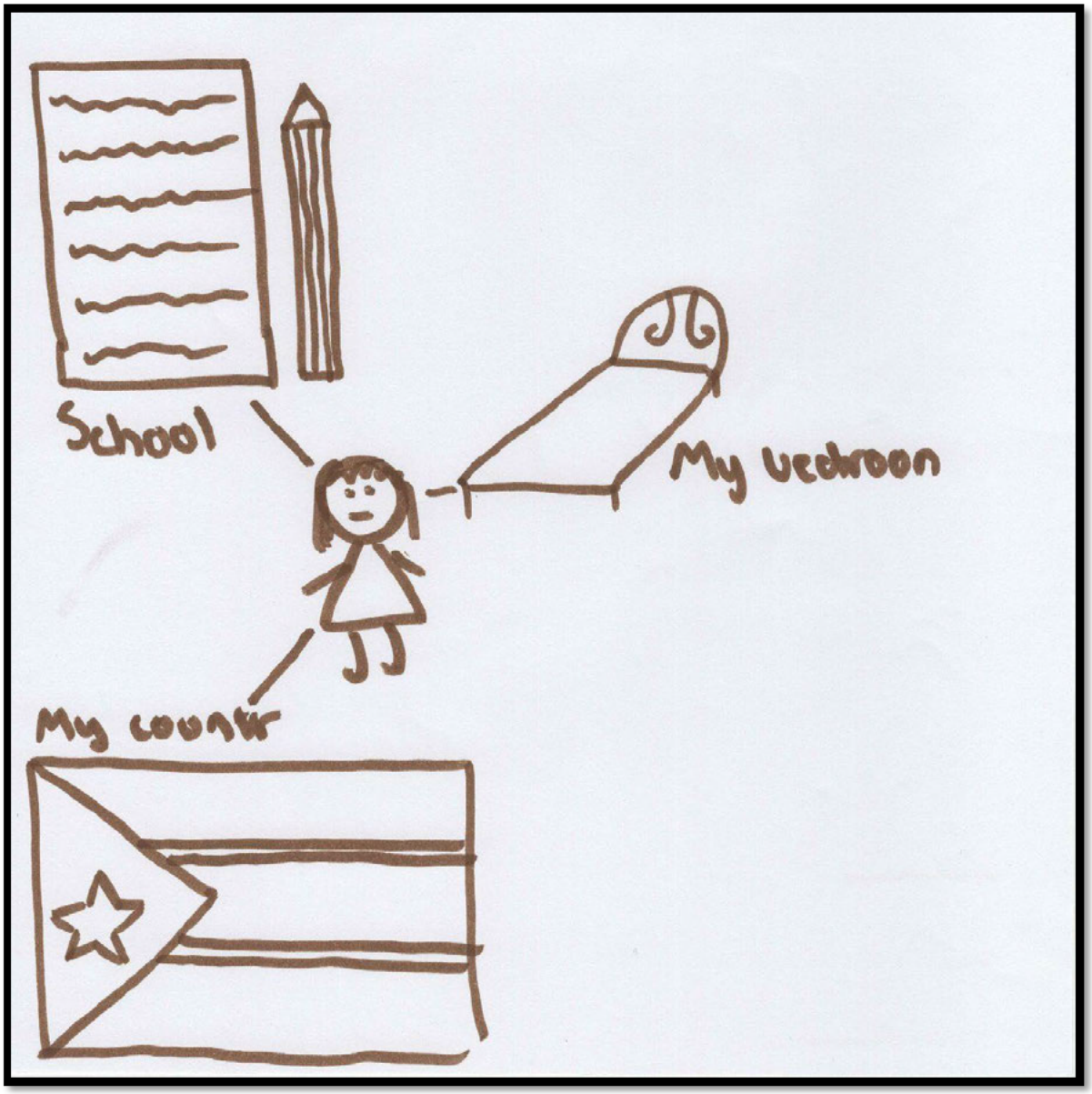


Figure 39

Aluat's Geomap

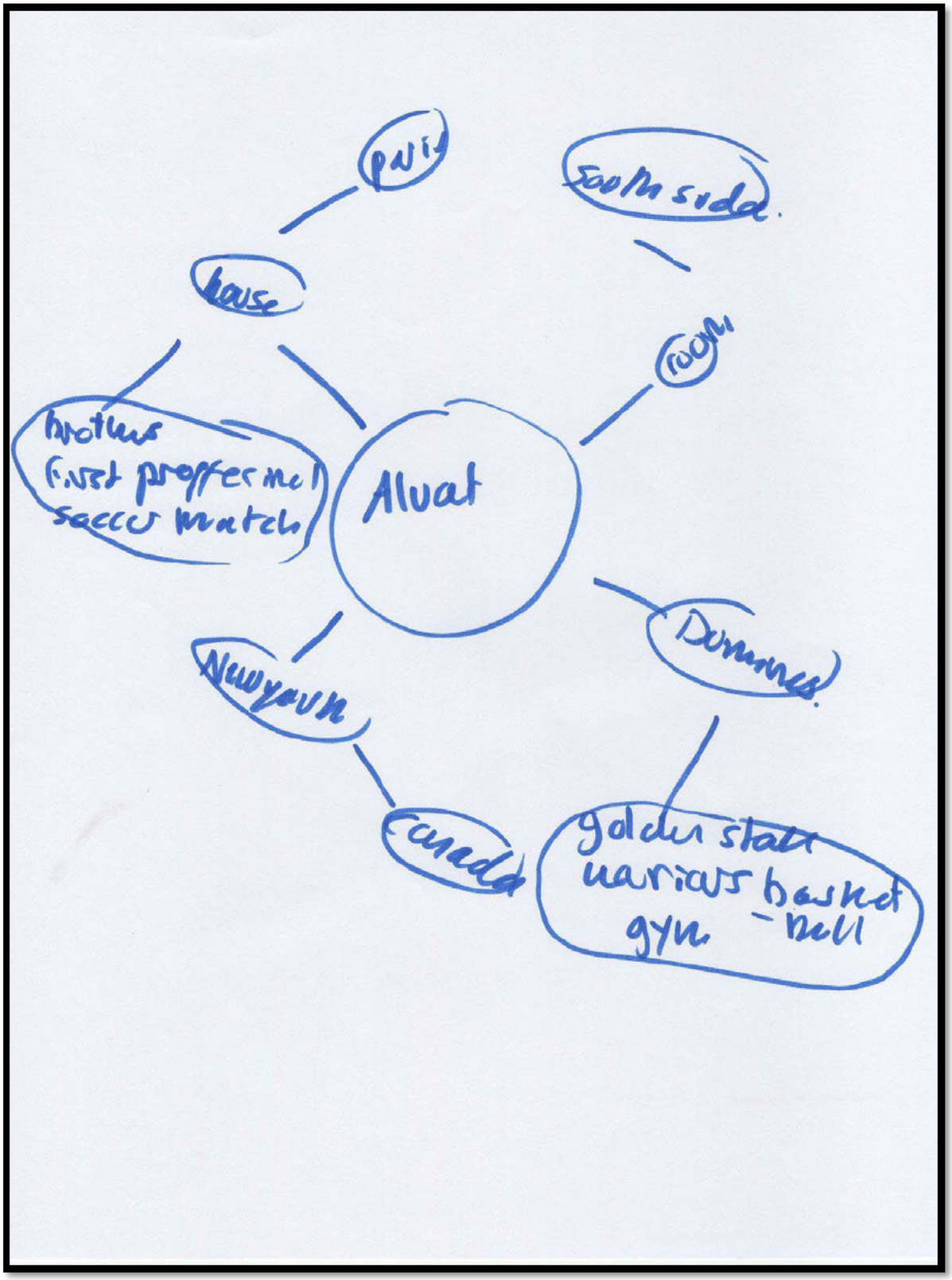


Figure 40

Amiot's Geomap

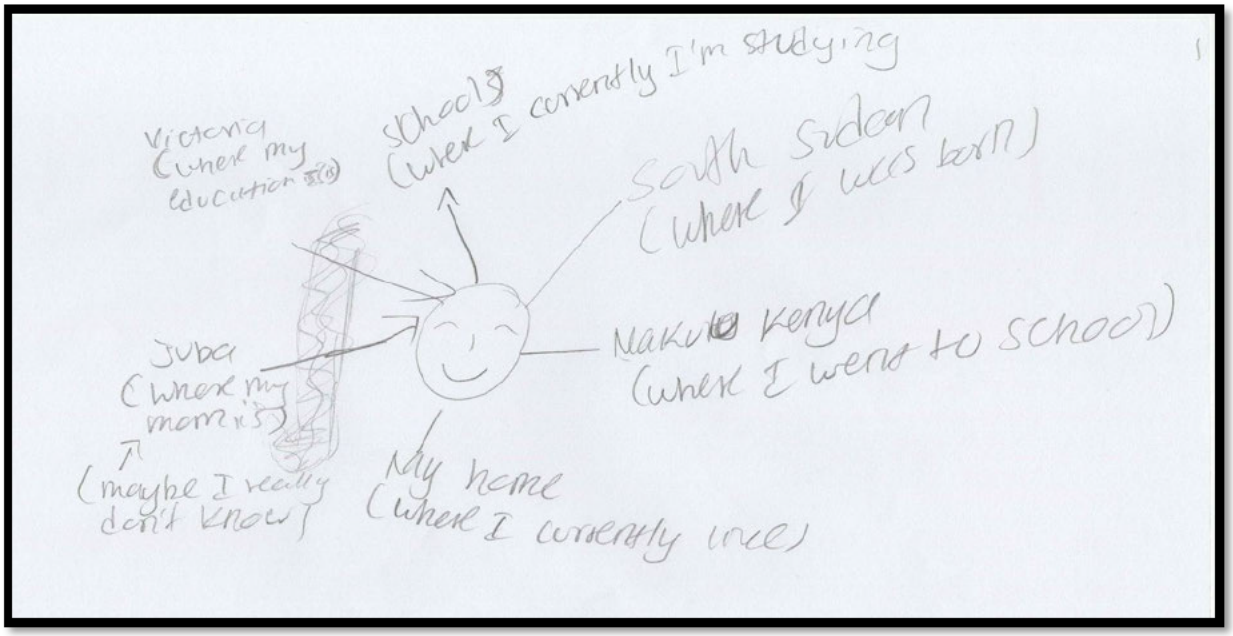


Figure 41

Chanel's Geomap

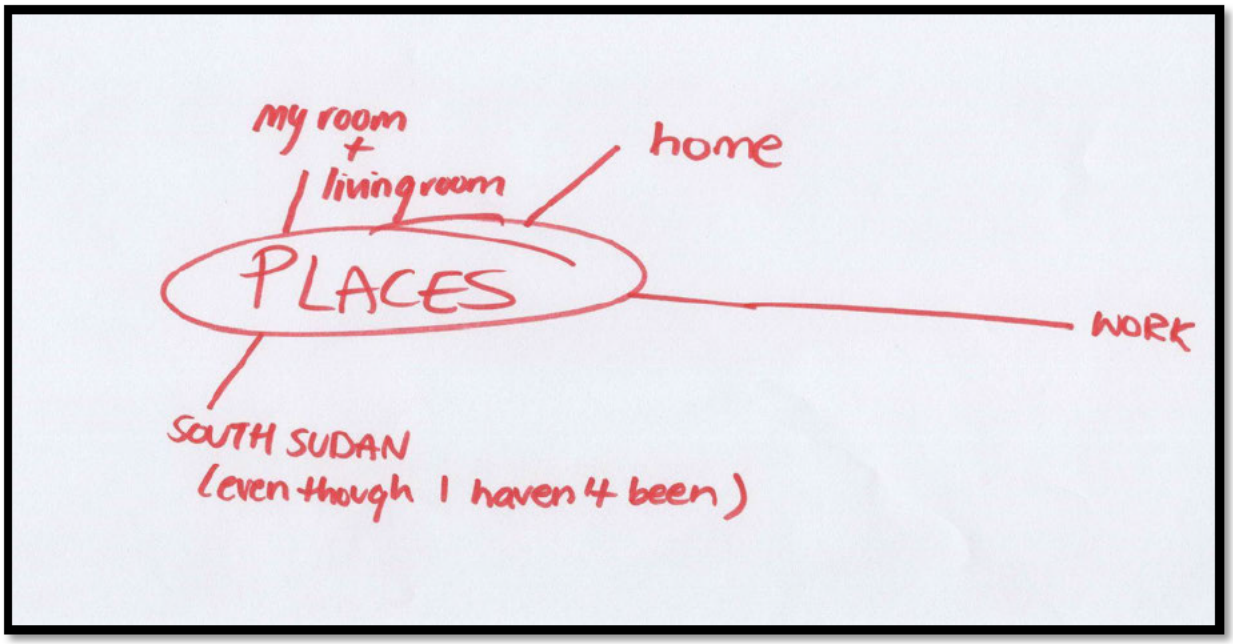


Figure 42

MJ's Geomap

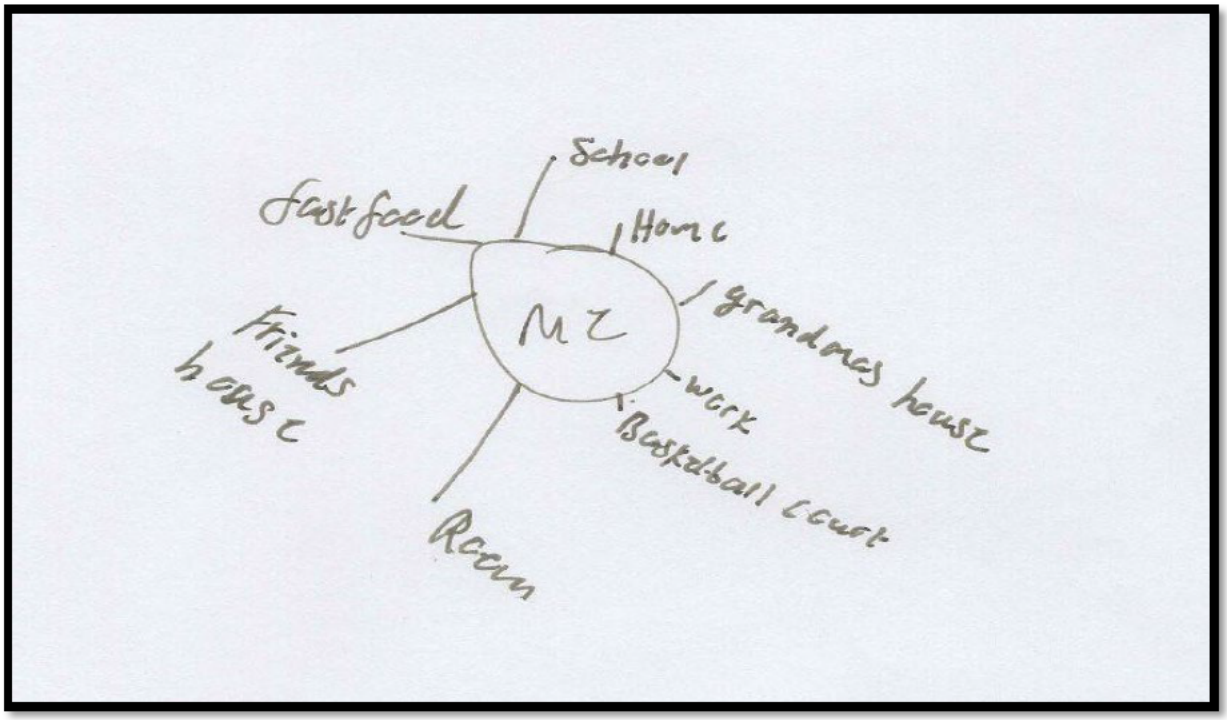
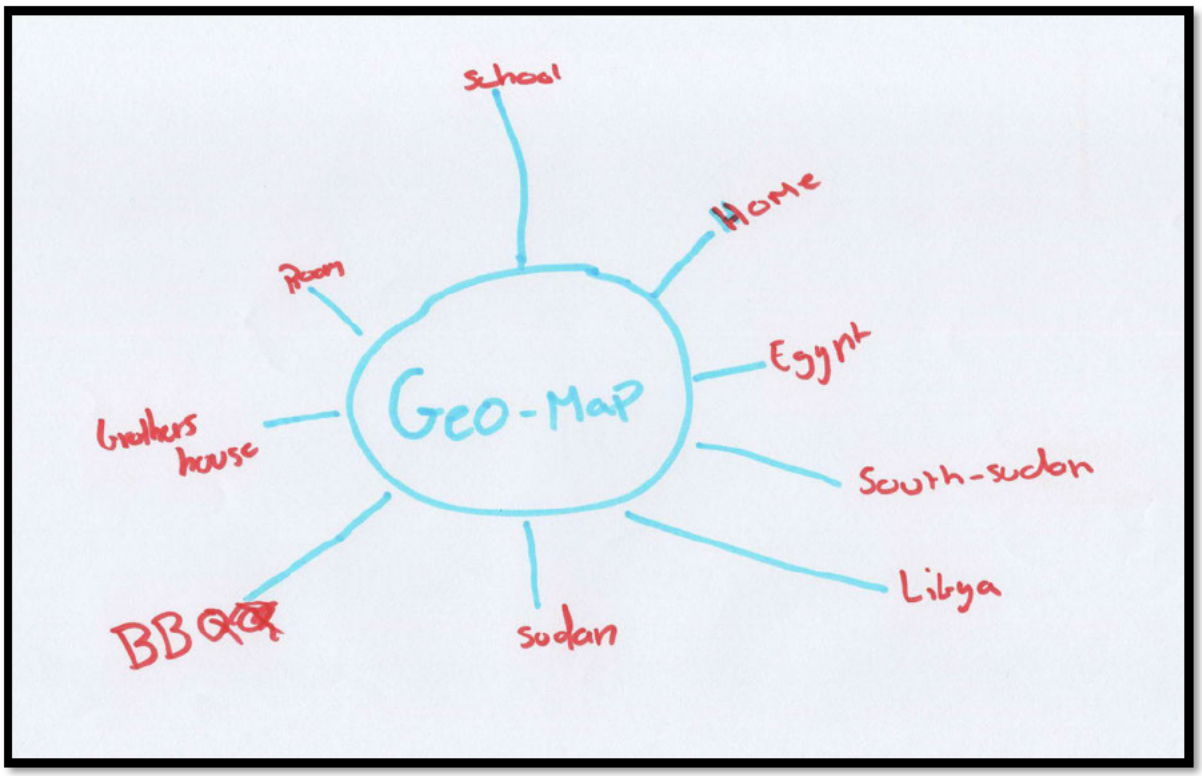


Figure 43

Moya's Geomap



Based on the length of the lines connecting the centre of their drawing (representing the student) to various places, as well as the number of students who included these locations in their geomaps, the most significant places were determined as follows:

- The students' rooms: Included by ten out of 12 students, with seven ranking it as the first or second most important place.
- Home: Included by ten out of 12 students, with seven ranking it as the first, second, or third most important place.
- South Sudan: Included by eight out of 12 students, with three ranking it as the first or second most important place.
- School: Included by eight out of 12 students.

After completing the geomaps, the students were asked to explain what they had included. The following are some of the explanations they provided.

Abraham considered home to be one of the most important places. He explained that his home, which represents his family, is "like a safe place." Abuk only included three places on her geomap, with her room being one of them. Abuk had already shared in the interview how she likes spending time alone in her room. She loves to read there or just rest after a busy day at school or work. When we talked about her room after she completed her geomap, Abuk provided details of the layout of her room, including referring to a bookshelf with one shelf of books and the remaining shelves being taken up by make-up and skincare. She included a photo of her bookshelf in her photo collage, particularly from her extensive collection of makeup and skincare products.

Aker is one of the students who included "my country" in her geomap (see Figure 38) When asked if she referred to South Sudan, she confirmed that she did, and when I asked why it is a special place, she responded, "It's who I am." Both Abul and Amiot provided an explanation on their geomap for including South Sudan and wrote that it is because they were born there. Akuch included South Sudan in her geomap and added, "Even though I haven't been there." AD had South Sudan as the most important place on her geomap. AD was born in South Sudan and later moved to Uganda before coming to Australia. She still vividly remembers South Sudan and explained, "Back home, it's like you can just go out, and everyone on the street will be fine with it. 'Cause, like, everyone on the street is your family, yeah. But here, it's completely different."

Saint shared that school is important but added, "At the moment," indicating that the geomap is a snapshot of the current situation. This confirms that identity and the elements important to identity

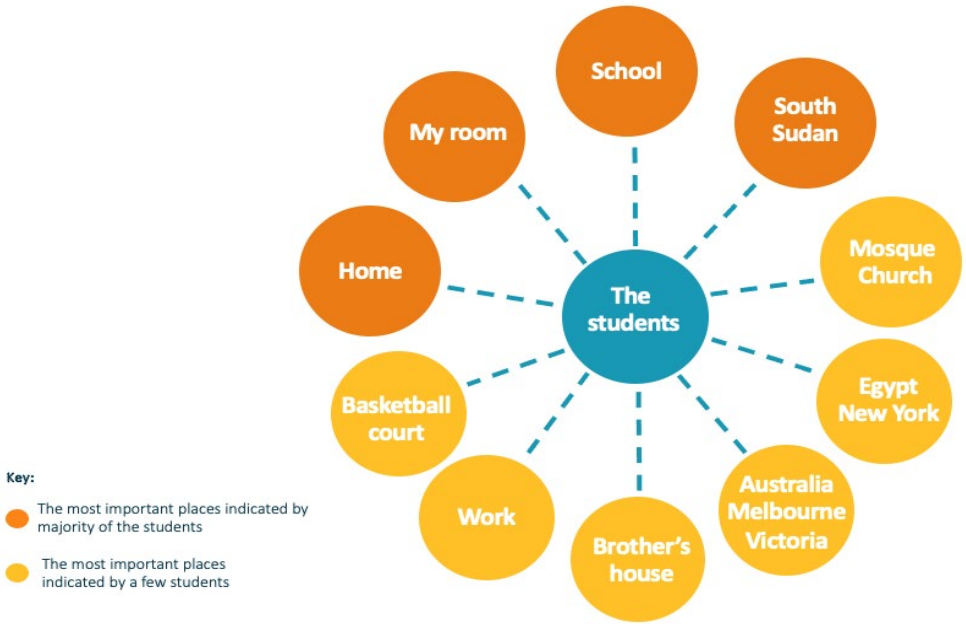
are dynamic and an ever-evolving process (Esteban-Guitart, 2021, 2023b). Abraham indicated that school is an important place because he takes "School pretty seriously," while Abul commented that this is where she meets her friends. Aker explained that school is essential for her because "That's the place where I can be myself." When asked why this was the case, she responded that she feels more confident at school and can freely express herself, unlike at home, where she does not feel as confident speaking.

In addition to the four most important places, several students ranked the following places as first or second most important: the mosque, church, Australia, Melbourne, Victoria, Egypt, New York, brother's house, basketball court, and work (see Appendix N). I grouped these places where possible (e.g., mosque and church are both places of worship, Egypt and New York are both located outside Australia). Some of the places indicated on the geomaps are similar to the geographical FoI identified in the identity drawings, namely school, South Sudan and the basketball centre (see Figure 34).

Figure 44 presents an overview of the ten places deemed most significant by the students. The orange spheres highlight the four locations identified as most important by nearly all of the students. The yellow spheres represent places ranked first or second by only one or two students, but they are included in this overview based on their rankings.

Figure 44

Overview of the Most Important Places Indicated on the Students' Geomaps



The responses on the geomaps were not as extensive as the identity drawings; however, they contain valuable insights and can be explored for possible interpretations and ascribed meanings. The students' rooms emphasise the importance of having a personal space where they can be themselves and feel comfortable. The students' homes can refer to a sense of belonging and safety and a place where they are most likely to connect strongly to their cultural identity. However, as mentioned above, home is also a place where students feel different from how they feel at school (e.g., less confident). South Sudan refers to the students' cultural heritage, which contributes to their cultural identity, even for the students born in Australia. For some students, South Sudan represents a more specific connection and evokes certain memories of their families, feelings of acceptance and safety, or referring to their birthplaces. Lastly, the inclusion of school as important by nearly all the student Knowledge Holders underscores the value placed on education and the place where they interact with friends and develop and navigate their identities. The importance of school aligns with the responses provided on the identity drawings (see Section 6.2.2) and in the focus group meetings and interviews.

6.3 The Community Cultural Wealth of the South Sudanese Australian Knowledge Holders

In addition to exploring the knowledge gathered from the student Knowledge Holders for expressions of FoI, I also explored expressions of CCW. The following sections present the diverse expressions of CCW by the student Knowledge Holders. Each dimension—aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, spiritual, navigational, informational, and resistant—reflects the rich and multifaceted resources the students draw upon to navigate their educational and personal lives. Appendix M provides an extensive overview of the CCW expressed by the student Knowledge Holders, including exemplar quotes.

6.3.1 Aspirational Capital: "Legal Studies Because I Want to do Law; I Want to be a Lawyer"

The student Knowledge Holders expressed their aspirational capital—defined by Yosso (2005) as the capacity to maintain aspirations and dreams for the future despite facing actual or perceived obstacles—in multiple ways. These actual or perceived barriers, often categorised as dark/existential FoI (see Table 6), can include, for example, mental health issues, lack of parental involvement and interest in school, teachers' assumptions regarding the 'good' and the 'bad' South Sudanese, experiences with discrimination and racism at school, negative attitudes and restrictions towards girls from parents and community members, and differential treatment and assumptions/negative attitudes from teachers regarding abilities (deficit approach).

The Year 10 students from Riverwalk College were in the process of selecting their Year 11 subjects to align with their future plans for tertiary education. For example, Abul stated in her interview that she would select "Legal studies because I want to do law; I want to be a lawyer." The other students also had ambitious career aspirations, including nursing, veterinary science, modelling, and becoming a professional basketball player, while Aker expressed her desire to start her own business.

As previously mentioned in the narrative student portraits, Saint, Abuk and AD faced multiple obstacles during their high school years. Despite these obstacles, they maintained aspirations for tertiary education and future careers. For instance, AD, who aims to become a social worker, proudly stated, "Some of my family is not doing what I'm doing now; no one in my family. I want to graduate school and graduate uni." Similarly, Saint said that she wants to "be the first person" in her family to attend university. AD and Saint's ambitions not only illustrate their aspirational capital but also highlight their resistant capital as they actively challenge and seek to overcome limitations, including negative assumptions about their academic abilities and familial expectations of early marriage and child-rearing.

6.3.2 Linguistic Capital: "We not Only Speak Dinka But We Can Also, Like, Speak Swahili and Arabic"

The student Knowledge Holders demonstrated their linguistic capital through their multilingual abilities and the significance of their native languages. Aluat mentioned, "We not only speak Dinka, but we can also, like, speak Swahili and Arabic," highlighting her linguistic capital acquired from living in countries such as Uganda and Kenya. Moya also speaks Arabic, which has a functional aspect as he reads the Qu'ran, linking his linguistic capital is linked to his spiritual capital.

AD used to speak Dinka when she was living with her mother in South Sudan but has forgotten much of it after living in Australia for ten years (an example of dark/existential FoI). AD emphasised that speaking Dinka is part of her South Sudanese identity, stating, "Dinkan is an important thing for me. So, if you classify as a South Sudanese, it's not a, you must know Dinkan, you have that part in you [...] It's just a good skill to have in life." AD continued sharing the importance of maintaining Dinka to communicate with her non-English-speaking mother, which is also the case for Abraham. Both examples indicate the functional aspect of their linguistic capital.

Chanel mentioned that she initially spoke only Dinka but began speaking English when she started kindergarten, leading her to forget most of her mother tongue (see 6.2.1.7). To address this, her parents enrolled her in a Dinka class where, according to Chanel, "They would teach you, according to

your level of Dinka speaking, they would teach you the alphabet, they'll teach you like numbers, letters, all this stuff, and greetings." This experience highlights Chanel's linguistic capital and her parents' familial capital. As mentioned in Section 6.2.1.2, some students enjoy speaking their mother tongue at school with fellow South Sudanese Australian students, which fosters a sense of belonging to their ethnic backgrounds.

The students' linguistic capital was also evident in the artefacts they created, which included written expressions (see Sections 6.2.2 and 6.2.3). Overall, the students' linguistic capital does not merely exhibit language proficiency but also refers to cultural preservation, emotional connections, and practical use in everyday interactions with their peers, family, and community members.

6.3.3 Familial Capital: "My Mom's Been Teaching Me All This Stuff"

Familial capital is the cultural knowledge and practices nurtured and transmitted among families (Yosso, 2005). The expression of familial capital was evident in the quotes from the student Knowledge Holders that referred to the transmission of cultural knowledge and skills. For instance, Abul and Chanel credit their family members for teaching them how to cook and perform cultural dances (see 6.2.1.3). The intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge fosters a strong sense of identity and belonging to the South Sudanese culture for the students.

Aluat said, "They [family members], like, always tell us stories about the things that have been and the stuff that they did in their families." This example illustrates the importance of oral transmission of lived experiences, knowledge, and skills, which contributes to preserving cultural heritage and instilling values and historical knowledge that can assist the students in their identity development.
When we discussed the role of the family, Abul shared that the extended family from the father's side is involved in naming newborn babies. She explained: "They mostly just call like the, like, if the grandma from the dad's side is alive or, like, just anyone from like the dad's side that is, like, older than the rest of the family." Abul's explanation of the process of naming children highlights the continuity of cultural traditions across generations, even when the families live in the diaspora.

Chanel's abovementioned example of her family and community teaching young people Dinka illustrates the transmission of linguistic skills. She explained how, after she stopped attending the Dinka school, her mother continued to facilitate language learning by speaking only Dinka at home. This practice highlights the intentional efforts of familial capital to preserve linguistic capital despite

the dominance of English in their daily environment, such as at school. This demonstrates how families actively work to maintain their cultural heritage and linguistic identity.

Lastly, Chanel's desire to create and wear traditional jewellery signified her effort to visibly represent and connect with her South Sudanese heritage. This personal initiative to maintain cultural visibility illustrates how familial capital can motivate South Sudanese Australian young people to sustain and promote their cultural identity within the Australian social context. Chanel's self-reference as being "a bit whitewashed" because she was born in Australia highlights her intrinsic motivation to learn this skill as a way to express her love for South Sudan (see Section 6.2.1.7).

6.3.4 Social Capital: "If I Need Something, I'll Call Them"

Social capital refers to the network of people and resources in the community (Yosso, 2005). The student Knowledge Holders shared limited examples of their social capital, primarily within the school setting, and these were closely related to navigational capital (see Section 7.4.6). The three female students from Western College shared how they utilised the career counsellor's expertise, with AD noting the counsellor's advice on exploring alternative tertiary pathways and providing reference letters. At Riverwalk College, Abraham mentioned submitting his CV to the school career counsellors for assistance in finding part-time jobs.

6.3.5 Spiritual Capital: "My Family has the Qur'an, Like, in Five Places"

As stated in Chapter 3, spiritual capital refers to "a set of resources and skills rooted in a spiritual connection to a reality greater than oneself" (Huber, 2009, p. 721). Within the context of this research, spiritual capital can also refer to cultural beliefs and practices that are shared among members of the South Sudanese Australian community.

Spirituality was not explicitly discussed during the focus group meetings and interviews. However, two Islamic student Knowledge Holders at Western College shared the importance of their faith in their families' lives. For instance, Moya shared, "My family has the Qur'an, like, in five places", while Saint mentioned that there are several recital verses displayed in her house. During the first focus group meeting, Moya shared that he expresses himself "Spiritually, through religion" and added that "My emotions are dependent on whether I pray or not" and that he often visits the mosque. Saint included 'mosque' on her geomap and added that it is a very important place for her (geographical FoI). Abul included 'church' on her geomap, specifying that she attends a "South Sudanese Dinka church" with her grandmother (social FoI) on Sundays. For Abul, this involvement with the church not only nurtures her spiritual capital but also serves a functional purpose by helping her maintain and understand the Dinka language, thus contributing to her linguistic capital.

6.3.6 Navigational and Informational Capital: "I Only Need Units 1 and 2 for Maths so I can go into my Bachelor's in Nursing"

Navigational capital refers to the skills required to manoeuvre social institutions that were created without considering Communities of Colour (Yosso, 2005). As discussed in Chapter 3, Liou et al. (2016) suggested informational capital as a sub-component of navigational capital, whereby information refers to the "knowledge derived from school adults that can be processed, stored, and transmitted into a set of actions that support and empower students toward academic and social success" (Cooper & Liou, 2007, p. 44). In this section, I have combined both forms of capital.

The students expressed their navigational capital in various ways during the focus group meetings and interviews. The narrative portraits of Saint, AD and Abuk (see Chapter 5) provided multiple examples of how they navigated the school systems to secure alternative pathways for their preferred tertiary education options, thereby displaying resilience, resourcefulness, determination and aspirational capital. For instance, when we talked about her Year 12 subjects, Abuk said, "No, I don't do further maths; I've replaced it with food studies. Cause, like, I only need Units 1 and 2 for maths so I can go into my bachelor's in nursing." Abuk's decision was based on her knowledge of the prerequisite requirements for a bachelor's program in nursing. This expression of navigational capital reflects her ability to make informed choices that align with her career goals. Similarly, Saint explained that her knowledge of the requirements allowed her to make informed decisions about her Year 12 exam subjects. She stated, "I found a different pathway to get to nursing. So, like, I'll be going to uni doing one year of Health and Science and then get into my second year of Bachelor of Nursing." Both examples highlight their navigational and aspirational capital.

The students also shared examples of seeking assistance and guidance from school-based career advisors, demonstrating both informational and navigational capital. Abuk's interactions with the career advisor at Western College regarding the Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS) highlighted the crucial role of informational capital in accessing resources that can facilitate higher education entry. The career advisor's guidance ensured Abuk was aware of and could take advantage of programs designed to support students from marginalised backgrounds.

Another example of informational capital was expressed by Chanel during our group discussion about the benefits of having South Sudanese Australian CLOs employed at school. Chanel stated, "If you can't talk to any of the other teachers and they don't understand you, you could talk to them." This reliance on community-based support structures also expresses social capital (see Section 6.3.4) and highlights

the importance of available culturally competent resources to assist South Sudanese Australian students in navigating their educational journey.

6.3.7 Resistant Capital: "It Shouldn't Be My Job to Look After Your Kids!"

Among the different forms of CCW expressed by the student Knowledge Holders, resistant capital was the most prominent. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.3, resistant capital draws from Freire's (1970/2017) notion of '*conscientização*' or conscientisation. The process of becoming conscious can be utilised by the oppressed to cultivate a critical awareness, enabling them to recognise challenges and respond with resistance (Freire, 2021). Resistant capital can be expressed in various ways (Yosso, 2005), whereby, at times, becoming aware of and understanding inequality and injustice without acting upon it can still be considered resistance. In this research, rather than displaying oppositional behaviour (Yosso, 2005), the students exhibited a critical awareness and understanding of the inequality and injustices they observed and experienced.

The students' expressions of resistant capital can be categorised into seven distinct themes, namely:

- Resistance against the restrictions placed on girls and the freedom granted to boys to go out.
- Resistance against the parental assumption that girls get pregnant when socialising.
- Resistance against expected gendered roles and responsibilities.
- Resistance against the expectation of marriage for girls.
- Resistance against South Sudanese cultural values and norms that the students do not consider suitable/relevant in Australia.
- Resistance against South Sudanese Australian parents who do not take responsibility for their children's upbringing.
- Resistance against stereotypical portraits of and assumptions about South Sudanese Australian young people by the broader Australian community.

Six of these themes address observed inequalities and injustices within the South Sudanese Australian community, with four specifically related to females. It is important to include here that out of the 12 participating students, only three were male, with one male student attending all four focus group meetings. Therefore, it is quite likely that the topics discussed in the focus group meetings reflect more on the lived experiences and observations of the female students. The majority of the expressions of resistant capital were provided by the three female Year 12 students from Western College, AD, Saint and Abuk (see Appendix M), and their narrative portraits have included most of the seven themes (see Chapter 5).

AD clearly expressed resistance to the restrictions placed on girls, as evident in this quote provided earlier, “The only freedom we have is school, our work, get married, get kids.” Similarly, Chanel stated, “Most of us are staying in and cooking and cleaning and babysitting all day.” Contrary to the ‘freedom’ experienced by girls, Saint stated that “Boys can go out whenever they want to!” Aker echoed this, saying, “My brothers are allowed out, yeah, any time they want!” Although AD understood and recognised the restrictions as a form of protection, at the same time, she stated that she feels suffocated. Similarly, Saint expressed that she needs “that little bit of release, just release me for a bit; Just time out to go shopping by myself.” Abuk considered the main reason for restrictions placed on girls to be based on fear of girls falling pregnant. During the third focus group meeting at Western College, when Moya (male) was also present, the topic of the differences in how parents treated boys and girls was revisited. Moya said, “I agree with that, though. I have an older sister, and even though she’s older than me, I wouldn't let her go out [...] I care for her safety.” Upon asking what could go wrong if a girl were to go out, Moya responded, saying, “Everything!” Like Abuk, Saint stated that the overprotective attitude of parents stems from the fear of their daughters falling pregnant. For a son, however, impregnating a girl was not considered a shameful act.

Contrary to the limited trust placed in girls when they are outside the house, at home, they are entrusted with a significant number of roles and responsibilities, including cooking, cleaning and being an “Unpaid babysitter”, according to Abuk. Again, the female students compared their position with their brothers’ who, according to Saint, “are so lucky, yeah; they don’t have to clean, don’t have to look after any kids [...] And that’s not fair.”

Chanel was visibly frustrated during the focus group meeting at Riverwalk College when this topic was discussed and adamantly stated, “I actually wish I was a boy. No, seriously, the boys in my house relax; literally, they watch TV. All, if I just sit down, watch TV for a little bit, I'm automatically lazy.” Some female students were very vocal about their frustrations regarding the responsibilities placed on them and expressed their plans for oppositional behaviour to act upon or change certain norms and expectations. Saint said that, at times, she tells her brothers to assist her with the cleaning. However, her parents say, “Stop relying on the kids!” Saint angrily stated that her parents are relying on her “to look after the whole house!” Saint continued saying that she intended to move out because she “had enough” and stated, “I’m changing it!” Abuk expressed anger towards her mother, who is expecting another baby, saying, “I'm sick of it!” Although her anger as an expression of resistant capital might not necessarily bring about change, it could be essential for Abuk’s identity development and positively contribute to her mental health.

The three female students at Western College repeatedly discussed marriage, which is often considered the ultimate goal for South Sudanese girls and closely tied to their worth as potentially good wives and mothers. AD mentioned that at times when there is an argument, she gets questioned, "Are you gonna be like that when you get married?" Frustratedly, she questioned why it always revolves around marriage and said, "Why should we get married to prove that we are good? Because getting married is about proving that you're good." In response to the expectation and emphasis on marriage, AD, Saint, and Aduk expressed their resistance by highlighting their desire to develop themselves personally and professionally after finishing high school and wished to be acknowledged for their academic capabilities. AD's advice to the younger South Sudanese Australian students is to finish school and "prove your parents and the community right that you can do this."

The topic of marriage was also discussed at Riverwalk College, and Aluat stated:

> The thing is, most of the time, they [parents] don't really care about, like, that [going to university]. They just care about the guy that you're marrying that's going; they think that's the best future. They don't care about your actual dream.

Aluat pointed out the tension between her aspirations and those of her parents. Closely linked to the resistance against marriage is the students' observed clash between traditional cultural expectations and pressure and their experiences growing up in a western context. For instance, Saint stated:

> We're literally all based on community, what the community, what other people say [...] And that's where it doesn't add up to me, 'cause, obviously, I have been raised in a western life, western culture. And that's where it clashes because I can't do that.

The students resisted by pointing out inequalities between men and women based on cultural norms and values. For example, AD critiqued the normalisation of polygamy within their culture and the double standards it creates for men and women, saying, "And that's another thing in our culture: men are so much better; they can marry as many wives as they like. We can't! We do that, and we're cheating."

The students also expressed resistant capital when discussing the lack of parental responsibility, particularly regarding supervision and involvement in their children's lives. AD and Saint criticised some parents for prioritising social activities while neglecting their parental responsibilities and duties at home. They pointed out the negative consequences of this neglect, such as not checking if their sons are home. They expressed a desire for parents to be more accountable and involved in their children's lives and not place the responsibility of raising the younger children on their teenage daughters. AD shared:

> But then, as you came along, they said, “You know, I'm tired, like, I want to go party and leave my three-year-old son at home, like, with my 17-year-old daughter.” And it's kind of, like, why are you leaving me in that position; it's your job and your job only. It shouldn't be my job to look after your kids!”

Saint also expressed her frustration against parents who only become concerned about their children’s behaviour when things have gone dramatically wrong, for example, when the police become involved. Saint stated, “They [absent parents] start acting like they care. They were supposed to be like that at the start! But it's just, like, it's all fake, it's all fake, until it's all public.”

Lastly, the students resist the stereotypical and prejudiced views held against them based on their race and ethnic backgrounds. Several students shared their experiences with racial profiling and discrimination in various contexts, such as at school and in shops. For instance, Abraham mentioned, “When you're in a group, and there's, like, two white and two black people. If the white one stole, they would follow the black ones because they assume they stole.” The students resisted these stereotypes by asserting their identities and challenging the assumptions made about them. For example, Saint stated:

> If you think that I steal, then OK, that’s what you think. I’m not going out of my way, and change and prove to you that I don’t. Cause what am I gonna gain from that at the end of the day? Like, there is nothing.

The students believed that constantly proving themselves to a prejudiced society and hoping for change often seemed futile. However, AD stated that changing societal attitudes and assumptions is the only way to bring about radical changes, saying, “Why can’t you change? Why do I have to change for you to make you think, ‘Oh, I was wrong; not all black kids are bad.’”

6.3.8 Visual Overview of Explored Community Cultural Wealth

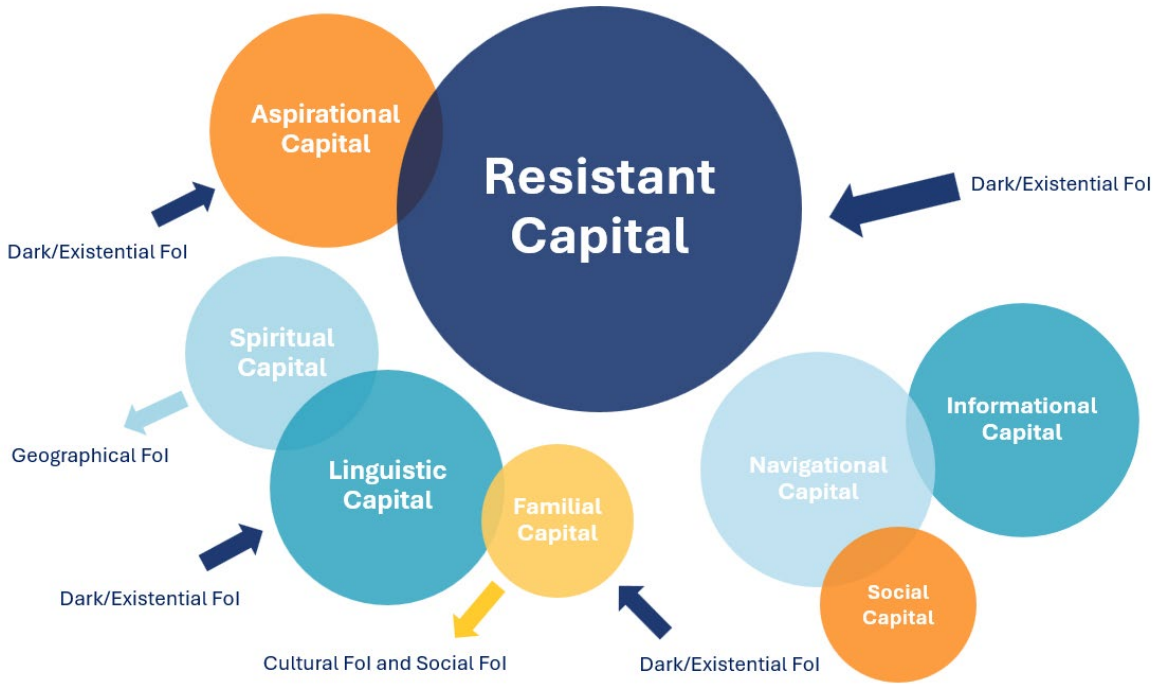
The previous sections presented the various expressions of CCW. As discussed in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.3, the different forms of CCW are interconnected and constantly evolve, collectively representing the resources and assets within a community (Yosso, 2005). CCW builds on both FoK and CRT, whereby CRT serves as the initial lens to examine the assets of Communities of Colour, highlighting their lived experiences that counter dominant deficit-based narratives (Solórzano, 1997; Yosso & García, 2007). Therefore, these presented expressions of CCW reflect lived experiences, helping address the first sub-question: How do the adolescents’ lived experiences contribute to their funds of identity? This will be further discussed in Chapter 8.

Figure 45 illustrates an overview of the expressed CCW, with the size of the spheres representing the number of expressions or significance of each form of capital. As explained in the previous sections

(Sections 6.3.1 to 6.3.7), some of the different forms of capital overlap with each other, which is visible in Figure 45. The figure also shows the connections to FoI, highlighting how dark/existential FoI contribute to resistant, aspirational, linguistic, and familial capital (dark blue arrows). There are similarities between FoI and CCW as well. For example, spiritual capital specifically relates to churches and mosques but can also be considered an expression of geographical FoI (light blue arrow), and familial capital can be viewed as cultural FoI (yellow arrow).

Figure 45

Visual Overview of the Explored Community Cultural Wealth



6.4 Additional Themes

The deductive analysis captured most of the themes, and these could be placed in one of the categories of the FoI or CCW framework. As previously mentioned in Chapter 4, Section 4.5.1, an inductive analysis was also conducted on the gathered knowledge to identify any additional themes that were not captured through the deductive approach.

In Section 6.2.1.9, I noted that gender-specific expectations could be considered invisible FoI due to their foundation in South Sudanese cultural norms and values. However, several expressions, particularly from the three female students from Western College, could be considered expressions of resistance (see also Section 6.3.7). This prompted the need for an inductive analysis to explore

elements related to gender-specific expectations. Furthermore, due to the multiple expressions of resistance capital, I examined the connections between resistance, identity and identity development. The outcomes of this inductive analysis centred around expectations and resistance resulted in the proposed additions of two new categories of the FoI framework, which will be presented in Chapter 9, Sections 9.2.4 and 9.2.5.

6.5 Recommendations Suggested by the Student Knowledge Holders

At the conclusion of the one-on-one interviews, I asked each student for their recommendations to other South Sudanese Australian students, the school, the community, and their parents/caregivers. I was impressed by the honesty, thoughtfulness and vulnerability with which the students articulated their suggestions. Their responses revealed their underlying struggles, frustration, and confusion, as well as their calls for help, love, and acceptance. Additionally, their answers demonstrated wisdom, discernment, resistance, and a deep understanding of what they consider to be unjust and 'out of touch' with their experiences.

The following recommendations are the responses from the students, where possible accompanied by a quote that captures the essence of their recommendation. These quotes remain unaltered to authentically represent the students' voices. This deliberate choice allows the reader to hear the young people's recommendations from their perspectives and lived experiences.

The students shared a range of thoughtful recommendations for their peers, many of which reflected both resilience and a strong desire for positive change. A common theme was the importance of staying true to oneself and make good decisions. MJ advised, “Just to be yourself and don't follow other people, especially people that are not doing good [...] it's better to be loved than feared.” Moya similarly encouraged students to resist internalising negative stereotypes, warning against the trap of self-fulfilling prophecies. He stated, “If people view you as the villain, you'll mostly act like the villain. Just don't think about it.” Alongside authenticity, students also stressed the importance of optimism. Saint suggested that the best approach was “just to look at the bright side of life [...] no matter what obstacles [...] just get through it.” A recurring recommendation was to embrace cultural identity with confidence, particularly for girls who may feel pressured to conform to dominant beauty standards. As Abul shared, “Maybe don't be insecure that you really have dark skin [...] I’ll recommend that you should wear [your hair] out sometimes because it looks good.” Academic perseverance was also mentioned, with students encouraging one another to remain focused on school and surround themselves with positive influences. Aluat said, “Just, like, focus on school. Be friends with, like, good people, not bad people because that can get you in trouble and be nice.” For AD, educational

achievement was framed as a way to challenge negative community perceptions, and noted, “Finishing school [is about] saying, you know what? I'm going to prove my mom wrong. I'm gonna prove the community wrong.” Finally, Amiot considered that even if life in Africa was difficult, it does not remove the responsibility to work hard in Australia: “You got to continue to work more here [...] no matter how much you've been through, you're going to have to push yourself even more.”

The students also offered practical recommendations for how schools could improve their learning environments and better support them. Amiot noted that having more African-background teachers would create a greater sense of cultural understanding and referred to an African-heritage teacher, and said, “We all loved her because she was African [...] we can understand each other really much better than we do with the other white teachers.” Students also advocated for the employment of younger South Sudanese Australian CLOs, because, as Abuk explained, “‘Cause, like, these people are 30 and, like, are married and stuff like that. They try to assimilate, like, what the elders would say, what the elders expect of them.” Role modelling was also considered important, and Saint reflected on the importance of including South Sudanese Australian alumni as guest speakers to demonstrate what is possible and to counter negative stereotypes. As Saint reflected, “We need to see that look, there's actually other good South Sudanese students that are trying to make the community a better place.” Alongside cultural representation, students asked schools to prioritise wellbeing and relevance in the curriculum. This included calls for practical life lessons such as changing a tyre. Aluat recommended having consistent check-ins with all students. “Sometimes they look like they're doing well on the outside,” Aluat observed, “but in the inside or, like, in their home they’re not doing as well.” Students also asked for greater support rather than punitive measures when they struggle to complete their work. “Try helping instead of punishing,” said Aluat, “because what if they don’t understand it but they’re too scared to ask?” In line with this, students recommended that teachers adopt varied approaches to instruction, recognising that not all students learn the same way. Finally, there was a compelling call for curricular inclusion of Black histories and experiences, to challenge ignorance and encourage empathy among students of all backgrounds. As AD noted, “Why can't we learn about these things where kids' minds can be opened, because this is where racism starts [...] They always say you have a voice; use it. But, like, when we use it, no one hears us.”

The students also directed several important recommendations toward their parents/caregivers and the broader South Sudanese Australian community. These recommendations focused on a shift toward more open-minded, supportive, and inclusive forms of engagement between the parents and their children. One of the recommendations was a call for less judgmental attitudes, particularly regarding friendships with non-South Sudanese peers. As Amiot shared, “Anyone, any friend that's not

non-South Sudanese [...] is considered a bad influence." Some students expressed a strong desire for community reconnection. Moya simply stated, "I just want to see, like, a more reconnection," while Chanel recommended regular meetings between elders and youth "so that the elders could, like, bring some rules and stuff and make sure they grow up as good respectful people." Another recurring message was the need for greater empathy and understanding within families, particularly toward girls. Saint reflected on the enduring gendered expectations in many households and stressed that "some parents aren't understanding." AD elaborated on the limiting effects of cultural expectations around marriage and pleaded for a focus on their plans for the future. She said, "It always has to revolve around marriage, never revolves around your future." AD also pleaded for an increase of parental trust and to reduce the tendency to generalise negative behaviour. Lastly, Aluat shared a personal recommendation and asked her parents to show more visible love, trust, and encouragement instead of the "tough love" and said, "I would like them to trust me more and show me more love and to show it more because they don't really show it, and sometimes it feels like they don't care. [...]. And also, like, support me in stuff that I want to do more."

The recommendations provided by the student Knowledge Holders are expressions of their frustrations, aspirations, and the complexities of their (developing) identities. These recommendations can also be considered counter-narratives, which they have constructed against negative perspectives existing in the South Sudanese community and the broader Australian society. Their advice to fellow students emphasised resilience, pride in cultural heritage, and proactive personal growth, challenging externally imposed identities and beauty standards. For schools, their emphasis on cultural representation, mentorship, and diverse teaching strategies underscored the importance of creating supportive learning environments. By advocating for greater parental understanding, especially towards girls, the students addressed gender biases, calling for increased empathy and progressive attitudes toward their aspirations and autonomy. Furthermore, the students' emphasis on the need for more love, trust, and emotional support from parents indicated the importance they placed on emotional security and validation, suggesting that nurturing relationships with parents and caregivers are foundational to their overall well-being and development. In conclusion, several of the student Knowledge Holders' recommendations reveal elements of counter-narratives that challenge, oppose, contradict, confront, and critique, which are all expressions of resistant capital (Yosso, 2005). However, these counter-narratives are predicated on a desire to enhance goodness and promote well-being, personal development and growth, not just for themselves but also for the broader South Sudanese Australian community.

6.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the knowledge gathered from the twelve student Knowledge Holders in the focus group meetings, interviews and created artefacts.

The first section provided an overview of the explored expressions of FoI, including geographic, practical, cultural, social, institutional, invisible, dark/existential, digital, and ideological, and the concepts of agency and imagination that can be used for self-definition, self-expression and self-understanding (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a). The analysis revealed that the majority of the expressions of FoI could be grouped under dark/existential FoI, with 18 distinct themes highlighting 'dark' and 'negative' experiences that can impact the students' identity and identity development (Charteris et al., 2018; Poole & Huang, 2018). The identity drawings revealed expressions of self-perceptions, lived experiences, identity practices and future aspirations. The analysis of the geomaps identified schools, the students' rooms and family homes, and South Sudan as the most important places.

The second section presented the explored expressions of CCW. Resistant capital was most often expressed by the student Knowledge Holders, with six of these themes addressing observed inequalities and injustices within the South Sudanese Australian community, four of which specifically related to females. The final section presented recommendations provided by the students for their peers, schools, their families and the South Sudanese Australian community. These recommendations revealed various insights into the students' developing identities and the tensions they experience with their peers, teachers, and families. However, the suggestions also highlight aspirations, positivity, agency and goodness.

The next chapter presents the narrative portraits of the two participating schools.

Chapter 7: School Portraits

7.1 Introduction

A narrative portrait of each school, Riverwalk College and Western College, incorporating perspectives from school leadership, teachers, and CLOs, as well as personal observations and fieldnotes, has been created. Each school approached inclusive education differently, but as Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) observed, "There are myriad ways in which goodness can be expressed" (p. 9). In each portrait, goodness is evident, albeit in different forms, such as the implementation of inclusive education strategies, fostering student voice, seeking and applying cultural awareness strategies, building community connections, and maintaining reflexivity about these aforementioned practices.

7.2 Portrait of Western College: "How can we Improve the Lives of Every kid we got in the School?"

In April 2022, I was invited to a meeting with the Principal of Western College following my email request for permission to conduct my research there. The Principal, John, preferred an in-person meeting over a Zoom call, citing Zoom fatigue. In the days leading up to the meeting, I experienced a mixture of nervousness and concern. Although John agreed to allow me to conduct the research at the school, he also voiced some reservations regarding potential disruptions to the student's routine and class attendance. After two years of intermittent COVID-19 lockdowns in Melbourne, the staff had been working hard to re-establish daily routines and return student attendance levels to pre-lockdown levels. While I fully understood his reservations, I hoped that our meeting would take away some of his concerns.

I have passed the school numerous times, as it is located in a familiar suburb, and I have often encountered its students at a nearby shopping centre during school hours. The school holds a somewhat mixed reputation in the neighbourhood, making it challenging to gauge its overall character. However, one of my supervisors spoke highly of the school and previously liaised with several pre-service teachers who had completed their placements there. I was grateful to be able to mention her name in my introductory email, as she had a personal connection with John. He later admitted that, without this connection, he might not have been as enthusiastic about my request.

I drove to the school with a sense of anticipation and excitement. I parked nearby and found my way to the entrance, which was relatively small and flanked by offices on either side. The walls were adorned with frames displaying the names and photos of students who had obtained the highest ATAR

scores[54] in the previous years. Upon entering the school office, I introduced myself to one of the administrative staff members and explained the purpose of my visit. I was asked to take a seat as John was still occupied. This allowed me to observe the surroundings and absorb the atmosphere as the entrance of a school exposes its character. I think that the interactions here reveal a lot about the
. It felt good to talk about my research and explain its purposes and how it could benefit the South Sudanese Australian students and the school staff, as I was keen to share my findings with the school upon finishing the thesis. By the time the meeting concluded, John gave his full support. As he was soon taking some personal leave, we scheduled an interview for the end of April. Before I left, John took me around the school and pointed out some initiatives to address the students' cultural diversity.

John and I met again later that month for the interview and sat down for over an hour. In preparation for the meeting, John asked the administrative staff to collate a list of all the South Sudanese Australian students in the school; there were sixteen in total. He was visibly surprised by this number and said he thought there were fewer South Sudanese Australian students. Apart from South Sudanese, more than 60 ethnic backgrounds are represented in the school. During the academic year, events are organised to celebrate the school's cultural diversity. John told me that the school's vision is to support "every student, irrespective of who they are", with "quality teaching by the staff here to achieve the pathway of their choice." The staff is from "a really broad multicultural mix", which John believed to be an asset of the school; however, there are currently no teachers from African Australian backgrounds.

We talked about students from African backgrounds, particularly those of South Sudanese ethnic origin. John shared that he has had no specific interactions with the South Sudanese Australian students apart from an incident a couple of years ago. At that time, some students in the school had organised themselves into a gang-like group, including some South Sudanese Australian students. John's interactions with South Sudanese Australian community members primarily involve meetings with parents or caregivers when a particular issue needs to be addressed. These meetings typically involve the student's mother and an older sibling. Occasionally, in the absence of a parent, an older sister represents the family. The fathers rarely engage with the school. Apart from these visits, there is limited parental engagement, which is typical for most parents regardless of cultural background. John considered that the students' growing independence in the senior secondary years might be a reason for low engagement in, for example, parent-teacher interviews. The parent-teacher interviews are well-advertised, and an interpreter is provided when required. John acknowledged that limited

[54] Final examination ranking scores used for tertiary education admission.

English literacy skills are an issue for many parents and might be a reason for low attendance rates. The school newsletter had been translated into several languages in previous years, but this practice has ceased recently. Nowadays, it is assumed that the children will translate the newsletter and disseminate any other important information to their parents.

The school focuses on positive behaviour, including respect, responsibility and effort. Racism is not tolerated, nor assumptions regarding students based on their racial backgrounds. John said that even if incidents occurred where there was suspicion of racism, the students would "call it for what it is." The staff is expected to treat every student as an individual regardless of background. John stated that he is not just focused on academic outcomes but also holds a holistic approach to the school's role, saying, "How can we improve the lives of every kid we got in the school?"

As well as talking to John, in the following months I also spoke with the homeroom teachers of the four participating students. The first one I interviewed was Jenny, AD's homeroom teacher. We had arranged to meet during a free period, and we sat in her office, which she shared with several other teachers. She was open and honest and expressed care and concern for AD. Jenny shared that the school has a sound student support system, including year leaders, advisory teachers, engagement leaders, career advisors, youth workers and counsellors. Despite this, Jenny felt that as a teacher, she is being "really stretched" and that there are numerous students with various issues at the school. These students need additional support in class, and due to the pressure to achieve the KPIs (Key Performance Indicators), teachers feel significant pressure. Jenny suggested that it would benefit both the teachers and those students considered at-risk when the support staff and teaching staff work together as a team and develop strategies that can be utilised in the classroom. Developing teaching strategies could also be applied to, for example, specific student cohorts such as those of refugee backgrounds.

I also spoke with Jin, Saint and Moya's homeroom teacher. Jin had to cancel our scheduled appointments; however, after a few weeks, I met with him after school. He appeared calm and composed and had a noticeable accent. Jin arrived in Australia as a refugee when he was young, and he believes that his lived experiences assist him in understanding the living situations and struggles faced by many students and families with immigrant and refugee backgrounds. He observed that many immigrant and refugee-background parents need help understanding the school system and are often unable to assist their children. Jin also observed limited parental involvement, for example, in parent-teacher interviews. Jin is determined to help the students, whom he suspects might receive little

support at home, not because of their backgrounds or a deficit perspective, but because he knows from personal experience how challenging it is to settle in a country as a refugee. Jin spoke passionately about his teaching philosophy and stated that teachers must support and encourage students to work hard and push themselves to reach their full potential, no matter what they decide to pursue upon finishing school. Jin's insights and commitment to improving students' educational outcomes and teaching transferable life skills were inspiring.

Over nearly eight months, I interacted with staff from Western College, including the administrative staff, who always welcomed me and often accommodated the meetings with the students. During John's absence, Laura, a dynamic and enthusiastic Assistant Principal, assisted me in setting up my research. She was keen for the South Sudanese Australian students to participate, although she was concerned that they might feel apprehensive about meeting with senior staff due to previous meetings, which were mostly centred around behaviour issues. To counteract this, Laura created colourful invitations that briefly explained the reason for the meeting, hoping this would reassure them that they had not done anything wrong. Laura admitted that she lacked specific insights and knowledge regarding the backgrounds and experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse students, such as those from the South Sudanese Australian community. However, she seemed truly willing to develop cultural awareness skills and a deeper understanding of some of the contributing factors that impact the educational engagement of South Sudanese Australian students and their families. Towards the end of my time at Western College, Laura sought my advice regarding certain issues experienced by some students of African background. I introduced her to Deng, one of the CLOs of Riverwalk College, who would be better equipped to assist and advise Laura. This exemplifies the importance of seeking insights from community members to better understand how to address certain issues with student behaviour.

I formed a positive impression of the school throughout my interactions at Western College. I mostly met with the students just before the lunch breaks in a room adjacent to the library. Once lunchtime commenced, the library would fill up with students who would be casually chatting, playing card games or working on their laptops. The interactions between the students appeared friendly and cheerful, and the atmosphere seemed relaxed and welcoming. Western College provides a nurturing environment with committed staff members catering to the culturally diverse students and their families it aims to serve. However, despite employing culturally diverse staff (although not from African backgrounds), the school could benefit from professional learning sessions focused on cultural understanding and responsiveness. Lastly, Western College could benefit from the employment of

CLOs to provide invaluable support to the leadership team and teachers in addressing the challenges experienced at the school, particularly those involving students from minority backgrounds.

7.3 Portrait of Riverwalk College: "Our South Sudanese Kids, or African Kids, Have got That Personality; it's a Winning Personality!"

It took some time before I received a response from Riverwalk College requesting participation in this research. I decided to write another email, and this time, the Assistant Principal, Caroline, replied and provided the contact details of one of the CLOs. I was delighted that the school was open to having me conduct my research there, especially since the school had a considerable cohort of South Sudanese Australian students and employed several CLOs. During the Term 1 break, I contacted the CLO, Deng, and arranged a Zoom meeting with him. I felt slightly awkward; establishing a connection via a computer screen can be challenging, and I sensed that Deng was not fully informed about my research. I also worried his assistance might impact his work duties when he told me he worked only on Fridays. During our Zoom meeting, I provided more details about the research and expressed my intention to involve about nine to 10 students. Deng suggested focusing on students from Years 9, 10 and 11 and offered to reach out to the relevant Year Leaders who could assist in identifying suitable participants. I emphasised that it was crucial that only students who are currently not having any issues at school, are attending regularly, and are not involved with youth justice could participate. This would ensure that participation in the research activities did not create additional burdens for vulnerable students.

A few weeks after my initial conversation with Deng, he told me I could visit the school and meet with some students. I was unfamiliar with the suburb where the school was located, let alone the school itself. I felt a sense of excitement as I embarked on my first visit. I parked on what seemed to be the main road in front of the school, and since the school is rather spread out, finding the main entrance proved challenging. I asked someone passing by, and they directed me to the correct entrance. The entrance, specifically for secondary students, was very basic, with some chairs and a handful of posters and leaflets related to school uniform guidelines and lunch recess activities hung on the wall.

I introduced myself to the administrative staff, who were exceptionally kind and helpful. I signed in and sat down to wait for Deng, who had informed me that he would pick me up at the entrance at 9 a.m. My arrival coincided with the start of the school day, and I noticed numerous students arriving late and signing in at the reception desk. The administrative staff seemed undeterred by the never-ending line of students signing in. I immediately noticed that the school had a relaxed approach to

enforcing school uniforms, as many students were dressed casually. I appreciated this; attending school is, after all, much more important than wearing the correct uniform.

When Deng arrived, he apologised profusely. He explained that he had been preoccupied with numerous phone calls and had been delayed by various matters on his way to the school's entrance. Like the students, Deng dressed casually, reflecting the laid-back atmosphere of the school. Deng walked me through a long corridor lined with lockers. While following Deng, I glanced into the classrooms and noticed that the classes were mostly quiet, with the students engaged in learning. We settled in a spacious meeting room, where Deng explained his plan. He spoke slowly and deliberately, and from all my interactions with him, it was evident that he cared deeply for the students and was well-connected to the South Sudanese Australian community. After some time, a group of Year 9 students joined us, and I started sharing some details about myself and the purpose of the research. The meeting was brief, and the students did not really engage, so I could not determine who was interested in participating. I handed out the information sheet and consent form and asked them to share it with their parents. These visits continued over the next couple of Fridays, during which I met with Year 10 and 11 students, respectively. Deng worked tirelessly to assemble the students, and, in the subsequent weeks, he followed up with the students to collect any completed consent forms. Similar to the experiences at Western College, it took several weeks before a sufficient number of consent forms were returned. By the first week of June, I organised the first focus group meeting with seven students from several year levels.

After completing the student focus group meetings, I focused on interviewing the relevant staff members and, in Term 3, organised a meeting with Caroline, the Assistant Principal. I very much looked forward to speaking with her, and when we met, Robert, a Head of House also joined the interview. He was in charge of students and families from former refugee backgrounds. This joint interview was a practical solution, given their limited availability. We sat in a small room used for student counselling and were so engrossed in our conversation that I forgot to start recording. Caroline explained how the school leadership is divided into two main groups; she used the whiteboard in the room to draw the structure. The first group consisted of a Principal, two Assistant Principals, three Head of House leaders who were also in charge of looking after either refugee background students, Indigenous students or students from multicultural backgrounds, and, lastly, the Year Leader Coordinators. The second group comprised mental health care practitioners, school counsellors, occupational therapists, speech therapists, mentors, and CLOs. This impressive leadership was set-up to cater to the diverse student cohorts and their families.

Riverwalk College also provides lunchtime schoolwork assistance walk-ins and an after-school study club where maths and English teachers help students with their homework. A career team assists students from Year 10 onwards with an action plan and explores multiple tertiary education pathways for the students. However, at times, they also engage with students from Years 8 and 9 who are struggling with attendance and engagement. By meeting with these students, they attempt to create a sense of purpose and direction. The career team also assists the students in finding part-time jobs. There is also a student leadership team in each house, and those in charge of cultural events organise activities such as cultural performances during assemblies and lunchtime by, for example, a Polynesian group, a Karen group, and an African girls' dancing group.

Caroline emphasised that the CLOs, who are part of the mentor team, are instrumental in the school. They were strategically recruited to connect with the respective communities as the leadership team observed that previously, it "was really difficult to connect with parents." At the time of the interview, there were three South Sudanese Australian CLOs and two Karen CLOs. The leadership team "draw on them for the expertise", creating connections with the families in the different communities and organising multicultural school events. They mentor any student who requires assistance, including mediating between students. According to Caroline, the CLOs' involvement benefits the teachers; it makes their "lives easier and calmer", and they can focus on teaching. At times, the CLOs assist students in the classroom or just observe so they can provide feedback to parents in cases where their child claims that a teacher is being racist. Caroline stated, "I can't count the times that Deng has said, "No, I was in the class, and I observed this child doing it." Parents are more likely to accept this feedback from a CLO, and over the years, complaints from parents have reduced. Caroline shared that before CLOs were employed, she, and most often another white person, would meet with parents, and it was "really tough because they [the parents] didn't feel, like, they felt like we didn't understand." With CLOs in the schools, the connections with parents have drastically improved. Caroline concludes, "Having one of the mentors sit with us, and for them [the parents] to see that we work together as colleagues, is powerful." The CLOs are mentors for all the students in the school and attend enrolment meetings, which is very important because parents will "more likely contact one of the mentor team before us," Robert said. Caroline concluded that employing several CLOs is imperative in multicultural schools and advises other schools, particularly those experiencing issues, to prioritise this. Employing CLOs is also a preventative measure since the students have realised that the CLOs can communicate with their parents in their mother tongue and will go the extra mile trying to get in touch with them.

The three South Sudanese Australian CLOs mentioned similar roles and responsibilities assigned to them. While their roles and responsibilities are not limited to South Sudanese Australian students or students from other African Australian backgrounds, they do spend a considerable amount of time with this cohort. A strong focus is placed on supporting the students with schoolwork, goal setting, and handling issues at school. They check daily attendance and contact the family when students have been absent for more than two days. Deng mentioned that he often calls in the evening or during the week, being well aware that parents and caregivers often work long hours. The CLOs regularly check on the students, especially those considered at risk of dropping out. They also teach students the importance of being punctual, which is a valuable transferable life skill. Deng considered the importance of their presence in the students' lives, at times taking on the role of a parent or caregiver. This includes conversations about well-being, regular meals and staying away from drinking and substances.

The CLOs work alongside school management, teachers and administrative staff. They provide staff with cultural awareness training to promote effective communication skills and the ability to foster relationships with families of African backgrounds. For example, Deng explained that when speaking with African-background families, it is important to communicate informally before addressing the purpose of the call. When teachers implement cultural awareness, the parents are more likely to engage. Conversely, a lack of interest from teachers is often interpreted as disinterest in the child's well-being and can lead to reduced parental involvement.

The three CLOs confirmed that both students and parents have responded positively to their presence and liaison activities. Due to direct links to the community, South Sudanese Australian parents have a much better understanding of the school system and the expectations regarding their involvement. The CLOs shared that, as parents, they also struggle at times with the system, and this is where they can connect with community members. Although positive improvements have been noticed, there are still some ongoing issues. One of the main issues is an overall lack of trust between parents and staff, as well as limited communication between the school, teachers, and parents. The CLOs attempt to address these issues but also acknowledge that contributing factors, such as limited literacy skills and significant struggles in settling in for those who have recently arrived, are also present. It was also noted that South Sudanese Australian families often do not live together due to issues between parents, which primarily impact the father's involvement in the children's lives. Furthermore, Deng shared that South Sudanese Australian students tend not to complain when they experience issues with their peers and often wait until the situation escalates. By responding physically and taking

matters into their own hands instead of involving a teacher, South Sudanese Australian students often receive punishment even though they may initially have been the victims of other students' inappropriate behaviour.

The CLOs observed several issues affecting the educational experiences of South Sudanese Australian students and their families. One recurring concern is that many teachers are unaware that, within South Sudanese and broader African Australian communities, there is often a culturally grounded expectation that teachers—not parents—are primarily responsible for a child's education. This expectation can inadvertently lead to reduced parental engagement, which may be misinterpreted by teachers as disinterest or neglect. At times, teachers have deficit-based perspectives and perceive South Sudanese Australian students as having limited capabilities, often equating students' limited English literacy with poor academic ability. Furthermore, the CLOs noticed that when conflicts arise—particularly when a South Sudanese Australian student physically reacts to verbal provocation, such as racial insults—teachers tend to avoid fully investigating the incident. Instead, the responding student is often punished more harshly, reinforcing a sense of injustice and racialised discipline. Teachers sometimes demonstrate limited awareness of South Sudanese cultural values, norms, and communication styles, leading to misinterpretations and strained relationships with the students and their families. Some teachers also avoid direct communication with parents and rely instead on semester reports to raise concerns, which limits opportunities for collaborative problem-solving throughout the term. The CLOs considered it important to continuously implement responsive teaching approaches and provide professional development for teachers to ensure equitable and respectful engagement with South Sudanese Australian students and families.

Since the school had three CLOs from South Sudanese Australian backgrounds, I assumed the school was experiencing numerous issues with the South Sudanese Australian students. However, Caroline said it was instead the "Australian kids" who were mostly disruptive and whose parents frequently enabled their behaviour. Caroline stated:

> Our South Sudanese kids, or African kids, have got that personality; it's a winning personality [...] They might be, you know, not academically, you know, moving forward. But they don't really do silly things that gets them into major trouble in class. Now, out of class is a different story. So, we do have a lot of kids that are involved in youth justice and things like that. But over the years, they've learned that it's just not worth their time to bring it into school. Because we just were, I think we're on it, and they just worked out that it's not worth it.

Caroline continued:

> We've put a lot of effort into building relationships with these kids as well. So, we know, most of the kids, most of our South Sudanese kids. So, even them being able to come up and ask us

> questions and just, like, you know, make fun of us sometimes. You know, I think that's good for them to have a positive experience. And not just with any old teacher but with someone in leadership. Previously, you know, they would hate assistant principals and schools.

Robert confirmed that in previous years, the focus was on keeping the South Sudanese Australian students "off the streets" and getting "rid of all the gang stuff." After teaming up with the local police, the overall behaviour has significantly improved. Enquiring about the academic outcomes of the South Sudanese Australian students, Robert and Caroline told me that this is the next step in their plan. For now, the leadership team is very pleased with the positive changes in student behaviour and optimistic about the years ahead.

I intended to interview a homeroom teacher for each participating student, eight in total, but this proved very challenging due to staff changes and limited availability. However, I was able to talk to one teacher who was friendly and very willing to assist me, but she disclosed that she did not know the students well. In her years at the school, she observed that, while some South Sudanese Australian students have achieved academic success in previous years, many attend school primarily for social reasons and exhibit limited aspirations for the future. However, she observed a similar trend among students from other ethnic backgrounds, particularly those who are the first in their families to pursue higher education. Besides teaching content, many teachers focus on teaching the students transferable skills that they can utilise beyond the classroom, including accountability, punctuality, and the understanding that all actions carry consequences. The school sometimes involves students in mediation sessions to resolve student conflicts. It was interesting to learn that two students involved in my research, namely Amiot and MJ, had been involved in these mediation sessions as they were recognised for their insights and mediating skills. Including students in meditation underscores the school's commitment to promoting student voice and involvement in conflict resolution processes.

Despite the challenges encountered at Riverwalk College, particularly regarding scheduling interviews with students and teachers and organising arts-based activities, I enjoyed spending time at the school. I am immensely grateful to Deng, who went above and beyond to assist me, often dedicating a significant portion of his working day to organising the interviews with the students. One of the other CLOs stepped in to help on days when Deng was unavailable and even organised sandwiches and snacks for the focus group meetings, which the students very much appreciated. Based on my observations, interactions and interviews, Riverwalk College is highly committed to empowering its students by recognising the value of their unique backgrounds and skills. The respect shown to the

CLOs indicates a great understanding of culturally responsive practices and utilising cultural knowledge and skills to develop and foster strong connections with the students and their families.

7.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the narrative portraits of the two participating schools, Western College and Riverwalk College. The portraits included the responses of the interviews with the (Assistant) Principals, teachers, and CLOs.

The two participating schools, Riverwalk College and Western College, have different approaches to the implementation of inclusive education measures. This is evident across various facets of their organisational structures and practices. However, it is important to note that direct comparisons between Western College and Riverwalk College are inherently limited due to the differing year levels for which they cater, as well as their unique student cohorts. Western College is a Senior Secondary College (Years 10-12 only), whereas Riverwalk College is a Prep-Year 12 school. This distinction results in significant differences regarding the structure of the schools, the number of students, the composition of the respective student cohorts, the services required and offered, and the issues encountered. The schools have different management structures. Western College has a more traditional leadership team consisting of a principal and an assistant principal. Riverwalk College has an extensive leadership team, with specific three Head of House leaders who were also in charge of refugee background students, Indigenous students or students from multicultural backgrounds. Riverwalk College also employs mental health care practitioners, school counsellors, occupational therapists, speech therapists, mentors, and CLOs.

The most notable difference between the schools is the presence of CLOs in one and their absence in the other. The feedback from members of the leadership team and the CLOs at Riverwalk College provides ample evidence that the employment of CLOs has made substantial improvements related to aspects such as attendance rate, communication between the school and families, cultural awareness and understanding among staff, and reduced occurrences of poor student behaviour. The presence of the three CLOs of South Sudanese Australian heritage seemed to make a significant impact on the educational experiences and wellbeing of African students and their families. However, some challenges remain. These include teachers' deficit perspectives, lack of cultural awareness, inadequate communication with parents, and a tendency to equate limited English literacy with limited academic ability, all of which impact the engagement and outcomes of South Sudanese Australian students. The CLOs highlighted several challenges faced by South Sudanese Australian students and their families, including feelings of exclusion among students, delayed responses to issues that often escalate into

physical confrontations, and a lack of trust and communication between staff and parents. Furthermore, limited parental involvement is influenced by factors such as literacy challenges, settlement struggles, demanding work schedules, and family dynamics, particularly among families who arrived in the early 2000s.

The next chapter presents the outcomes of the interviews conducted with six adult members of the South Sudanese Australian community. These outcomes are used to gain insights into some of the salient and multi-layered issues experienced by members of the South Sudanese community. The chapter will also explore the Knowledge Holders' various forms of capital that are part of Yosso's (2005) CCW framework.

Chapter 8: Setting the Context: Interviews with Knowledge Holders from the South Sudanese Australian Community

8.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the findings from the first stage of the research, the deep contextualising of the South Sudanese Australian community in Melbourne through interviews conducted with six adult South Sudanese Australian community members (Knowledge Holders) between October and December 2021. Due to a delay in ethics approval by the Department of Education resulting from ongoing COVID-19 lockdowns in Melbourne that prevented access to schools, my supervisors and advisor Abur, and I decided to start with interviewing South Sudanese Australian community members. This phase was initially planned to take place after the engagement with the schools. These initial interviews were a means of getting to know the community and gaining insights into some of the salient and multi-layered issues experienced by members of the South Sudanese community. Secondly, the interviews facilitated an exploration of the Knowledge Holders' various forms of capital that are part of the CCW framework (Yosso, 2005). Furthermore, the analysed knowledge provided valuable insights for addressing the research sub-question:

- What change would need to occur to improve the educational outcomes, engagement, and participation of South Sudanese Australian adolescents?

The insights from the interviews also informed the remaining knowledge collection phases with the South Sudanese Australian adolescents, as well as stakeholders at the schools, including the CLOs, teachers, and the (Assistant) Principals. Lastly, the analysed knowledge from these interviews provided context for understanding the knowledge gathered from the student Knowledge Holders during the focus group meetings, interviews and created arts-based artefacts (as presented in Chapters 5 and 6).

The six Knowledge Holders were introduced in Chapter 4, with some specifics about their backgrounds presented in Table 2 of that chapter.

This chapter comprises three parts. The first part presents the emerging themes, followed by an overview of identified aspects of CCW (Yosso, 2005). The chapter concludes with a brief discussion pertaining to the most salient and relevant topic, namely the issues experienced with the educational system. As noted in Chapter 4, Section 4.6, direct quotes have been left intentionally unedited. This is purposely done as this research draws from, among others, CRT, which is situated in the transformative paradigm and is aimed at addressing issues related to power, social justice and

inequalities (Mertens, 2009). Amending the 'voices' of the Knowledge Holders would be contrary to one of the research's main aims, which is to create counter-narratives.

8.2 Identified Themes

The following three meta-themes encapsulate the multiple codes and sub-codes that were identified from the analysis:

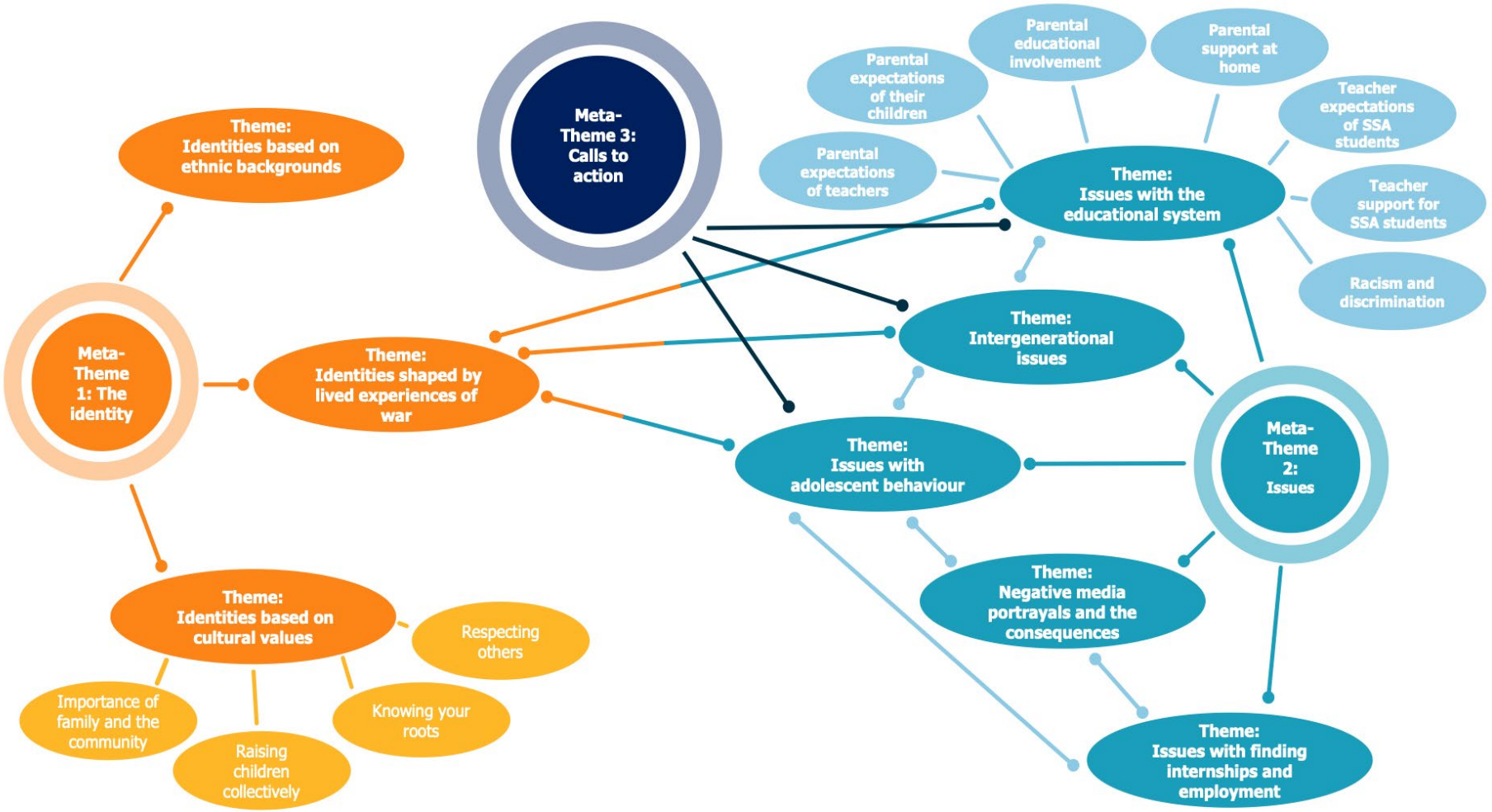
1. The identity of South Sudanese Australians
2. Issues experienced by the South Sudanese Australian community
3. Calls to action

Figure 46[55] visually represents the themes and illustrates the interrelatedness among them. Meta-themes one and two comprise several themes and sub-themes. As mentioned in Section 8.1, this chapter serves to provide essential context and insights to facilitate understanding of subsequent findings chapters. While all themes offer valuable knowledge concerning lived experiences and observations, it is crucial to acknowledge the layered and complex nature of issues in some themes. Furthermore, the selection of the Knowledge Holders via purposive convenience sampling may limit the representativeness of the broader South Sudanese Australian community, attributed to their professional roles, community positions within the community, and education levels.

[55] SSA in Figure 4 stands for South Sudanese Australian. This abbreviation was included due to limited available space in the figure.

Figure 46

Overview of the Generated Themes



8.2.1 Meta-Theme 1: The Identity of South Sudanese Australians

The first meta-theme explores the identity of the Knowledge Holders and comprises the following three themes:

1) Identities based on ethnic backgrounds

2) Identities shaped by lived experiences of war

3) Identities based on cultural values.

8.2.1.1 Identities Based on Ethnic Backgrounds

The first theme examines how the Knowledge Holders construed their identity based on their ethnic backgrounds rather than their national identity as South Sudanese. Chapter 2, Section 2.2 provided a condensed historical overview of South Sudan and the continued current-day conflicts that are partly due to ethnic conflicts and divides. The notion of ethnic divide was mentioned by nearly all Knowledge Holders when talking about the role of the South Sudanese Australian community in their lives. Knowledge Holder Nyamal mentioned that ethnic division is also visible in the South Sudanese Australian community and said that "there's nothing much that can bind us together." Mabor stated that the South Sudanese Australian community has "no identity as one" due to ethnic diversity, dissimilar cultures, traditions, languages, and historical experiences. The divide is not just between ethnic groups but also associated with those South Sudanese Australians who used to live in northern Sudan (current-day Sudan). These community members are often not considered 'true South Sudanese' as they have taken on certain cultural customs from the north and often speak Arabic.

8.2.1.2 Identities Shaped by Lived Experiences of War

Despite a lack of national identity, many South Sudanese share a commonality that has shaped and impacted their identity: lived experiences of war. During the interviews, the Knowledge Holders shared that during the Second Civil War (1983-2005), they left South Sudan either as a child, an adolescent or a young adult. Those who could flee the war and seek safety in refugee camps, such as Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya, were relatively safe; however, life was incredibly challenging. Before living in Kakuma Refugee Camp, LB had stayed in a semi-military training camp in Ethiopia with thousands of other young boys, where he was forced to undergo military training.[56] JD and Mabor had both lived as refugees in Cairo for several years after fleeing the violence in Khartoum. Though living in Cairo was in certain aspects better than the confinement and consequent issues experienced in

[56] The memoir *Father of the Lost Boys* by Yuot A. Alaak (2015) gives a detailed account of Alaak's father, Mecak Ajang Alaak, a teacher who oversaw the education of the thousands of young South Sudanese boys who had escaped the violence in South Sudan during the Second Civil War and were living in a semi-military camp in Ethiopia. Mecak Ajang Alaak was determined to bring the boys to safety in what would later become Kakuma Refugee Camp. Knowledge holder LB shared that he knew Mecak Ajang Alaak and was part of the *Lost Boys group*. During the interview, he recounted several parts of the dangerous journey, including losing his cousin, who was killed.

Kakuma Refugee Camp, life was still incredibly challenging due to issues such as fear of abduction from organ harvesters, harassment, discrimination and racism.[57]

Though I did not explicitly ask the Knowledge Holders how their lived experiences impacted their identity, LB shared that many within the community in Australia live with trauma, affecting the families, particularly their children. LB stated:

> The group that I call [...], so from the 1980s on to now, we have developed a culture that is totally, most of it is trauma, the war trauma [...] So, the kids are the last residues of violence [...] So, it is the post-trauma; it's this generation with this kind of background baggage—living refugee camp lives—which was very hard on the people. This is what has affected our kids.

Suzy referred to the ITT and stated, "Trauma is something that is passed on; I might not have felt it, but my mum felt it, and she passed it on." She advocated for awareness in schools about the potential presence of trauma among children, even those born in Australia.

8.2.1.3 Identities Based on Cultural Values

Even though the South Sudanese Australian community is not united, the Knowledge Holders shared several cultural values intrinsic to being South Sudanese, regardless of ethnic background. The four central cultural values identified are the importance of family and the community, raising children collectively, knowing your roots, and respecting others. LB, Atong and Suzy shared that cultural values are instilled in their children and modelled by displaying hospitality and care to other community members. Living in Australia has profoundly affected the cultural value of raising children collectively, with Atong stating, "We're struggling much," and that the lack of support from community members is a root cause of some of the issues that the community experiences with their youth.

Knowing one's cultural roots is particularly important for South Sudanese Australian young people, especially those born here, as it will assist them in comprehending their parents' behaviour (see also Section 5.2.2.2). Mabor shared the following comment:

> But we've got roots, you know. The way I'm behaving, the way I'm communicating to you, to my kids, the way I'm interacting with the people around me, it's not something which I picked up in Australia; it's something which is innate, is cultural. The way how I treat other people, how people treat me, how are my morals.

8.2.2 Meta-Theme 2: Issues Experienced by the South Sudanese Australian Community

The second meta-theme (see Figure 46) explores the main issues mentioned by the Knowledge Holders grouped under the following five headings:

[57] Recurrent reports confirm that racism, harassment, and illegal organ harvesting are rampant in Egypt, and African refugees, including those from (South) Sudan, are targeted (CairoScene, 2017; Columb, 2017; Miranda, 2018).

- Issues with the educational system
- Intergenerational issues
- Issues with adolescent behaviour
- Negative media portrayals and the consequences
- Issues with finding internships and employment

The following sections explore each of the five issues accompanied by verbatim quotes from the Knowledge Holders who shared their lived experiences and observations.

8.2.2.1 Issues with the Educational System

The Knowledge Holders expressed two major concerns pertaining to education, namely low engagement levels and educational outcomes, that, at times, lead to school dropout. Several factors contribute to these main concerns. These can be grouped under the following sub-themes:

- Differences in parental expectations regarding the teachers' role
- Limited parental educational involvement
- Unrealistic parental expectations of their children
- Limited parental support at home
- Low teacher expectations of South Sudanese Australian students
- Limited teacher support for South Sudanese Australian students
- Racism and discrimination within the schools.

Subsequent sections elaborate on these contributing factors, incorporating quotes from the Knowledge Holders that encapsulate the essence of the issues presented.

8.2.2.1.1 Differences in Parental Expectations Regarding the Teachers' Role

The most fundamental difference in the issue with the educational system pertains to the parental expectation of the role of teachers. Three Knowledge Holders clearly stated that in South Sudan, teachers are responsible for teaching, mentoring and disciplining; they are like the parents of the students within the school setting. This expectation is contrary to the Australian partnership between the school, parents, and the child, whereby parents are expected to be actively involved in, for example, resolving issues. Atong shared that this expectation needs to be clarified for the South Sudanese community since the parents believe it is not their responsibility to get involved when problems arise within the school setting. Furthermore, many parents need more skills to be active in this partnership with the school. Mabor explained another aspect of parental expectation concerning the roles and responsibilities of teachers. He stated that in South Sudan, teachers are highly respected

and considered to have “all the knowledge.” Mabor also stated that teachers take “time to explain things to the children.” However, the Knowledge Holders considered explicit teaching in Australian classrooms to be very limited, which puts pressure on parents to fill the knowledge gap. This is particularly challenging for those parents with limited English literacy skills. Parental expectations regarding the roles and responsibilities of teachers is the main contributing factor to low parental educational involvement.

8.2.2.1.2 Limited Parental Educational Involvement

The Knowledge Holders shared several reasons for limited parental educational involvement among South Sudanese Australian community members. As mentioned above, many South Sudanese Australian parents do not consider it their responsibility to be involved in their child’s educational journey. Furthermore, some parents struggle to comprehend the educational system and are often unable to ask for assistance due to limited English literacy skills. The language barrier can also impact parent-teacher communication, consequently, noted Suzy, “There's no accountability. So, they [teachers] felt like they can do something, and it cannot, like, no one can question it.” The limited language skills also position children as mediators and translators, which can pose challenges, especially when the child withholds information from the parents regarding school-related matters.

The combination of parental expectations regarding school and the language barrier seemed to be the main reasons that could explain the lack of involvement of South Sudanese Australian parents. The Knowledge Holders shared three examples of the lack of parental involvement and the consequences for the children. The first example is parents' limited involvement in dropping off their child at school and entering the school grounds and classrooms to engage with the teacher. The second example is the lack of involvement in parent-teacher meetings. Suzy shared how a lack of involvement from her grandmother, mainly resulting from low literacy skills, made her feel vulnerable and isolated as she had no one to support her and hold teachers accountable. Furthermore, complicated booking procedures can exacerbate limited involvement in parent-teacher interviews. Mabor stated that parents interested in attending need additional support to comprehend the booking system. The third example relates to parental involvement in Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE)[58] subject selection, which requires specific knowledge and skills to assist their children. Mabor concluded that many South Sudanese Australian parents and caregivers lack the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively support their children’s education. It is essential for schools to recognise that the majority of South Sudanese Australian parents arrived in Australia as refugees, which means their pre-settlement

[58] Students receive a VCE upon completion of Units 3 and 4 (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority [VCAA], n.d.a).

experiences, including limited exposure to formal schooling and English language learning, may impact their ability to assist their children adequately. Therefore, schools need to provide additional support to these parents to ensure effective parental involvement.

8.2.2.1.3 Unrealistic Parental Expectations Regarding Their Children

There are three elements to parental expectations regarding their children. The first is that some parents who lack a solid educational background and English language skills have limited expectations regarding their children's educational development. These parents are unable to determine whether their child is doing well at school, apart from concluding that their child can read and write and is, therefore, from their perspective, doing well.

The second element is that some parents disagree with differentiated work that is often, and at times unjustifiably, given to South Sudanese Australian students. In the South Sudanese school system, students are placed in classes based on their achieved level, whereby they move to the next grade only after successfully passing the progress exams. This approach to year allocation is contrary to Australia, where students are placed according to age regardless of their academic capability. In this system, teachers differentiate the work so that all students work according to their ability while staying in a class with peers of their age. Atong stated that parents are "often against this idea of modification" and prefer their children to be given work according to the required level, as differentiation gives them a false sense of security. Upon entering Year 11, no more moderation is offered, and many students struggle with the demands of VCE.

The third element involves some parents holding unrealistic expectations regarding tertiary education, particularly expecting their child to pursue fields such as medicine, law or engineering, which are deemed prestigious with promising job prospects. However, in many cases, children struggle to successfully complete demanding prerequisite subjects (e.g., specialist maths, physics and chemistry) to be eligible to apply. This misalignment between expectations and reality can lead to friction between the school, the parents, and the child. Consequently, the child may feel overwhelmed by the parental expectations and pressure and contemplate leaving school.

8.2.2.1.4 Limited Parental Support at Home

In addition to the lack of parental involvement in school, South Sudanese Australian parents often face challenges in supporting their children with schoolwork. Atong highlighted that children are only taught specific parts of the curriculum at school, with the remainder often taught at home or through

extracurricular tuition. However, parents can only assist their children at home if they have attained certain numeracy and literacy skills. Mabor concluded,

> The majority of the parents arrived here as refugees. The majority of the parents don't have a high education, and the majority of the parents cannot support their child at home […]. These are real issues; they are real. If the parents are not in the position, if the school is not in the position, what do we do?

Moreover, parents who recognise their inadequacies in supporting their children may wish to send them to tuition but often lack the financial means. As a result, many South Sudanese Australian students rely solely on their teachers' teachings and additional support, which, according to Atong, is not always provided when required. This continuous lack of support at home, coupled with insufficient supplementation from teachers, can demotivate South Sudanese Australian students, leading to behavioural issues or school dropouts.

8.2.2.1.5 Low Teacher Expectations of South Sudanese Australian Students

The sub-theme of teachers' expectations of South Sudanese Australian students was shared with certain emotions by some of the Knowledge Holders. The main issue identified was the teachers' deficit approach to South Sudanese Australian students, predominantly based on an assumed lack of English. Nyamal shared that her son was put in an EAL (English as an Additional Language)[59] class without testing or discussing this with her and her husband. She stated that her son only speaks English and should not be in an EAL class. Suzy shared a similar experience when she realised that her son's work was moderated and was informed that it was because she was from South Sudan. However, her son was born in Australia and speaks only English. Suzy did not agree with this decision and concluded that the differentiation was based on an assumed lack of English language skills because of her ethnic background.

Besides a deficit approach based on an assumed lack of English, the Knowledge Holders also commented on perceptions of a lack of abilities among South Sudanese Australian students. Atong stated that although some South Sudanese Australian students are doing VCE, many are pushed towards the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)[60] and unscored VCE.[61] However, she

[59] For more information about EAL see, for example, https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/support/diversity/eal/Pages/default.aspx

[60] VCAL changed into the Victorian Certificate of Education Vocational Major (VCE VM) and the Victorian Pathways Certificate in 2023 (DE, 2024e; VCAA, n.d.a, n.d.b). The VCE VM is a two-year vocational and applied learning program that enables students to successfully transition into apprenticeships, traineeships, further education and training, or employment (DE, 2024e; VCAA, n.d.a, n.d.b).

[61] Unscored VCE refers to the possibility of completing VCE units without being assessed. The student will not receive a study score or ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admission Rank) (VCAA, n.d.)

believed that some students do struggle with the demands of VCE because their work has always been moderated in previous years (as noted above) and they cannot work at the required level.

Both JD and Suzy attended high school in Australia. They commented that during their final years in high school, they experienced deficit expectations from their teachers based on their abilities. This resulted in them being encouraged to select specific subjects that were less demanding but would not qualify them to apply for a university course. Unlike her classmates, Suzy shared that she did not receive career advice support from the school. She was living with her grandmother, who could not support her and make decisions for her due to her limited English language skills. Though the school pushed Suzy to take practical subjects and apprenticeships, Suzy refused. She did well with her self-selected subjects and was accepted for a Bachelor of Law. JD shared a similar experience and stated that his teachers' low expectations of his abilities affected his self-esteem.

Another aspect relating to teacher expectations concerns online learning during the recurrent COVID-19 lockdowns in Melbourne in 2020-2021. Within her work, Atong was made aware of the teachers' concerns that South Sudanese Australian students were not actively participating in online learning and submitting their work. She commented that the teachers often did not realise these children were already struggling when attending school in person. Atong shared: "How would these children be able to work independently at home, most often without the support of a parent?" In addition, the absence of sufficient numbers of devices prevented many students from attending classes or submitting work online. Atong observed a tendency among teachers to complain about the South Sudanese Australian students who wondered why "always the same students" were not participating in online learning. This observation indicates a lack of background knowledge and understanding of family situations (e.g., a single-parent household with several children and a limited number of devices).

8.2.2.1.6 Limited Teacher Support for South Sudanese Australian Students

Several Knowledge Holders shared their observations regarding teacher support for South Sudanese Australian students, which was either limited or completely absent. According to LB, the root cause of this is an unconscious bias, resulting in criminalising people of African descent in society, including in the educational system. This often results in a lack of attention given to students, from childcare to tertiary education. LB noted that:

> Any person of African descent [...] would always be regarded as, would be criminalised in any system [...] So, our students, regardless how good they are, they might be brilliant, they are the neglect that is given, the lack of attention that is given to them has compounded the lack of self-esteem and self-identity.

Mabor stated that in his interactions with several schools, he often observed a lack of resources and staffing to provide additional support to South Sudanese Australian students who are struggling with school and who receive little or no support from home. Some schools do offer support, such as after school homework clubs where students can finish work or prepare for exams. However, Mabor commented that the relationship between the South Sudanese Australian students and the school is often strained, and the students lack a sense of belonging and feel isolated. So, for these students, a homework club is the last place they want to go.

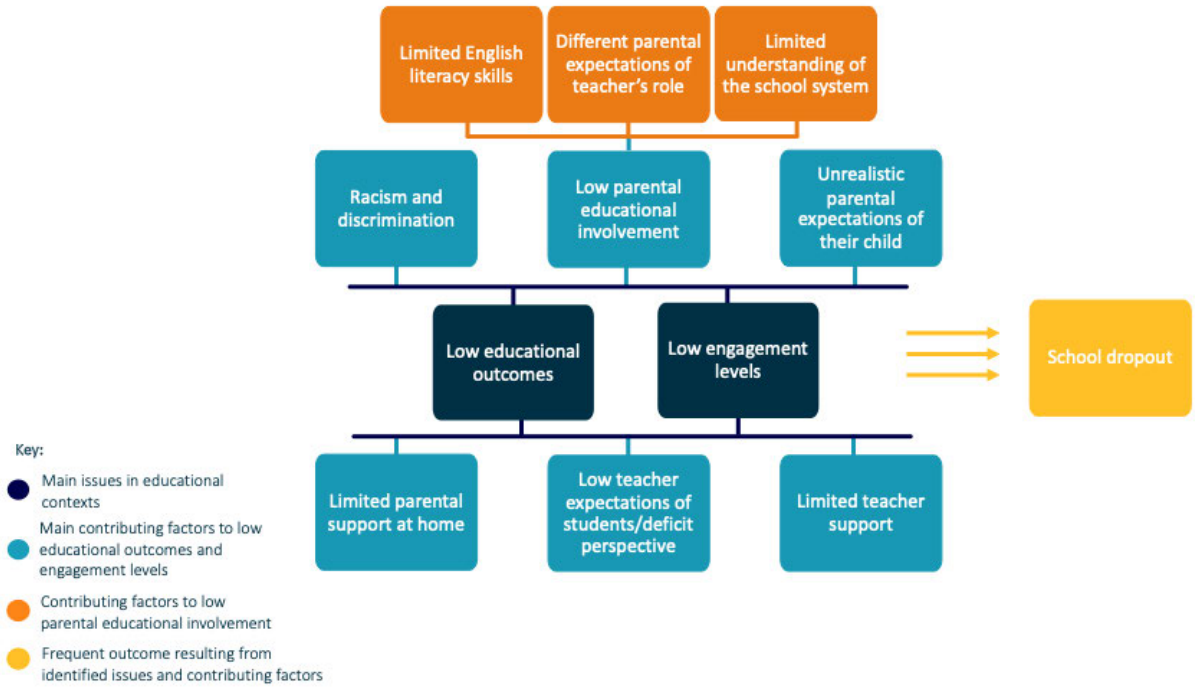
8.2.2.1.7 Racism and Discrimination Within the Schools

The deficit approach to South Sudanese Australian students is based on assumptions and generalisations and the Knowledge Holders shared lived experiences of racism and discrimination within the school settings. For example, Nyamal shared that her son was heavily judged by a teacher who assumed he must be on a substance because he was quiet and withdrawn. She wondered if the teacher's comments were based on prejudice against black students. JD shared his experience of a school rule about hairstyles that was not culturally inclusive and could indirectly be considered racist. Suzy shared her experience with indirect racism when she nominated herself for the school council and got selected. However, the school asked her to withdraw because she spoke improper English. She also remembered that while in school, regardless of her abilities, teachers questioned the authenticity of her work; she said, "When you do something good, you're not being accepted; you're questioned. Something is being said, just to push you down and just to, you know, your ability. So, I did, I wasn't supported to, to thrive."

In conclusion, the seven sub-themes of meta-theme 2 illuminate serious issues experienced by the South Sudanese Australian community within the educational system, leading to low educational outcomes and engagement levels and, at times, school dropout. Figure 47 provides an overview of the issues and contributing factors.

Figure 47

Overview of Contributing Factors to Low Educational Outcomes and Engagement Levels



8.2.2.2 Intergenerational Conflicts

The second theme identified by South Sudanese Australian community members pertains to intergenerational conflicts. The Knowledge Holders highlighted three elements of this issue. Firstly, some of the Knowledge Holders indicated that there are conflicts between parents and their children arising from differences in cultural values and expectations. At home, young people are expected to adhere to South Sudanese cultural values and norms. Meanwhile, outside the home, they are expected to conform to the socially accepted norms in Australia. This disconnect often leads to confusion, anger and rebellion among some young people (discussed further in Section 8.2.2.3). Some South Sudanese parents believe that young people in Australian culture have too much freedom. Many South Sudanese Australian youths, having been born in Australia or having arrived at a young age, possess limited or no understanding of South Sudanese cultural values. Suzy and LB explained that these differences in experience and expectations often result in a disconnect between elders and young people, leading to a breakdown in communication. This growing rift is further exacerbated by the reduced ability of young South Sudanese Australians to communicate in their parents' languages and the limited English literacy skills of some parents and caregivers, which hinders already strained communication.

Secondly, intergenerational conflicts can arise when young people view certain cultural customs as outdated or inappropriate in Australia. LB stated:

> They [children] demonise the old values; they think the tradition is outdated. They blame it for having stopped them or giving them no access to modernity at that time. So, anything associated with old traditions is considered wrong. And you get this family where people are not anchored; they can never function. What is left is fighting.

For instance, JD noted that some younger South Sudanese Australians do not support the dowry system,[62] considering it irrelevant to their lives in Australia. In addition to causing confusion, anger and rebellion among young people, intergenerational conflicts can escalate into feuds between parents or caregivers and children, occasionally turning violent, especially when parents are still dealing with trauma. Despite these conflicts affecting the South Sudanese Australian community, however, Mabor remained optimistic. He believed that although it might take a few generations to change the rigid attitudes of some parents and caregivers, which are contributing to these conflicts, the situation will eventually improve over time.

8.2.2.3 Issues with Adolescent Behaviour

The third theme pertains to issues with adolescent behaviour. This theme has many different layers and is exceedingly complex. The Knowledge Holders identified three areas in which the South Sudanese Australian community is experiencing issues with adolescent behaviour: at school, at home and in the community. The main identified issues are 1) low school attendance and engagement, 2) school dropout, 3) use of alcohol and drugs, 4) conflicts at home, 5) involvement with police, 6) stealing and other criminal behaviour, 7) unemployment, and 8) gang membership.

It is important to reiterate that the issues with young people concern only a small fraction of the South Sudanese Australian community. Despite the Knowledge Holders identifying multiple problems and concerns, they also indicated that many young people are engaged in school, employment, and sports and contribute to society in numerous ways.

The Knowledge Holders spoke mostly from their professional experiences and shared complicated factors such as parenting skills, cultural values, intergenerational conflicts, criminalisation, racism and discrimination. To assist in comprehending this sub-theme, I have visually displayed (Figure 48) the issues and their contributing factors as per the Knowledge Holders' responses, using their descriptive words as much as possible. This visual representation is not exhaustive, and input from young people and non-community members' perspectives might add valuable insights. Nevertheless, it is

[62] The dowry system, otherwise known as bride price, is a system where the family of the groom pays the father (or, in his absence, the family) of the bride. In South Sudan, this is normally paid in cows (Sommer & Schwartz, 2011).

undeniable that the issues are complex and require community-wide actions and solutions initiated by the community to improve the current situation.

Figure 48

Overview of Contributing Factors to Issues with South Sudanese Australian Adolescents

8.2.2.4 Negative Media Portrayals and the Consequences

Section 2.3.4 in Chapter 2 provided information pertaining to the identity of South Sudanese Australian adolescents that has been shaped by negative media portrayals and damaging comments by politicians. This has profoundly impacted South Sudanese Australian adolescents, their families and the community. Though the Knowledge Holders acknowledged specific problems with adolescents in their community, they commented that this related to only a few young people, and overall, many communities, including white Australians, struggle with adolescent behaviour. Knowledge Holder Nyamal argued that South Sudanese youth are negatively portrayed because they stand out due to their skin colour.

The negative media attention has several consequences for the South Sudanese Australian community. Firstly, Suzy strongly felt that the police targeted South Sudanese Australian young people in response to the negative media portrayals that created fear among the people in certain suburbs in Melbourne. The police targeting makes South Sudanese Australian parents very worried and protective of their children, as the police response can be very harsh. Secondly, although only a small percentage of the young people behave problematically, such behaviour affects all of Victoria's South Sudanese community members. Many community members experience racial profiling when they are out. Suzy said that she feels treated with suspicion when shopping as if people always assume that "she is going to steal something". In addition, Suzy shared that the negative media attention isolates the South Sudanese Australian community because it only focuses on the negatives and omits their positive contributions to Australia. Suzy concluded, "every community has the bad and the good; the one that lost their track in life. And then the media goes and highlights the little one, just to isolate us." The negative media attention also impacts employment and placement opportunities and impacts how South Sudanese young people get treated within educational settings.

Mabor expressed his belief that the South Sudanese Australian community is "grieving" due to the negative media attention, which "does not represent us." He highlighted that many South Sudanese Australian families are thriving and contributing positively to Australian society. However, the pervasive negativity has led some community members to "hide themselves in their homes," avoiding association with others. This negative portrayal has also caused divisions within the community, as some members believe that the troublemakers are predominantly from Dinka and Nuer ethnic backgrounds. Nyamal noted that, at times, parents prohibit their children from "associating with those who strive," meaning that the young people are instructed not to interact with peers who are considered troublesome. Similarly, Suzy observed that families with children who have encountered

legal issues and are incarcerated often face isolation from other families within the community. This division makes it challenging for the South Sudanese Australian community to work collaboratively to find solutions for the issues affecting their young people.

8.2.2.5 Issues with Finding Internships and Employment

The final sub-theme, issues with securing employment, is closely connected to the two previously discussed issues of adolescent behaviour and negative media portrayals. Due to exaggerated and disproportionate negative media coverage, young people within the South Sudanese Australian community often struggle to find employment. Nyamal expressed her concerns, attributing the lack of job opportunities to the actions of a few individuals within the South Sudanese Australian community, which she believes affects the prospects of others because the media portrays the whole community negatively.

While LB did not directly link employment challenges to the issues of adolescent behaviour and media portrayals, he affirmed that unemployment is a significant concern for community members, including those who have obtained tertiary education in Australia. LB expressed his frustrations and said, “This is the system that is so difficult, and this is one of the things we want to understand why. All our education is acquired here in Australia, and you still see that people cannot get a job.” LB noted that while graduates can find jobs in certain sectors, such as mineral science, many remain unemployed or take on "petty jobs." He concluded that unemployment issues strain well-being and lead to "families falling apart due to unmet expectations."

8.2.3 Meta-Theme 3: Calls to Action

The third meta-theme, calls to action, explores the Knowledge Holders’ suggestions for addressing some of the issues affecting the community within school settings. The Knowledge Holders were explicitly asked what schools could do to improve the current issues experienced in the educational system. Furthermore, during the conversations, recommendations were provided for other matters, such as intergenerational issues and issues with some of the young people in the community. These recommendations are based on their observations, lived experiences, and work-related experiences. The following are the suggestions from the Knowledge Holders, which I grouped into calls to action for the South Sudanese Australian community, schools, and teachers.

Improving educational outcomes and wellbeing among South Sudanese Australian adolescents requires a collaborative effort from within the community, particularly in strengthening school-family/community relationships. A key recommendation is increasing parental engagement with

schools, particularly by attending parent-teacher meetings and school activities. The absence of parental involvement not only leads to students feeling isolated but also affects how they are treated within the school environment, mainly due to a lack of accountability of teachers. In addition to greater engagement, there is a need for parents and caregivers to have realistic expectations regarding their children's academic abilities. Mabor explained that when "the parents that are doing very well, they want their kids to be lawyers, doctors, engineers [...]. And [the child] is saying, "I can't do further mathematics; that's what my mum wants me to do!" [...] They drop out of school." These expectations, while rooted in aspirations for success, can make the young people feel unsupported in pursuing pathways that align with their strengths and interests.

Other recommendations centre on communication. An important recommendation concerns improving communication with schools about cultural norms. For instance, cultural norms such as avoiding direct eye contact with adults—perceived as respectful in South Sudanese culture—may be misinterpreted as evasiveness or defiance by Australian teachers. These misinterpretations, which can lead to negative stereotyping, can be avoided if teachers are made aware of these cultural differences. Another recommendation for the community members focused on strengthening intergenerational conversation within families. Mabor pointed out that many young people struggle to speak openly with their parents due to language barriers and generational divides. Lastly, it is vital for the community to draw on its own strengths and resources. As Mabor stated, "We've got people who are learned, we've got people who have the capacity and the ability to be able to do something about it." Drawing on the available knowledge and experience can enable community-led initiatives that support young people and improve educational experiences and outcomes.

The main recommendation to better support South Sudanese Australian students and their families in school was the employment of CLOs from South Sudanese backgrounds. As Atong explained, "I would encourage all the schools to get someone from the cultural background who can oversee the issues that are going on. It makes the communication easy with the parents; it reduces the behavioural issues." CLOs were also indicated as being instrumental in advocacy and creating a bridge between the school and the families. Second, it is important that school management and teachers are understanding of the socio-historical contexts from which many parents come. As Mabor pointed out, "We are not all starting from the same starting line! One is, who are your parents? What is their experience? What is going on at home?" It is, therefore, crucial that teachers are mindful of the fact that many families arrived in Australia as refugees, often with limited formal education, which can substantially impact their capacity to support their children's learning at home. Mabor also

recommended that schools should take the initiative in organising information sessions to clarify “the expectations of the school, what are expectations of the parents, what kind of system [is] going to be used to communicate.” Furthermore, Suzy emphasised the importance of the school reaching out to the community when she stated, “Get the schools to reach out to the community instead of the community reaching out to the school […] get to know who we are, get to know our history.” Another recommendation pertained to early intervention strategies are also essential, particularly to prevent behavioural issues that may arise from learning struggles. As Atong explained, “If the kid struggles for long, they become lost within that system... so sometimes [they] have behavioural issues as a defence.” Lastly, schools should acknowledge that ITT may affect some families. As Suzy insightfully noted, “Trauma is something that is passed on. I might not have felt it, but my mum felt it, and she passed it on [...] And for sure, my kids will feel the trauma that I went through.”

The Knowledge Holders also provided recommendations for teachers. One important recommendation is for teachers to communicate clearly with parents and caregivers about curriculum expectations, modifications to schoolwork, and the rationale behind such adjustments. While differentiation is necessary in some contexts, Atong cautioned against excessive modification that may limit students' academic development and cause issues once the students are in senior secondary. Teachers should also take the time to explain key aspects of the curriculum and education system, because without sufficient information, parents may struggle to assess whether their child is meeting the required expectations. Furthermore, teachers should provide proactive support in facilitating parent engagement, such as assisting families with booking parent-teacher interviews. Mabor highlighted the systemic barriers involved and explained that “it’s so complicated! But we’re expected to be there. What do you hear? “These guys don’t come to these things!” Yeah, because the process is so hard for us.” Lastly, besides practical support, teachers should also consider taking on mentoring roles and offering additional support to students facing challenges or when parents/caregivers are unable to provide that support. As Suzy explained, “Why do you have to be strictly a teacher? Why can you not support them in some way? [...] The child that deals with emotional problems, you know, give them that much support.”

Overall, addressing issues within the educational system requires a collaborative effort involving schools, CLOs, teachers, students and their parents (Block et al., 2014; Isik-Ercan, 2012; S. Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). Strong partnerships between schools and members of the South Sudanese community will facilitate better support for the students and improve student learning outcomes, behaviour and engagement. By fostering cultural understanding, proactive communication, and parental

involvement, schools can create a more supportive and inclusive environment that meets the diverse needs of South Sudanese Australian students.

8.3 Observed Community Cultural Wealth

The anti-deficit model of CCW, as proposed by Yosso (2005), is a framework that emphasises the knowledge, skills, abilities and networks of Communities of Colour used to challenge oppression (see Section 3.3.3). The CCW model consists of six interrelated types of capital that can be found in communities: familial, aspirational, social, linguistic, resistant, and navigational (Yosso, 2005) with suggested additional concepts of emotional intelligence (Guzmán et al., 2021), spiritual (Huber, 2009) and informational capital (Liou et al., 2016).

In this research, the analysis of the interviews with the Knowledge Holders revealed four types of CCW: aspirational, familial, navigational and resistant capital, which were often interconnected. Emotional intelligence, which refers to the ability to direct thoughts and actions in constructive and efficient manners (Guzmán et al., 2021), was also observed in the interviews. However, social and linguistic capital, along with the suggested additional categories of spiritual capital (Huber, 2009) and informational capital (Liou et al., 2016), were not identified in the deductive analysis. It is important to note that the absence of these expressions of CCW does not imply that the Knowledge Holders lack these forms of capitals. Since the interview questions were not explicitly guided by the CCW framework, it is possible that the Knowledge Holders possessed these forms of capital, but they were simply not expressed during the interviews.

Aspirational capital refers to the capacity to maintain aspirations and dreams for the future, even in the face of actual or perceived obstacles (Yosso, 2005). Suzy shared how she persevered in her ambition to study law, despite her teachers “pushing” her to pursue TAFE and apprenticeships. She believed the teachers' suggestions were rooted in a deficit perspective of her abilities. Suzy's brother eventually intervened, exemplifying familial capital. Similarly, JD described how, lacking support and encouragement from his teachers, he was pushed to take subjects that would not allow direct university entry. However, JD’s father supported and encouraged him, again demonstrating familial capital. JD recounted:

> And because I wasn’t getting that support, I didn’t have that encouragement from school, I had to rely on my father to push me and say, “No, what are you doing, you need to go to university! I don’t care if it takes you longer, go to TAFE, go to college!”

Suzy's brother's intervention also showcased navigational capital, and Suzy's refusal to follow the school's advice and challenged decisions made on her behalf exemplifies resistant capital. Resistant capital was utilised to counter the teachers' advice, which was based on a deficit discourse regarding Suzy's academic capabilities. By resisting the advice to select TAFE, Suzy successfully navigated her final years in school, ultimately completing her final exam and gaining university entry.

Another example of resistant capital was exhibited by Nyamal, who addressed the teachers when she noticed that her sons were incorrectly placed in an EAL class. Nyamal recounted:

> But they put us in the wrong way, they came to Language other than English. Yes, I have other languages to speak, but my children does not, they only have one English language to speak. And that's what you have to deal with. And they said what about we put them, and I said, "No, they are not going to be treated differently, and they go to the mainstream and they learn." That is what I've been fighting for.

Nyamal shared another example of resistant capital when she questioned a comment made during a parent-teacher interview. The teacher asked, "Why is this boy so quiet? He looks like he is on drugs." Nyamal considered the teacher's comment regarding the perceived quietness of her son inappropriate and said, "We felt we were judged by that teacher; it is not so good."

Suzy also exhibited resistant capital when she confronted her son's teacher upon discovering that he was given modified work under the assumption that English was his second language. She approached the teachers to inquire why she had not been informed about this decision. When the teacher explained that it was because English was supposedly her son's second language, Suzy firmly corrected them, stating, "It is not! It is first. My child is born here. It's his first language!" She found it unacceptable that the teacher had assumed her son's literacy skills based on her South Sudanese background, pointing out, "Imagine if I were not involved—my child's work would have been altered, and he would be a grade behind." Suzy demonstrated emotional intelligence capital in addressing this issue of her son's class placement, despite not necessarily having the requisite language skills. Her experience also underscored the importance of clear communication between teachers and parents, as well as the need for parental involvement in education.

It is important to recognise that resistant capital is employed to recognise and challenge inequalities. As noted in Chapter 3, Yosso (2000) proposed the term "resilient resistance", which she defined as "surviving and/or succeeding through the educational pipeline as a strategic response to visual microaggressions" (p. 180). The Knowledge Holders provided examples demonstrating how they employed resilient resistant capital to survive and succeed in the school systems. Although labelled as

resistant capital, these actions are positive and can be seen as instances of parental or student agency addressing injustices.

In contrast to the concept of resistant capital is the notion of the 'good refugee,' described as a refugee possessing "an assemblage of characteristics that denote passivity, vulnerability, gratitude, compliance, and productivity" (Clark et al., 2024, p. 150). Within these prescribed characteristics, employing resistant capital does not fit the idealised "good refugee archetype." The 'good refugee' is expected to be deserving to avoid being labelled as the 'bad' or the 'undeserving' refugee (Clark et al., 2024, p. 149). This notion will be further explored in Chapter 9.

8.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has reported the outcomes of the analysis of the interviews with six adult South Sudanese Australian Knowledge Holders who shared their lived experiences, insights and observations from their perspectives as former secondary school students, parents, community members, and professionals. The first meta-theme provided insights into several aspects of the identities of South Sudanese Australians. The second meta-theme presented the multiple issues experienced, the main one being with the educational system. The third-meta-theme presented recommendations for members of the South Sudanese community, schools and teachers. The Knowledge Holders emphasised the importance of parental educational involvement and communication with their children's teachers. Though the expectations regarding the role of teachers and parental engagement differ between South Sudanese Australian community members and the Australian school system, in order to move forward, it is imperative that the community takes the initiative to advocate for their children. The most feasible way they can do this is by learning about the school system and the curriculum expectations. It is important that parents are informed of the consequences for their children when there is limited parental engagement. The Knowledge Holders suggested establishing parent groups where information and concerns can be shared. Employing CLOs was considered instrumental as it has proven to positively impact the communication between schools and parents and reduce behavioural issues of some students at school. The CLOs can communicate with parents in their language, understand the cultural values and norms, and act as 'cultural brokers' between schools and parents. It is, of course, imperative that schools acknowledge and utilise the wealth of knowledge and insights of the CLOs. Lastly, parental engagement and employing South Sudanese CLOs will profoundly increase the community's visibility in schools, resulting in better learning outcomes, higher attendance and school completion rates, and reduced behavioural issues. The recommendations can be used to answer the research sub-question: What change would need to

happen to improve educational outcomes, engagement and participation for South Sudanese adolescents?

The next chapter synthesises and discusses all of the gathered knowledge from the South Sudanese Australian community members, students, CLOs, and school staff and provides recommendations and answers to the research questions.

Chapter 9: Discussion of the Key Findings and Proposed Additions to the Funds of Identity Framework

9.1 Introduction

Having presented the outcomes of this research in the previous three chapters, this chapter discusses the key findings identified from both the deductive and inductive analyses. These findings are used to answer the main research question:

- What FoI do South Sudanese Australian adolescents draw from in undertaking their education?

As stated in Chapter 1, three sub-questions complement this main research question:

1. How do the adolescents' lived experiences contribute to their FoI?
2. How do South Sudanese Australian adolescents' educational experiences interact with their FoI?
3. What change would need to occur to improve educational outcomes, engagement, and participation of South Sudanese Australian adolescents?

As this research progressed, it became evident that greater nuance and complexities arose than were initially reflected by the research questions. As detailed in Chapters 5 to 7, the deductive and inductive analyses revealed multiple themes within the gathered knowledge. Although all are worthy of further exploration, five themes were identified as key significant findings, based on their position in this research according to the criteria of:

- The most prominent FoI in the gathered knowledge
- Their relevance in addressing the research objectives and questions
- Their contribution to new knowledge
- Their alignment with this research's transformative purpose.

The five highly important and potentially transformative themes arising from this research that are explored in this chapter are:

1. Impacts of dark/existential FoI on the student Knowledge Holders
2. The hybrid identities of young South Sudanese Australians and their navigation of liminal spaces
3. The need for a positive presence and visibility of the South Sudanese Australian community within school environments
4. Navigating and balancing cultural expectations and gender norms

5. Resistance and reframing in response to challenges.

Although these themes focus on distinct aspects of the analysed knowledge, they are interrelated and build upon each other. My research advisor, Dr William Abur, supported identification of these themes as respectfully representing the participant students' voices without discrediting or misrepresenting the South Sudanese Australian community. The ontological assumptions of the transformative paradigm recognise the existence of multiple socially constructed realities, all of which hold value (Mertens, 1999, 2007b). Thus, in this research, the realities and perspectives of the student Knowledge Holders are considered just as valuable as those of the adult Knowledge Holders, even when they challenge and critique the status quo. In line with these challenges and critiques, as the portraitist of this thesis, I adopt the approach of searching for 'goodness', whereby I emphasise strengths while also discussing the Knowledge Holders' expressions of "vulnerability, weakness, prejudice, and anxiety" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 141).

9.2 Key Findings and Proposed Framework Additions

The following sections consider the five key thematic findings of this research based on explorations of South Sudanese Australian adolescents' FoI. The FoI framework is situated in Vygotsky's notion of *perezhivanie,* which Esteban-Guitart and Moll (2014b) translated as 'lived experience' (see Chapter 3, Section 3.2). These lived experiences can include both positive and negative elements, and Esteban-Guitart (2021) recently acknowledged that translating *perezhivanie* as 'experiencing-as-struggle' (see Clarà, 2016; Poole, 2017; Poole & Huang, 2018) is more suitable for exploring FoI, particularly when there are 'difficult' elements contributing to one's identity. This interpretation aligns with Zipin's (2009) notion of dark funds of knowledge, which refers to the "difficult lifeworld knowledge" (p. 323). Building on this, Charteris et al. (2018) introduced the concept of dark FoI as an additional sub-category to the FoI framework.

However, Poole (2019) was concerned that the notion of dark FoI assumed a dichotomy between positive (light) and negative (dark) experiences. In response, Poole and Huang (2018) proposed the sub-category of existential FoI. This category integrates both negative and positive lived experiences, which aligns with the interpretation of *perezhivanie* as 'experiencing-as-struggle'. Within this interpretation, Poole and Huang (2018) emphasised how negative experiences can lead to positive outcomes, such as personal growth or improved educational engagement. Poole (2020) further explained that negative experiences can be used in transformative ways by reshaping them into tools to navigate future challenges. This transformative element was evident in some of the responses of

both the student and adult Knowledge Holders. The following sections discuss some of these transformative outcomes, including efforts to challenge deficit perspectives and counter negative portrayals (Alvarez et al., 2023; Esteban-Guitart, 2021, 2023a).

9.2.1 Impacts of Dark/Existential FoI on the Student Knowledge Holders

Dark/existential FoI can be considered the most prevalent sub-category for the students based on the number of quotes associated with this, with 18 categorical groupings (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.1.7). The 18 expressions of dark/existential FoI were grouped by the three primary settings where they were experienced, namely at school, at home or within the community, and in the broader Australian community. When discussing these experiences, it is also important to consider the students' specific socio-cultural contexts from which they speak, observe and interpret.

The 18 expressions of dark/existential FoI identified could be grouped by the three primary settings where they seem to be experienced: at school, at home or within the South Sudanese Australian community, and in the broader Australian community. This place-based grouping is important considering that 'home' and 'school' were identified as two of the four most important places on students' geomaps (see Chapter 7, Section 7.3.3) and can assist when formulating the study's recommendations, as presented in the next chapter.

9.2.1.1 Dark/Existential Funds of Identity at School: "Oh, So You're One of the Good Ones?"

School is an important place for the student Knowledge Holders. The students indicated that schools are places of fun and social interactions, where they can find relief from responsibilities and judgement from parents and community members and develop their linguistic capital (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.2). However, school is also a challenging place for many student Knowledge Holders due to limited support from teachers, differential and unfair disciplinary treatments, experiences of discrimination and racism from teachers and peers, teachers' deficit perspectives, and lack of teachers' cultural understanding (e.g., regarding the responsibilities of the girls at home) (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.1.7). Therefore, schools can, intentionally and unintentionally, contribute to the identity development of young people (Verhoeven et al., 2019).

Several expressions of these dark/existential FoI experienced in school settings reflect long-standing issues that have persisted since the mid-2000s when many (South) Sudanese first arrived in Australia. For example, an extensive report by the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (2008) identified issues related to racism and discrimination, often exacerbated by negative media portrayals. Despite the fact that more than 15 years have passed since this report was written, these

issues still persist, as is evidenced through this research and in recent studies that report on the experiences of South Sudanese Australian young people with discrimination and racism in schools (see, for example, Baak, 2019; Benier et al., 2018; Edgeworth, 2015; Macaulay, 2023b; Pittaway & Dantas, 2021). An increase in experiences with racism and discrimination in school was experienced after the 2016 Moomba 'riot', which was extensively covered by the media and used by several politicians to politicise the 'African crime' and 'African gangs' narratives (Weber et al., 2021).

The differential treatment mentioned by some student Knowledge Holders from Riverwalk College, where students either received unwarranted support or, conversely, did not receive (enough) help when required, aligns with Weber et al.'s (2021) findings. The differential disciplinary treatments reported by the female students at Western College, which could be considered indicators of discriminatory actions by senior staff in schools, aligned with studies by Baak (2019) and Macaulay (2023b). The root cause, as suggested by adult Knowledge Holder LB, could be the criminalisation of Black people (see Chapter 8, Section 8.2.2.1.6). As Abuk commented, "When you're Black because your skin colour is black, they [teachers] punish you differently."

Linked to these difficult experiences was the monitoring of South Sudanese Australian students who gathered in groups during recess. Abuk shared an experience from her previous school, where she was informed that only a limited number of South Sudanese Australian students were allowed to congregate. Weber et al. (2021) reported similar experiences with one of their study's participants, stating that "From three upwards, you are considered as a gang" (p. 68). Within the South Sudanese context, group gatherings are considered a cultural practice (Weber et al., 2021); however, within the Australian context, the 'African gang' narrative has criminalised the South Sudanese Australian young people by portraying them as dangerous, violent and mentally unstable (Majavu, 2020). This was well-explained by student Knowledge Holder Moya, who said, "Having darker skin in general; it's a negative statement behind it. You're more aggressive; you're more violent." The criminalisation of the visible 'otherness' of South Sudanese Australians reinforces their perceived differences, which negatively impacts their identity development, self-esteem and feelings of self-worth (Weber et al., 2021).

Aligned with the racial stereotyping of South Sudanese Australians is another expression of dark/existential FoI experienced in school settings related to teachers' assumptions regarding the 'good' and the 'bad' South Sudanese. The dichotomy of 'good' vs 'bad' has been discussed in a broader context as the 'good refugee' vs 'bad refugee' whereby the 'good' refers to "passivity, vulnerability, gratitude, compliance, and productivity" (Clark et al., 2024, p. 150) (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3).

Similarly, R. M. Davis (2021) stated that the 'good refugee' is considered those who are successful (e.g., athletes) and think and behave like "one of us", thereby positioning the Self against the Other or white against Black (p. 122). This is illustrated by the comment made to Saint when she was doing her work, and her teacher commented, "Oh, so you're one of the good ones?" Weber et al. (2021) noted that South Sudanese Australians often felt that "by being successful or doing good things, they are exhibiting 'Australianness'", whereas any wrongdoing was "attributed to the 'Africanness' of the perpetrator" (p. 96). Benier et al. (2018), who explored the lived experiences of young South Sudanese Australians after the 2016 Moomba 'riot', reported that "participants felt that they had to work harder than others to access opportunities and constantly prove themselves" (p. 35). Similarly, the students at Western College placed expectations on themselves to make up for other students who behaved and performed very poorly at school in previous years.

Although the topics of racism and discrimination were not extensively discussed during the focus group meetings at Riverwalk College, it seemed that these issues were less prominent compared to those experienced by the students from Western College. Only Aduk, who had recently moved to Riverwalk College, made several strong statements regarding teachers' deficit perspectives (see Appendix L), although it seemed that some of these experiences had occurred at her previous school. Based on this analysis, it seemed that Riverwalk College's whole-school approach to inclusive education, including the employment of several South Sudanese Australian CLOs, was effective in reducing experiences of racism and discrimination. However, it is worth noting that the CLOs did report instances where South Sudanese Australian students received disproportionate disciplinary actions, especially in cases involving a physical confrontation between students. One CLO noted that South Sudanese Australian students tend not to complain to the teachers when issues occur, and when issues persist or escalate, they take matters into their own hands, often including physical confrontation. Consequently, these South Sudanese Australian students receive punishment even though they were not the initial troublemakers (see Chapter 7, Section 7.3). Baak (2019) and Macaulay (2023b) reported similar findings, but in their studies, the students indicated that they informed a teacher about the issue; however, the concerns were ignored, which can exacerbate feelings of exclusion and injustice. In addition to the employment of CLOs at Riverwalk College, the leadership team involves students, including South Sudanese Australians, in mediation sessions to resolve conflicts between students (see Chapter 7, Section 6.3). By doing so, the school draws on these students' CCW and insights while enhancing their agency and student voice. These initiatives exemplify a culturally responsive approach and highlight the school's commitment to incorporating community perspectives into conflict resolution processes.

The portraits of AD, Saint and Abuk illustrated how the abovementioned dark/existential FoI negatively impacted the students' mental health, feelings of belonging and safety and led to feelings of frustration, anger and rebellion (see Chapter 5). Similar findings have been reported in other studies in which participants refer to the negative impact of racism, discrimination, racial profiling and criminalisation within school settings on South Sudanese Australian students' sense of belonging (see, for example, Baak, 2019; Macaulay, 2023b; Weber et al., 2021). To what extent the students internalised the negative perceptions, deficit perspectives, profiling, and differential treatments is not entirely clear. However, at times, it was evident in the students' responses that some of these dark/existential FoI were transformed into aspirational capital and resistant capital, expressing their resilience and agency (see Section 9.2.5). For instance, AD stated,

> Just because a group couldn't do it last year doesn't mean that we can't. So, I wanna show them that nothing is stopping us; we don't have limits [...] We're trying to show the teachers that not all of us are the same.

Similarly, Suzy, one of the adult Knowledge Holders, transformed her teachers' deficit perspectives regarding her academic capabilities and utilised her aspirational and resistant capital (see Chapter 8, Section 8.2.2.1.5). These examples align with Poole (2020), who suggested that negative experiences can be reshaped or transformed into strategies that can help people cope with future challenges. The notion of resistance will be discussed further in Section 9.2.5.

9.2.1.2 Dark/Existential Funds of Identity at Home and Within the South Sudanese Australian Community

Of the 18 identified expressions of dark/existential FoI, 12 were linked to experiences occurring at home and within the South Sudanese Australian community, making this the most prominent context of dark/existential FoI. This is essential information, indicating that despite the importance of home in young people's lives, as reflected in their geomaps (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.3), home is also where the majority of their 'difficult' lived experiences occur. The following five sub-sections discuss the dark/existential FoI that most significantly contribute to the students' self-identity and identity development.

9.2.1.2.1 Experiences With and/or Knowledge of Gangs and/or Gang-Related Violence: "One of my Older Cousins, he got Mixed up with it"

The topic of 'gangs' is complex and framing the 'gang' discourse within the proper context and using a counter-narrative perspective is essential to avoid exacerbating the already challenging situation for the South Sudanese Australian community. There is currently limited literature exploring South Sudanese Australian young people's perspectives on involvement in 'gangs'; however, Shepherd et al.

(2018) presented self-reported contributing factors to criminal offending behaviour, including "disrupted education, family disconnection, peer group delinquency, excessive alcohol use, (clinically) unaddressed anger and emotional problems" (p. 491), being bored, lack of finances, and taking revenge or assisting friends. Ensor's (2016) research found lack of parental supervision and discipline as the main contributing factors to young people joining 'gangs'.

Such factors influential in 'gang' involvement suggest counter-narrative perspectives and measures to address the issues (Lee et al., 2021). These measures should include culturally responsive partnerships with families and the community that acknowledge and address the presence of ITT, focus on crime-preventing behaviours, alcohol and drug support groups, and enhancing schooling and employment (Lee et al., 2021). Several recommendations provided by the student Knowledge Holders also include preventative measures, including finishing school, befriending 'good' people, not internalising negative stereotypes, talking to school mentors, not being aggressive, and being yourself (see Chapter 6, Section 6.5). Further research is required to study the effectiveness of the suggested preventative measures and how constructive relationships between the South Sudanese Australian community and the educational sector can be created to address the abovementioned contributing factors.

9.2.1.2.2 Experiences of Being Considered 'Whitewashed' by Family or Community Members: "When you Can't Speak our Language, They'll Call you Whitewashed"

The term 'whitewashing' was mentioned several times by the students and mostly referred to as being considered 'not Black'.

The student's explanation of 'not being Black' aligns with Nguyen (2015), who described whitewashing as "acting white, which refers to being perceived as performing an identity that closely aligns with the dominant culture in one's community" (p. 509). Pyke (2010) considered referring to someone as being whitewashed as a way of "intra-ethnic othering" among members of a subordinated group, thereby creating negative sub-ethnic identities (Pyke, 2010, p. 558). Considering someone as being whitewashed can result in a performative ethnic identity (Nguyen, 2015). Within the context of the South Sudanese Australian students, a performative ethnic identity might be embraced to avoid being considered assimilated or whitewashed, with the young people accused of valuing and maintaining the Australian culture above the South Sudanese culture (Berry, 1997). Consequently, a performative ethnic identity can promote performative behaviour. For instance, Chanel indicated that beading was a way to express her love for South Sudan, but also to ensure that she was not "pushing away" her country as she considered herself whitewashed as she was born in Australia. This shows another level of the term whitewashed, with those born and growing up in Australia given this label as they are not

considered authentic (Atem, 2019), which can contribute to the creation of negative sub-ethnic identities (Pyke, 2010). This can further exacerbate the already confusing and challenging circumstances in which young South Sudanese Australians are developing their identity. This tension is explored further in Section 9.2.2.

9.2.1.2.3 Personal or Familial Experiences of War, Displacement and Trauma: "I Lived in Kakuma Refugee Camp"

Impacts of war, displacement and trauma thread through the young participants' homes and community. Several students shared personal experiences of war or indicated that they had heard of the experiences of their family members, confirming that many families in the South Sudanese Australian community have been directly or indirectly impacted by the Civil Wars, particularly the Second Civil War (see also Chapter 7, Section 7.2.1.2). The students' experiences included witnessing their parents/caregivers being triggered by traumatic memories, hearing survival stories from family members, having vivid memories of fleeing for safety and seeing and smelling dead people, and observing the effects of PTSD resulting from trauma (see Table 5 and Appendix L). According to adult Knowledge Holder LB, the community, particularly from the 1980s onwards, has developed a culture rooted in trauma, with children as the "last residues of violence" due to the ITT. There is a paucity of studies that have explored the impact of ITT on the mental health of second-generation South Sudanese Australian adolescents. However, research by Tutlam et al. (2022) involving second-generation South Sudanese Americans reported an increase in behavioural and emotional problems such as aggression, antisocial behaviour (including 'gang' membership), anxiety, depression and PTSD (Tutlam et al., 2022).

The student Knowledge Holders did not directly refer to ITT and how these experiences and observations of war and displacement impacted their identity and identity development. However, the adult Knowledge Holders explicitly referred to the presence of trauma and ITT in the South Sudanese Australian community. For instance, Suzy stated, "Trauma is something that is passed on; I might not have felt it, but my mum felt it, and she passed it on." Suzy acknowledged that it was likely that she would pass her trauma on to her young children, thereby indicating the ongoing cycle of ITT (see Chapter 7, Section 7.2.1.2). Similarly, Gitau (2018) stated that decades of exposure to collective trauma have been internalised and "woven into the social fabric" (p. 30) of the South Sudanese, thereby becoming an integral part of identities (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the student Knowledge Holders are exposed to ITT at home and from the broader

South Sudanese Australian community (see also Abur & Mphande, 2020; Anyieth & Abur, 2022; Savic et al., 2016).

The impact of trauma on identity is complex within the specific context of South Sudanese Australians and is, according to Atem (2019), linked to the notion of the "authentic" South Sudanese (p. 158). Atem (2019) stated, "The experience of suffering and trauma as a result of direct participation in the war and living in the bush had become important components of South Sudanese identity" (p. 158). Besides these experiences of suffering and trauma, those considered 'authentic' are able to speak the mother tongue and have cultural knowledge, which is often shared orally via songs (Atem, 2019). Upon resettling in countries such as Australia, these expectations regarding the 'authentic' South Sudanese and a collective memory centre around the experiences of life before the war (cultural knowledge), experiences during the war, and the ability to speak a mother tongue, are impacted by the expectation to take on a new identity and speak a new language. The younger generation, particularly those born in Australia, often have no direct experiences or knowledge of the war, limited cultural knowledge and ability to speak a mother tongue, which can impact the development of their ethnic identity and place in the community (Atem, 2019).

9.2.1.2.4 Experiencing Mental Health Issues and Having to Grow up too Quickly due to Responsibilities at Home: "Not Being Seen as a Child all of my Life"

Several students shared dark/existential FoI related to mental health concerns, including depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts. They also mentioned the overall negative impact on their mental health resulting from experiences with stereotypical assumptions, racism, discrimination and lack of support at school (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.1.7).

The narrative portrait of Abuk (see Chapter 5, Section 53) elaborated on her struggles with mental health, which she attributed mainly to "stress, as well as having to grow up so quick; to, like, not being seen as a child all of my life." Abuk seemed to self-identify as a mother to her younger siblings—an identity that has been forced upon her despite her strong resistance. Abuk's experience resonated with a participant in Macaulay's (2021) study, who reported a nearly identical response to having to grow up quickly due to caregiving responsibilities. Interestingly, as mentioned in Section 6.2.1.1, Abuk observed that in school settings, South Sudanese Australian young people are often perceived as older than their actual age and are not seen as children. This perception prematurely forces them to adopt an adult identity, rather than a child or adolescent identity. Consequently, these young people face the dual pressure of assuming adult responsibilities and identities, both at home and in school. Abuk

expressed her resentment toward her mother, whom she views as irresponsible and inconsiderate of her feelings, questioning why she was expected to care for her younger siblings. These expressions of resistance capital (Yosso, 2005) are explored further in Section 9.2.5.

Abuk took the initiative to seek help for her mental well-being and was prescribed medication and advised to keep a diary. Her proactive effort exemplifies her agency and discernment, which is particularly significant given the cultural stigma surrounding mental health issues and the tendency within the South Sudanese Australian community to avoid seeking professional help (Abur & Mphande, 2020; Anyieth & Abur, 2022; Kasherwa et al., 2024; Pittaway and Dantas, 2021). This could be attributed to Abuk's hybrid identity (discussed in Section 8.2.2) and her exposure to Australian culture, where seeking help for mental health issues, particularly for young people, is highly encouraged. It is also possible that the strained relationship with her mother contributed to Abuk's rejection of South Sudanese cultural norms regarding mental health and seeking professional help.

While I am cognisant of the cultural expectations regarding the roles and responsibilities of girls in South Sudanese and many other cultures, I urge the South Sudanese Australian community to engage in discussions about this topic and consider its impact on the mental health of their young women. Since the topic was frequently discussed in focus group meetings at both schools, I sought to explore this further with the CLOs to gain their perspectives. The two older CLOs, who spoke from both their expertise as parents and CLOs, confirmed the significant burden placed on girls within their community. Section 9.2.4 explores this topic of gendered roles and expectations further.

AD's narrative portrait (see Chapter 5, Section 5.2) described her struggle with a negative self-image and suicidal thoughts in Year 11, although she did not elaborate on the contributing factors. Suicide is an increasing concern among young South Sudanese Australians (Kasherwa et al., 2024) and African-background youth in general (Mwanri et al., 2018). Intergenerational conflicts, driven by traumatic pre-settlement experiences, settlement challenges, and strained relationships between parents/caregivers and children, have been identified as key contributing factors (Mwanri et al., 2018). Furthermore, limited communication between young South Sudanese Australians and their families exacerbates these conflicts (Kasherwa et al., 2024).

It is likely that, in addition to AD and Abuk, other student Knowledge Holders struggle with mental health issues, but because this topic was not explicitly discussed in the focus group meetings, these experiences may not have emerged. However, certain lived experiences shared by the students could

contribute to the development of mental health issues. This includes, for example, Amiot's lived experiences with war, displacement and death, and Abul, Aker and Abraham all losing their fathers due to illnesses. It is most likely these lived experiences impacted the student's mental health and identity development. The impact of lived experiences on mental health has been explored in studies by Macaulay (2023a) and Pittaway and Dantas (2021), who reported an increase in feelings of anxiety, depression, and sadness among young South Sudanese Australians.

The above insights highlight the mental health struggles of South Sudanese Australian young people and the potential impact of these dark/difficult experiences on their identity development. Since young people spend much of their time at school, it is crucial for educational stakeholders to recognise the diverse mental health challenges they face, many of which are not directly linked to their own or their families' refugee backgrounds. A broad and nuanced understanding of the causes of mental health issues is, therefore, essential. Educational stakeholders are further encouraged to implement trauma-informed teaching strategies, such as the BSEM (Berry Street, n.d.), and employ CLOs. The significant efforts made by Riverwalk College—such as employing South Sudanese Australian CLOs who provide culturally appropriate, trauma-informed mentoring—and the positive impact on the well-being and behaviour of the young people are evidence of the effectiveness of these suggestions. Lastly, the South Sudanese Australian community is strongly encouraged to recognise mental health issues, including the rising rates of suicide among young people, as critical concerns. It is imperative that the community works collectively to address these issues and the contributing factors, develop community support systems and encourage seeking professional help by removing the cultural stigma associated with mental health.

9.2.1.2.5 Experiences with Losing the Ability to Communicate in the Mother Tongue: "There's not Much Mother Tongue Anymore Because I've Been in Australia for, Like, ten Years"

Language is considered both practical and cultural FoI (see Chapter 6, Sections 6.2.1.2 and 6.2.1.3) and was mentioned by several students as being an important part of their identity. The concerns expressed regarding losing the ability to communicate with family due to the loss of their mother tongue were mentioned by AD and Abraham, who need to communicate in Dinka with their mothers. This is particularly challenging for AD as her mother lives in South Sudan. The difficult lived experience of separation from family geographically and linguistically is further impacted by the limited means of communications with family overseas. However, this limitation in AD's case has encouraged her to maintain and improve her ability to speak Dinka, actively seeking ways to do so by, for instance, conversing with her friend (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.1.2). The loss of speaking a mother tongue and

the consequences of communicating with parents/caregivers were also mentioned by adult Knowledge Holders, particularly regarding its contribution to intergenerational conflicts (see Chapter 8, Section 8.2.2.2). As mentioned, this dark/existential FoI contributes to the development of linguistic capital and links to familial capital since language transmission often occurs within family or community settings (Yosso, 2005). Vaughan et al. (2021, 2023) and Hatoss and Sheely (2009) also highlighted the connections between speaking one's mother tongue, identity and cultural attachment for South Sudanese Australians. Hatoss and Sheely (2009) noted the importance of places such as Dinka Churches (institutional FoI) where the younger members of the community can maintain the language, which is particularly salient in the context of language shifts among the second generation.

9.2.1.3 Dark/Existential Funds of Identity in the Broader Australian Community: "They Assume Everyone Steals"

Students at both schools referred to stereotypical descriptions of South Sudanese people, such as being tall, slim, good at playing basketball, or suited for modelling. While these attributes might be perceived as positive, the student Knowledge Holders noted that they often experience these assumptions and expectations negatively. For instance, Aluat remarked, "At first, it's like, okay. And then when it starts getting too much, it's annoying." These stereotypes become particularly challenging when the students feel they do not meet what they perceive as the 'typical' South Sudanese appearance, which can contribute to mental health issues.

There were also references to general assumptions about criminal behaviour. For instance, Abraham stated, "They [broader Australian community] assume everyone steals." Similarly, Moya noted the assumption that people with "darker skin in general" are seen as "aggressive" and "more violent." These observations resonate with Majavu's (2020) conclusion that Black people are frequently portrayed as dangerous, violent and mentally unstable. These racist assumptions have a significant impact on identity development and mental health. Vaughn et al. (2023) found that "discrimination and racism challenged identity formation" of South Sudanese Australian young people. which "contributed to a lack of belonging and aversion to living in Australia" (p. 8). Pittaway and Dantas' (2021) study reported similar consequences, particularly regarding the negative impact on mental health and the persistent feeling of never being good enough, except when excelling in sports. These so-called identity politics (Yuval-Davis, 2010) reinforce the external boundaries imposed on the self-identity of South Sudanese Australians, thus perpetuating their contingent identity (Nunn, 2010). Identity politics can force young people to create a hybrid identity (S. Williams, 2022) as a coping mechanism to navigate the politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2010), whereby the South Sudanese

Australian young people experience both inclusion and exclusion depending on their perceived 'Australianness' and 'usefulness' (Weber et al., 2021).

Both student and adult Knowledge Holders shared experiences of being targeted and racially profiled in public, predominantly in shops. This indicates that it is not only the young people who are being targeted. Several studies reported on experiences of South Sudanese Australians being targeted and profiled in public places, including over-policing, which includes being stopped, searched and questioned, often accompanied by excessive violent behaviour and verbal abuse by the police (see, for example, Benier et al., 2018; Macaulay, 2023a; Pittaway & Dantas, 2021; Weber et al., 2021). As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, police monitoring increased significantly after the 2016 Moomba 'riot' when the 'African gangs' narrative gained renewed attention (Benier et al., 2018). In 2017, former Minister for Home Affairs Peter Dutton's claims that people were scared to go to restaurants at night out of fear of the 'Apex gang' (Majavu, 2020), instigated further police targeting and increased racial abuse and discrimination (Benier et al., 2018).

In recent years, several initiatives have aimed to address the ongoing concerns about racial profiling, racism and discrimination experienced by the South Sudanese Australian community, such as the Victorian Police internship program (Greenbank, 2018) and the South Sudanese Australian Youth Advisory Group (Victoria State Government, 2024a, 2024b). However, despite these efforts, by mid-2024, the South Sudanese Australian community was once again on the receiving end of media and policy scrutiny in response to a 20 percent increase in criminal activities in Victoria over the last 12 months[63] (Kolovos, 2024).

Andrew Bruun, Chief Executive of the Victorian Youth Support and Advocacy Service, recently noted that many young offenders, including South Sudanese Australians, engage in antisocial and criminal behaviour due to a sense of disconnection from their families, communities, and schools, leading them to seek belonging in groups involved in such activities (Kolovos, 2024). Over time, these newly formed connections can impact young people's identity development and self-identification (Kolovos, 2024). The adult Knowledge Holders similarly noted that young people often feel caught between two cultures, with factors like intergenerational trauma, lack of parental educational involvement, and PTSD-related parenting challenges contributing to this disconnection. Given the central role of school, it is essential for the South Sudanese Australian community to collaborate closely with schools and

[63] Although there was an increase between 2023-2024, figures have remained quite stable over time. Figures from the Victorian Crime Statistics Agency indicated a total of 3,365 offenders per 100,000 persons aged between 10 and 17 in 2024 compared to 3,358 in 2017 (Kolovos, 2024).

services like Foundation House. Within schools, CLOs are crucial in addressing this disconnect, and where parental support is lacking, CLOs can provide guidance to help prevent students dropping out of school (see Chapter 8, Section 8.3).

It is important to highlight that collaboration between the police and the South Sudanese Australian community can be constructive, as demonstrated by the experiences of Riverwalk College. Members of the college's leadership team noted that, in previous years, their primary focus was on keeping the South Sudanese Australian students "off the streets" and getting "rid of all the gang stuff" at school. By working closely with the local police and increasing the number of CLOs, the leadership team noticed a significant improvement in behaviour and attendance. A key factor in this success was the CLOs' persistent efforts regarding aspects such as monitoring attendance, reaching out to parents and caregivers, and setting educational and career goals. Riverwalk College demonstrated that a holistic, community-centred approach is most effective in addressing challenging behaviours. This approach builds a culturally responsive network of support around the South Sudanese Australian students and their families to change the narrative of belonging and identity away from gang membership. This finding aligns with other studies (see, for example, Arnot & Pinson, 2005; Baak, McDonald et al., 2023; VFST, 2015a), suggesting that culturally responsive, community-driven interventions are most suitable when addressing issues faced by marginalised communities, including those from refugee backgrounds (Baak, McDonald et al., 2023; VFST, 2015b).

9.2.2 The Hybrid Identity of Young South Sudanese Australians and Their Navigation of Liminal Spaces

The second key theme, the hybrid identity of young South Sudanese Australians and their navigation of liminal spaces was identified as an overarching theme incorporating observations and experiences shared by both adult and student Knowledge Holders.

Adolescence is a critical phase during which physical, neurocognitive (Ngwenya et al., 2023) and identity development rapidly occur, often accompanied by identity crisis and, at times, identity confusion (Erikson, 1968). However, adolescence, as a developmental concept, is largely rooted in western frameworks and does not necessarily align with African, including South Sudanese, socio-cultural values and expectations (Ngwenya et al., 2023). It is, therefore, essential to frame adolescence and identity development during adolescence within the South Sudanese cultural context, recognising the communal values and social expectations that shape the lived experiences of young people in this community. Zaian et al. (2021) argued that adolescence can be particularly challenging for young

people from refugee backgrounds because they are "struggling to achieve a coherent identity in relation to their past and present, self and others, while simultaneously trying to resolve the demands of cultural transition" (p. 124). Although many South Sudanese Australian young people are born in Australia and thus are neither refugees nor migrants, the socio-cultural contexts in which they grow up still make their identity development a complex process.

Regardless of where the student Knowledge Holders were born, most self-identified as 'Sudo', 'Sudanese', 'South Sudanese', 'South Sudanese Australian' or 'African', with none of the students saying they were 'Australian' only. This finding aligns with S. A. Deng (2015), but differs from S. Williams' (2022) study in which South Sudanese Australian young people mostly self-identified as 'Australian' and 'South Sudanese' but not 'South Sudanese Australian'. Participants in S. Williams' (2022) study, however, acknowledged that self-identifying as Australian did not necessarily mean they were accepted as such, nor did it mitigate the differential treatments and Othering. Ensor's (2016) US-based study found that participants, some of whom were 'second-generation', self-identified as American. However, many expressed pride in their African and South Sudanese heritage, feeling a stronger connection to the African diaspora compared to African-Americans, who were often unable to trace their ethnic roots (Ensor, 2016). This sense of pride and strong connections to South Sudan was also evident among the student Knowledge Holders in this research, as seen in their identity drawings (see Figure 33), geomaps (see Figure 44), and through their expressions of geographical and cultural FoI, and linguistic and familial capital (see Chapter 6).

A major challenge faced by South Sudanese Australian young people lies in navigating the often conflicting expectations between their home environment and the broader Australian community. At home, they are often expected to uphold and adhere to cultural norms, values, and expectations prescribed by their parents/caregivers. These expectations are deeply rooted in South Sudanese traditions (S. A. Deng, 2015). The young people are expected to maintain and obtain cultural knowledge and skills, as well as speak their mother tongue. Linked to these expectations is the notion of adopting an 'authentic' South Sudanese identity[64]. As previously mentioned, the young people reported being labelled 'whitewashed' when they do not interact with other South Sudanese Australians (or African-background youth more broadly), or when they lack proficiency in their mother tongue and specific cultural skills like cooking and dancing. This labelling can lead to "intra-ethnic

[64] A different interpretation of 'authenticity' was provided by a participant in Ayrton's (2019) UK-based study, who commented that one's influence and position in the South Sudanese diaspora is related to "direct participation in the freedom struggle, physical presence within or proximity to the homeland, and participation in suffering" (p. 331). Based on these criteria, the male participant noted that there is a "a complete class system [...] with (ex-)soldiers who fought in the SPLA at the top, followed by those civilians who remained in South Sudan during the war, then the East African diaspora, and finally 'the last people at the bottom' are the Western diaspora" (p. 331).

othering" within the South Sudanese Australian community, potentially resulting in the development of negative sub-ethnic identities (Pyke, 2010, p. 558) or performative ethnic identities and activities (Nguyen, 2015).

In contrast, within school settings and the broader Australian community, South Sudanese Australian youth are often expected to integrate or even assimilate despite still being marked as 'different' due to their perceived 'Blackness'. Although some young people strive for integration, their visibility and contingent Australian identity often hinder these efforts (Kaphle et al., 2024; Nunn, 2010). Compounding this, the young people reported various dark/existential FoI experiences in school and the broader community, such as Othering, racism, discrimination, stereotypical portrayals, and educational deficit perspectives.

Navigating these conflicting expectations creates significant tensions and as previously mentioned, can contribute to mental health issues. The adult Knowledge Holders also mentioned tensions among young people. For instance, Atong noted that the young people often feel confused and lost as they try to navigate between two different cultures, which "puts a strain on them because they don't know what to agree with and what they don't need to agree with." These feelings of confusion were also mentioned by African-background participants in a study by Mude and Mwanri (2020), who concluded that a lack of connectedness to either the culture of origin or the Australian culture can result in young people who "define their own self-construct" (Mude & Mwanri, 2020, p. 7). This self-construct can also be considered a hybrid identity whereby young people create a 'third space' in which there is cultural hybridity without fixed boundaries and where one is "free to negotiate and translate their cultural identities in a discontinuous, intertextual temporality of cultural difference" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 55). Ultimately, the formation of hybrid identities reveals a broader cultural strategy among young South Sudanese Australians to navigate the complexities of belonging. This strategy is characterised by agency, resilience and resistance, and the self-constructed 'third space' (Bhabha, 1994); it provides the young people with a place in which they can negotiate their ethnic identities.

The development of hybrid identities was influenced not only by various conflicting expectations and dark/existential FoI, but also by expressions of geographical, cultural, practical, and familial FoI. These expressions reflected a strong desire to stay connected to South Sudanese heritage, even among those born in Australia. Thus, while hybrid identities serve as a means of navigating tensions, they also reflect the high value young people place on their ethnic heritage as they grow up as Australians. This dual self-identification encompasses both South Sudan as their ethnic origin and Australia as the

mainstream culture of their upbringing (Phinney, 1990). These young people have chosen what Berry (1997) describes as an integration strategy—adopting elements of the host culture while retaining aspects of their cultural origins.

The creation of hybrid identities among South Sudanese Australian young people aligns with findings from Vaughan et al. (2021, 2023) and S. Williams (2022). It is important to mention here that this navigating between two cultures and negotiating various identities is not only experienced by South Sudanese Australian young people but also by youth from other African countries such as Liberia, Burundi and Somalia (Mude & Mwanri, 2020; Mwanri et al., 2018).

Figure 49 summarises and illustrates the process by which the young people navigated the liminal spaces between home and the outside world, often accompanied by rising tensions (dark blue rectangles). Three additional tensions/outcomes are also depicted, which express responses to challenges experienced at home and within the South Sudanese Australian community (teal rectangles). These include intra-ethnic Othering and the development of negative sub-ethnic identities resulting from being labelled 'whitewashed'. In response to such labelling, some young people adopt a performative ethnic identity, often involving performative ethnic activities like dancing and beading. However, some students expressed enjoyment in engaging in these ethnic activities and considered them not performative. Some students voiced resistance to specific cultural norms and values, such as gendered roles, familial responsibilities, and arranged marriages, and adult Knowledge Holder JD mentioned resistance against the dowry system, which is, for many young people, considered irrelevant in Australian contexts. Lastly, as indicated above, the formation of hybrid identities is shaped by multiple FoI. For many young people, maintaining certain aspects, such as their mother tongue, is a vital part of their identity alongside their integration into Australian society (light blue rectangle).

Figure 49

The Navigation Between Two Cultures and the Development of a Hybrid Identity

9.2.3 The Need for a Positive Presence and Visibility of the South Sudanese Australian Community in Schools: "We, as a Community, We've got to do Something for Ourselves"

The third key theme in this study—emphasising the need for a positive presence and visibility of the South Sudanese Australian community—was central to the key recommendations from the adult and student Knowledge Holders, CLOs, and the leadership team from Riverwalk College. These seek to address and improve the many challenges currently faced by the community in educational settings as mentioned in the preceding chapters.

This theme consists of four elements that align with the suggested recommendations of the adult Knowledge Holders, CLOs and leadership team:

1. Employment of South Sudanese Australian CLOs.
2. Employment of South Sudanese Australian teachers.
3. Inviting South Sudanese Australian role models to speak in schools.
4. Increasing parental educational engagement and involvement.

School, as an educational and social environment, is a crucial place for the identity development of adolescents (Verhoeven et al., 2019). For some students, schools are inclusive places where they can develop strong relationships with teachers, utilise their agency, and feel supported and advocated by teachers, school staff and actively involved parents/caregivers. While this represents the ideal scenario, it is not the reality for most South Sudanese Australian students, including the young people whose perspectives are shared in this study (see Section 6.2.1.1). One of the most significant recommendations suggested by both student and adult Knowledge Holders is the employment of South Sudanese Australian CLOs to support young people in all aspects related to their schooling, including mental health and well-being.

As highlighted by the adult Knowledge Holders, CLOs play an instrumental role in fostering cultural awareness among school staff members and advocating for South Sudanese Australian students (see Chapter 7, Section 7.3). Their advocacy is particularly important in helping students navigate subject selection and exam pathways, especially when parents are less involved (for various reasons). Furthermore, CLOs play a crucial role in reducing challenging behaviours in schools and function as the bridge between the school and the parents, disseminating important information and explaining the expectations regarding parental involvement.

The three CLOs employed at Riverwalk College provided detailed insights into their roles, aligning closely with the perspectives shared by adult Knowledge Holders (see Chapter 7, Section 7.3). They highlighted several challenges for South Sudanese Australian youth and their families, particularly the limited parental engagement in school activities, such as parent-teacher interviews. To help bridge this gap, the CLOs undertook responsibilities like monitoring attendance, punctuality, nutrition, goal setting, and behaviour management. The leadership team at Riverwalk College attested to the positive impact of the CLOs' involvement, noting fewer complaints from parents about communication issues and perceived unequal treatment of their children by teachers. The Assistant Principal strongly suggested that all schools with multicultural student populations, especially those struggling with behavioural challenges, should consider employing CLOs.

While some student Knowledge Holders appreciated having a South Sudanese Australian mentor/CLO who understood their experiences, others expressed reservations. Concerns included privacy—particularly if CLOs know their parents personally—and the feeling that CLOs sometimes mirrored parental responses, limiting fresh perspectives. Schools can address these concerns by hiring CLOs from a range of cultural backgrounds and age groups.

Nearly 20 years ago, Cassity and Gow (2005) suggested liaising with the South Sudanese Australian community and using existing networks within this community as a culturally responsive way to address issues with the young people in school settings. (More recently, Miller et al. (2022) reported on the positive impact of employing bicultural staff to improve inclusive education practices for refugee-background students, although they acknowledged that there is currently limited implementation. The Victorian DE (2024f) has implemented the MEASP but there is no current data indicating how many MEAs are employed in Victoria and how successful this program is (see also Miller et al., 2022). However, based on this study's outcomes and relevant literature, it seems that the additional support and guidance needed for South Sudanese Australian students and their families are currently not being met, particularly in schools without MEAs/CLOs. This insight aligns with Macaulay (2023b), who recommended that a "wider implementation of MEAs, and broader eligibility requirements for funding to employ MEAs, may assist teachers in better understanding the intercultural challenges faced by some Australian Sudanese/South Sudanese youth" (p. 1338).

In addition to employing CLOs, the student Knowledge Holders stressed the importance of the presence of South Sudanese Australian teachers in schools. This finding aligns with existing studies reporting on the positive impact of teacher-student racial congruence on attendance (Gottfried et al., 2022), countering stereotypes (Bates & Glick, 2013), engagement, motivation, social skills (Rasheed et

al., 2020), and reducing excessive disciplinary actions (Shirrell et al., 2024). Furthermore, refugee-background teachers or those with immigrant experiences—particularly non-native English speakers—are more understanding of the challenges experienced by both students and their families and will therefore foster a more inclusive educational environment (Bloch & Hirsh, 2017; Özçürümez et al., 2023). Lastly, the CLOs suggested cultural awareness training for staff members as an important aspect of their role at school. A recent study by Parra López et al. (2024) reported on the positive impact of training programs aimed at developing teachers' critical racial consciousness and self-awareness, which contribute to positive and trusting teacher-student relationships, culturally inclusive classrooms, and an increase in feelings of safety and belonging for Black, Indigenous and students of colour. Moreover, Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programs play an important role in developing critical racial consciousness and should, therefore, incorporate a mandatory unit on CRE in education (Solórzano, 1998) (see Chapter 2, Section 2.4.4.4), asset-based, inclusive pedagogical frameworks such as FoK (Moll et al., 1992), FoI (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a) CCW (Yosso, 2005), and trauma-informed teaching strategies such as the BSEM (Berry Street, n.d.).

The third element contributing to a positive presence and visibility of the South Sudanese Australian community is inviting role models—such as athletes and professionals—to speak in schools, as suggested by the students at Western College. The presence of role models can be used to promote counter-narratives and foster asset-based perspectives that challenge deficit perspectives and stereotypical assumptions that perpetuate racism and discrimination (Baak, Miller et al., 2023; Flint & Jaggers, 2021). This recommendation exemplifies utilising CCW (Yosso, 2005), which can contribute to preventing and reducing discrimination and racism within school settings (Acevedo & Solórzano, 2023) while also promoting the development of positive racial and ethnic identities (Yared et al., 2023). It is essential to place the accountability and responsibility for addressing discrimination and racism on educational stakeholders, as schools are the most common sites where marginalised students encounter these issues from their peers, teachers and institutional systems (Baak, 2019; Benier et al., 2018; Yared et al., 2023). In addition to addressing racism and discrimination, inviting community role models can positively contribute to identity development and aspirational capital (Yosso, 2005). This aligns with Saint's observation: "We need that role model." The importance of role models for South Sudanese Australian young people, particularly regarding positive behaviour, was also mentioned in a study by Macaulay and Deppeler (2022). They noted that in the South Sudanese culture, being a role model for younger generations is a cultural expectation, especially when one is considered to have reached adulthood. Therefore, this recommendation presents an opportunity for schools to implement culturally responsive strategies that align with community customs and values. This can be

particularly useful when dealing with challenging behaviour, low engagement and school dropout. Members of the South Sudanese Australian community are encouraged to actively seek opportunities to liaise with schools to promote positive behaviours for the younger generation through role models.

The fourth element related to the theme of presence and visibility of the South Sudanese Australian community pertains to parental education engagement and involvement, particularly in areas such as student advocacy, parent-teacher interviews, exam subject selection, and ensuring teacher accountability. The community members noted that parental engagement remains limited, adversely impacting, among other things, students' educational outcomes. The CLOs from Riverwalk College reported similar observations. In addition to highlighting the limited communication between the school and the parents, the CLOs noted that teachers often made assumptions about the willingness of parents to engage with the school. The main contributing factors to limited involvement were different expectations regarding the role of teachers, language barriers, limited understanding of the school system, including curriculum and subject knowledge, and practical aspects such as booking parent-teacher interviews. These findings align with previously conducted research (see, for example, Cranston et al., 2021; Hatoss et al., 2012; Hwa-Froelich & Westby, 2003; VFST, 2015a, 2015b).

Mabor, one of the adult Knowledge Holders, emphasised that schools need to recognise that many South Sudanese parents have a refugee background and limited literacy and numeracy skills, which impacts their ability to support their children at home. This inability to support their children can result in limited parental involvement and a general sense of insecurity when interacting with schools, even among those parents who have been in Australia for nearly two decades. Furthermore, trauma-related challenges such as PTSD and depression, as noted by Flanagan et al. (2020) and Hodes and Hussain (2020), can negatively impact parenting, further hindering parental engagement with schools. Despite these barriers, many parents have high educational aspirations for their children and desire to be involved in their education (Cureton, 2020; Isik-Ercan, 2012; Molla, 2024). Therefore, schools are encouraged to view parents as co-educators (VFST, 2015a, 2015b) and adopt and implement holistic whole-school approaches that consider the unique needs of families of former refugee backgrounds (see, for example, Arnot & Pinson, 2005; Baak, McDonald et al., 2023; S. Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). CLOs are instrumental in facilitating these holistic approaches.

Lastly, the adult Knowledge Holders stressed the importance of parents and caregivers themselves taking ownership in improving their presence and visibility within schools (see Chapter 8, Section 8.2.3). Mabor stated, "We, as a community, we've got to do something for ourselves." An important

starting point, as suggested by the adult Knowledge Holders, is raising awareness within the community about the negative consequences of non-engagement on children's academic and social development and the potentially long-lasting impacts.

In conclusion, the need for a positive presence and visibility of the South Sudanese Australian community in schools is a key recommendation in this study. It directly addresses the third research sub-question concerning the changes needed to improve educational experiences and outcomes for South Sudanese Australian students. Enhancing the community's presence and visibility are crucial to improving communication between schools and parents, increasing cultural understanding and awareness, enhancing parental engagement, reducing deficit perspectives, preventing and reducing issues with student behaviour, increasing attendance, and preventing and reducing school dropout, all of which benefit schools, the South Sudanese Australian community, particularly its young people, and the wider Australian community.

9.2.4 Navigating and Balancing Cultural Expectations and Gender Norms: "The Only Freedom we Have is School, our Work, get Married, get Kids"

The fourth key theme builds on the invisible FoI (Esteban-Guitart, 2023c), which predominantly revolved around the roles and responsibilities of girls at home, a recurrent topic at both schools. As noted in Chapter 9, Section 7.3.1.9, analysis of this invisible FoI and the resistance against it revealed the need for further explorations. Furthermore, the deductive analysis revealed several expressions of dark/existential FoI (see Chapter 9, Section 9.2.1.7) centred around 'expectations' and 'gender norms'. Similar to invisible FoI, additional explorations were required. Following an inductive analysis, the theme 'navigating and balancing cultural expectations and gender norms' was created.

As discussed earlier, home holds significant importance for the student Knowledge Holders. However, their homes and their places within the South Sudanese Australian community are also the settings where the majority of their 'difficult' lived experiences occur. In these contexts, young South Sudanese Australians often navigate a hybrid identity. While they ethnically identify as 'Sudo', their cultural identity is influenced by Australian norms and expectations (see Section 8.2.2). The responses from the students revealed that navigating these liminal spaces involves several tensions and struggles. They face the challenge of balancing cultural norms and expectations while developing their own sense of agency in how they want to navigate these liminal spaces. Some of these identified tensions and challenges have been presented in the narrative portraits of AD, Aduk and Saint (see Chapter 5). The female students at Riverwalk College expressed similar experiences, which confirmed that this

emerging theme is a vital aspect of the girls' developing identities and likely for other female students from diasporic communities.

A recent study by Macaulay (2021) revealed similar themes among South Sudanese Australian youth regarding gender norms and expectations from parents and the community, all of which impact their transitions to adulthood. For instance, the pressure to "act in a certain way" in order not to get judged by community members, as noted by Saint, aligned with the experience of a female participant in Macaulay's (2021) study who stated, "I get judged a lot" (p. 143). Abul's contrasting experiences of being expected to conform to "being a Sudo" at home versus feeling free outside the home because "no one's going to judge you," illustrated the tensions between cultural expectations, ethnic identity and hybrid identity. These tensions could contribute to a disconnection whereby the young people encounter more confusion regarding their developing ethnic identity. Potentially, this creates further tensions and pushes the young people away from home and the South Sudanese Australian community.

The experiences of female students regarding gendered roles at home and the expectations placed on them were frequently discussed at both schools. Many were quite vocal about their frustrations, particularly when they compared their situations to those of their brothers, who were rarely expected to help with household chores or babysitting and enjoyed more freedom to socialise with friends. One female student, Chanel, expressed her frustration, as evident in this quote provided earlier, stating, "I actually wish I was a boy." Chanel's comment suggested a negative perspective on her gender identity (Butler, 1990), as she perceived being a boy as a more desirable option due to the reduced expectations and norms placed on boys. Her recognition of the inequity in gender norms and the expected gender performativity (Butler, 1988, 1990) can be interpreted as an act of resistance and expressions of resistant capital (Yosso, 2005) (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.7). AD also expressed resistant capital when stating how she considers it unfair that mothers go out while putting their daughters in charge of the younger siblings, stating, "It shouldn't be my job to look after your kids!"

While some students indicated that their mothers or grandmothers adhered to traditional cultural norms,[65] others noted that in their families, both girls and boys shared household responsibilities—an adjustment influenced by life in Australia. The female students explained that the gendered roles stemmed from the division of labour in South Sudan. However, in the Australian context, the roles for boys have become less defined. This shift creates an imbalance in families where these traditional

[65] For instance, Aker noted that her mother "thinks the cultural way […] she's, like, she has that mindset, like, I don't know how to explain it. Like, she's fresh." The notion of being 'fresh' refers to being new in the country and comes from the expression 'fresh off the boat'.

roles persist, with girls continuing to bear the bulk of household chores while boys have no equivalent duties. Several female students described this as particularly challenging and, for some, it has impacted their mental health and gender identity. Similar findings have been highlighted in studies by Hatoss et al. (2012), Pittaway et al. (2023) and Poppitt and Frey (2007), with Macaulay (2021) commenting on how girls take on (or are forced to) the identity of a parent or mother. The female students noted that in the absence of a girl, the eldest boy is placed in charge of the responsibilities at home, which was also evident in studies by Hove (2019) and Pittaway et al. (2023).

Despite the significant maturity required for these duties at home, the female students often faced restrictions on socialising with friends, usually based on assumptions of immaturity and being irresponsible and, therefore, being at risk of becoming pregnant. These conflicting expectations add another layer of complexity to the pressures faced by South Sudanese Australian girls. McMichael et al.'s (2010) study involving resettled former refugees in Australia also noted this contrast between expected maturity at home while having restrictions imposed on girls' social lives. However, there is a paucity of studies exploring this topic and further research is required.

The expectations regarding anticipated marriage and its centrality in the upbringing of girls were a recurrent topic in the focus group meetings at Western College. The female students expressed their frustrations and resistant capital against these expectations, which they considered oppressive and restrictive. Some female students at Riverwalk College shared their experiences and knowledge of arranged marriages, with some girls talking of family members in South Sudan arranging weddings for cousins. Aluat shared, "Someone from Africa called my mom and said that they should bring me there to get married."[66] Similarly, Abuk mentioned that "Sometimes they even send you back home to marry, and you stay there for a few years and come back, and you're married, and you're pregnant, and you already have a two-year-old child." While Aluat noted that her mother would not give in to the family's pressure to send her to South Sudan for marriage, which gave her some assurance, the experience seemed to have impacted her and could potentially create anxiety and tensions between her and her parents. The cultural custom of arranged marriage and the tensions this can create between girls and their parents was also reported by McMichael et al. (2010) in a longitudinal study with refugee-background young people. The female students noted that pursuing tertiary education seemed to delay or prevent arranged marriages before they turned 18, which, they stated, encouraged them to continue their studies (aspirational capital). However, Aluat noted that parents

[66] An important cultural custom in South Sudan is the bride price (Deng, 2021), which is under increasing scrutiny among South Sudanese, including those living in the diaspora. One of the adult Knowledge Holders, JD, stated that many young South Sudanese consider the bride price custom not relevant in the Australian context.

are often less concerned with their daughters pursuing tertiary education, stating, “They [parents] care about the guy that you're marrying [...] They don't care about your actual dream.” Prioritising a future partner over education could potentially impact the female students’ educational engagement and academic outcomes. Parental educational support plays a vital role in young people’s academic achievements and cognitive development (see, e.g., Boonk et al., 2018; Jung & Zhang, 2016). More research with the South Sudanese Australian community is required to examine this element, particularly regarding the impact on young females.

The centrality of marriage in the upbringing of girls, as well as the expectation for them to be in charge of household duties, was confirmed by the CLOs. I intentionally asked the CLOs about this topic; not to diminish the students’ lived experiences but to gain additional perspectives and seek their recommendations on this matter. The CLOs stated that further education for girls and women is not valued or supported by all community members, particularly men. They also confirmed that the girls take on the majority of the household chores, which can have a detrimental effect on their academic performance and school attendance. However, contrary to the students’ reports, the CLOs believed that arranged marriages do not occur within Australia. They mentioned that, at times, South Sudanese Australian men return to South Sudan to marry a girl, often younger than 18 years old who is, sometimes, the second or third wife in line with the culturally accepted custom of polygamy (Madut, 2020). The prioritisation of marriage over education for young girls reinforces traditional gender roles and perpetuates a cycle where women are disadvantaged in terms of formal education, economic independence and gender equality. This can severely impact female well-being (Madut, 2020). It is important to note that some students highlighted instances where family members actively opposed early and arranged marriages. These expressions of resistance—both visual and verbal—by family members had a positive impact on the young women’s sense of agency, gender identity, and self-esteem (see, for example, Saint’s narrative portrait in Chapter 5, Section 5.4).

Some female students in this study expressed feelings of anxiety and frustration due to the persistent expectation to marry and raise children, which is often perceived as an outward indicator of being well-raised. For some, the uncertainty around whether their family was arranging a marriage without their knowledge added to their distress. The students’ responses indicated that their potential lack of agency in ‘planning’ these marriages can severely impact mental health. Also, tensions can emerge when young women are exposed to broader societal messages in Australia that encourage them to pursue further studies and careers, while at home they are raised with expectations centred on household management and family responsibilities. These contrasting expectations create confusion and conflict, complicating the navigation of their developing identity, and could result in defiant

behaviour, including school dropout and teenage pregnancy. There is currently limited literature regarding the impact of the abovementioned cultural practice on South Sudanese Australian girls.

The various cultural and gendered norms and expectations significantly impact the participating students' identity development, mental health, feelings of self-worth and sense of purpose. This often reduces their agency and is particularly concerning because some of the students indicated that they are unable to communicate with their mothers (or parents/caregivers) about how they feel in terms of the expectations and consequent pressures placed on them. This further exacerbates the negative impact on their identity development, and could lead to identity confusion (Erikson, 1968; Schwartz et al., 2009). Similar to my findings, Mwanri et al. (2018) reported that expectations regarding obeying parents, doing household duties, and adhering to cultural norms and values are key contributors to intergenerational conflicts, which impact the mental health of African-background young people.

Expectations and norms play a crucial role in the identity development of South Sudanese Australian young people. As previously discussed, the existing sub-categories of invisible FoI and dark/existential FoI could not fully capture the findings related to the participants' navigating and balancing of cultural expectations and gender norms. Therefore, I propose an additional FoI sub-category: **normative and expectational FoI**. This new sub-category is defined as the internalised and externally imposed norms and expectations that contribute to identity formation, self-definition, self-expression and self-understanding. These norms and expectations can refer to cultural traditions, gender roles, and social behaviours that are deemed acceptable or desirable within a specific community.

This suggested sub-category incorporates the tensions and pressures South Sudanese Australian young people faced when navigating between different cultural expectations and norms while developing hybrid identities that align with both the South Sudanese and Australian cultural contexts. These norms and expectations are not static but evolve and can be transformed through negotiation and resistance (discussed in the next section). This highlights that identity formation is a dynamic process shaped by the navigation of societal, cultural and gendered norms and expectations. Overall, this new sub-category underscores the importance of understanding how societal norms and expectations intersect and influence identity development, particularly for young people from refugee or diaspora backgrounds who may experience conflicting pressures from various sources and in different contexts.

9.2.5 Resistance and Reframing in Response to Challenges: "I Wanna Show Them That Nothing is Stopping us; we Don't Have Limits"

The final key theme identified from both the deductive and inductive analysis and builds upon the previous themes, particularly the dark/existential FoI, hybrid identity, and the proposed additional sub-category of normative and expectational FoI. The deductive analysis explored the gathered knowledge for expressions of capital, including resistant capital (Yosso, 2005) (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.7). According to Yosso (2005), resistant capital is not necessarily displayed by oppositional behaviour but is rather part of becoming critically conscious, or what Freire (1970/2017) refers to as '*conscientização*', or critical consciousness, which "requires the ability to reflect and critique one's thoughts, actions, and motivations" (Darder, 2017, p. 141).

Chapter 6, Section 6.3.7 presented the various expressions of resistance capital, with four specifically related to girls and their roles and gendered positioning at home. This resistance could be interpreted as being part of the sub-category of agency and imagination as proposed by Hedges (2021) or as agency in the context of addressing and challenging epistemic injustices (Alvarez et al., 2023). While the expressions of resistant capital indicated that the young people developed a critical consciousness (Freire 1970/2017) that enabled them to reflect on and critique certain cultural and gendered expectations and 'dark' experiences, they lacked the ability to enact meaningful changes that would activate their agency. For instance, communication between children and their parents/caregivers is often limited, with open expressions of disapproval of rules and expectations considered disrespectful according to the students. Consequently, the students' expressions of resistance are beyond the notion of agency due to the South Sudanese cultural and social contexts, constraints and expectations in which the young people are raised. As a result, their resistance may take the form of internal reflections or small acts of defiance, but the constraints on using their agency highlight the complexities of navigating their identity and identity development in their current contexts.

Based on the expressions of resistant capital and the additional contexts provided by the students, it was evident that resistance played a critical role in their self-definition, self-expression and self-understanding (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a). As mentioned above, resistance does not always manifest as defiance or dissent. For the student Knowledge Holders, resistance was often connected to envisioning and aspiring to a different future, one in which they would possess the agency to pursue certain goals and selectively adhere to cultural norms and expectations they deemed necessary or relevant. For instance, AD expressed different ideas about parenting and which cultural norms and expectations she would implement, stating, "That's what I want to change; I want my kids to know

that they don't have to do things because I did it." This form of imaginative resistance enabled her to reframe her current experiences and, in a way, exert control over her future.

Linked to this imaginative resistance are expressions of resistance aimed at proving others wrong, which also include future aspirations. For example, as mentioned in AD's narrative, in response to previous poor student behaviour that aligned with stereotypical assumptions about South Sudanese Australian adolescents' capabilities, she stated, "Just because a group couldn't do it last year doesn't mean that we can't. So, I wanna show them that nothing is stopping us; we don't have limits." This future-oriented imagining aligns with Zipin et al. (2020), who explored the connection between identity development and emerging future identities. While Zipin et al. (2020) identified links between 'dark' lived experiences and pessimistic future aspirations, AD's statement reflected an optimistic aspiration tied to her emerging future identity as being strong and unstoppable.

At times, the expressions of resistance were shared to highlight injustice and inequity, while acknowledging that in the current context, not much could be changed. For instance, as mentioned in Chapter 5, AD expressed resistance against being criminalised and racially profiled by stating, "You can try to put your whole heart and chest out, but nothing will ever change." This expression of resistance can be considered what Solórzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) referred to as "transformational resistance," which includes "both a critique of oppression and a desire for social justice" (p. 319). In order to recognise oppression and injustice, critical consciousness is required (Freire, 1970/2017; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001).

The various expressions of resistance (see Appendix M) against gendered norms and expectations are also examples of transformational resistance. Although the females acknowledged the cultural constraints that would limit changes to certain gendered norms and expectations, their responses revealed both a critique and a longing for social justice that would change their current situations. For instance, Saint questioned her parents' reasoning when they told her to "stop relying on the kids" after she asked for assistance with household duties. Saint pointed out the inconsistency in her parents' response, as they relied on her to "look after the whole house." Saint expressed a longing for justice and imagined a future when she would leave "with no, no hesitation" because she "just had enough." These expressions of transformational resistance indicated a certain hope that in her imagined future, Saint would have agency and control, thereby reframing her current circumstances. Mwanri et al. (2018) also reported on African-background young people in Australia commenting on

the desire to move out of the parents' home or wanting to spend time at their friends' houses to avoid the pressure placed on them to do many household chores.

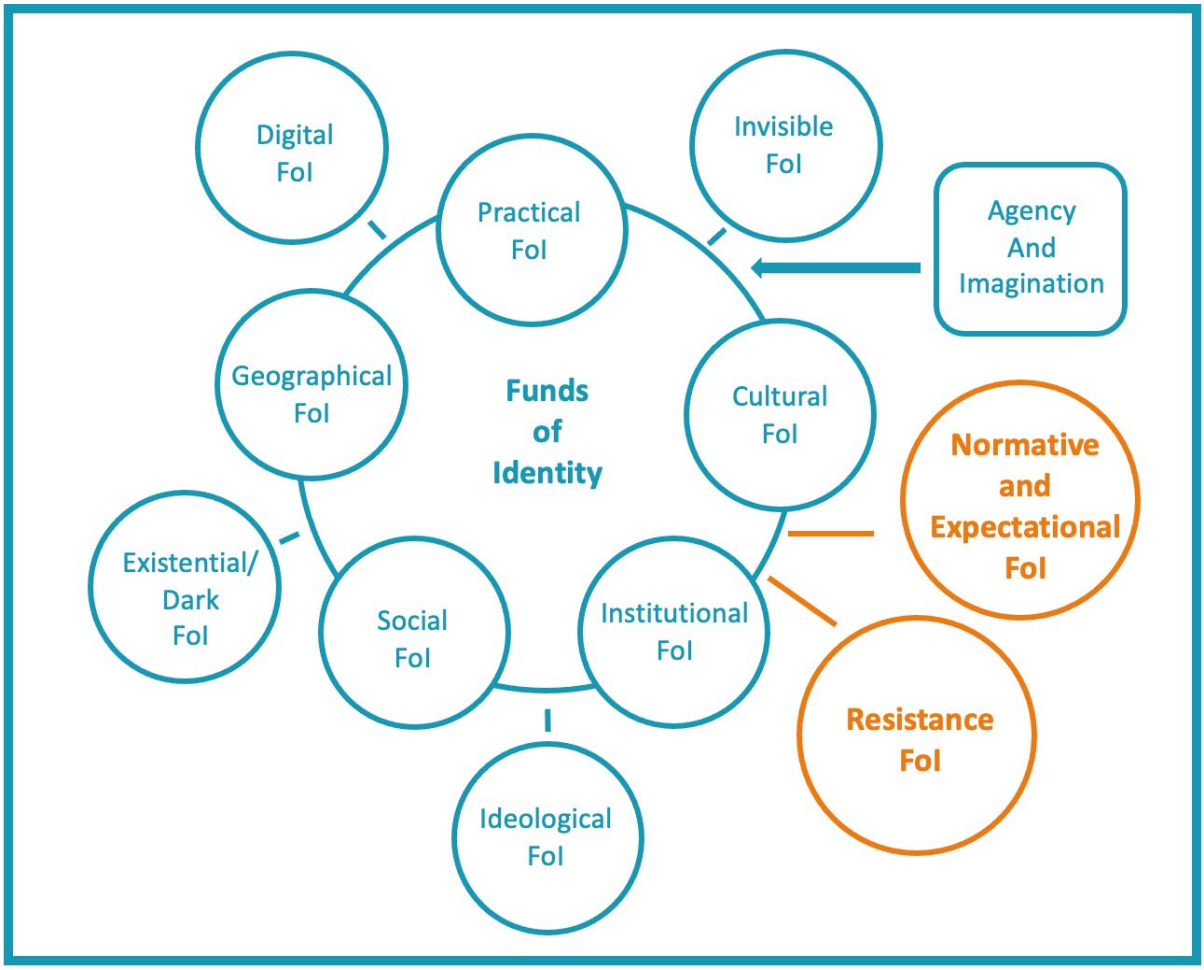
Because of the centrality of resistance capital in the expressed and exhibited CCW, I propose an additional FoI sub-category: **resistant FoI**, which refers to a critical consciousness that challenges and critiques cultural norms, gender roles, stereotypical representations and deficit perspectives. Within the context of this study, resistant FoI might not manifest as actual acts of resistance due to the students' limited agency and social and cultural constraints. However, this new sub-category aligns with the transformative purpose and notions of equity and justice that are central to the FoI framework (Alvarez et al., 2023; Esteban-Guitart, 2021, 2023a). Lastly, the notion of resistance is an important element of the critical theory paradigm, which underpins this study, and is characterised by resistance against structures of power (Wandel, 2001) (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.2.2).

9.2.6 Visual Overview of the Suggested Additions to the Funds of Identity Framework

Based on the proposed addition of two sub-categories to the FoI framework (normative and expectational FoI and resistance FoI), an amended overview was created (see Figure 50). This overview incorporates the five original sub-categories as provided by Esteban-Guitart (2012), previously shown in Figure 1, along with the proposed additional sub-categories of digital FoI (Poole, 2017a), invisible FoI (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a, 2023c), ideological FoI (Poole, 2017b), existential/dark FoI (Charteris et al., 2018; Poole, 2017b), the notions of agency and imagination (Hedges, 2021), and the two new proposed sub-categories brought forth in this research (in orange).

Figure 50

Visual Overview of an Interpretation of the Funds of Identity Framework with Suggested Additional Sub-Categories



In addressing the questions this research aimed to answer, I have visually represented the key findings in Figure 51 This overview illustrates the various FoI that South Sudanese Australian young people use for self-definition, self-expression and self-understanding (yellow rectangles). Dark/existential FoI was identified as the most prevalent FoI sub-category (orange rectangle), while two additional FoI sub-categories were proposed (teal rectangles). These newly suggested sub-categories are supported by contributing factors (teal squares/rectangles) that explain the tensions and challenges faced by young people and underscore the importance of including these categories within the existing FoI framework.

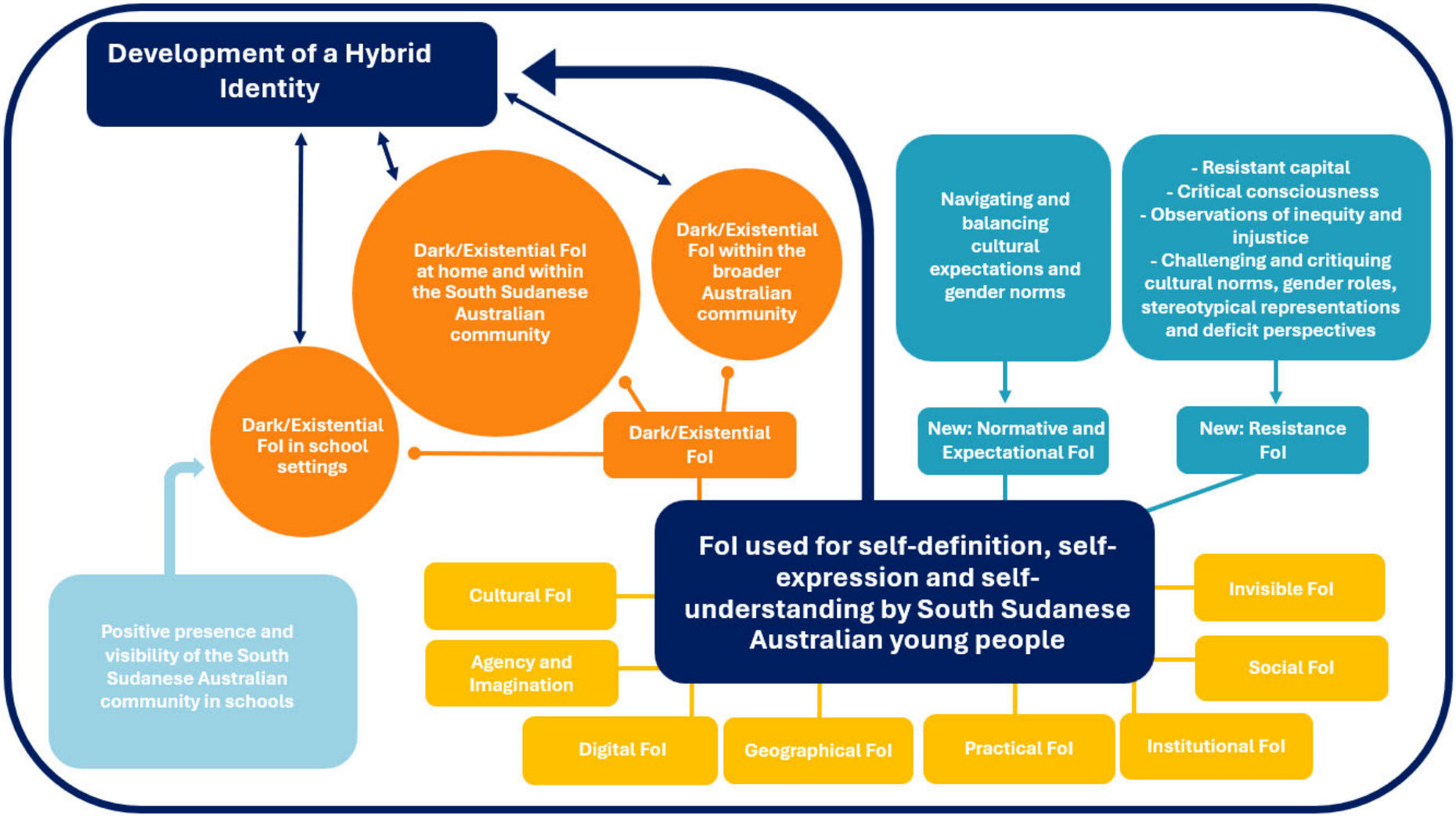
The orange spheres represent the three settings in which the young people experience lived experiences that are considered dark/existential FoI, with the home and the South Sudanese Australian community being the most significant setting (the largest sphere). The positive presence

and visibility of the South Sudanese Australian community in schools can help mitigate experiences of dark/existential FoI in educational settings, contributing to overall improvements in engagement and academic outcomes. The hybrid identity of South Sudanese Australian young people is shaped and influenced by the various FoI sub-categories (large blue arrow). Furthermore, there are two-way interactions between the development of this hybrid identity and the different settings in which the dark/existential FoI occur (two-sided arrows). These interactions reflect the ongoing tensions experienced in these environments and the coping mechanisms that lead to the development of a hybrid identity.

The visual overview is not intended to be a rigid interpretation of the findings of this research; identity development is a complex and dynamic process and constantly evolves depending on the resources used for self-definition, self-expression and self-understanding (Esteban-Guitart, 2021). This visual overview does, however, inform the recommendations outlined in Section 10.3 of the next chapter.

Figure 51

Visual Overview of the Key Findings of This Research That Explore the Identity Development of South Sudanese Australian Adolescents



9.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the five themes that were identified as the key significant findings of this research, providing further insights into the complex and multifaceted experiences of South Sudanese Australian young people. These themes highlighted the importance of identity formation, the challenges of navigating the multiple dark/existential FoI, and the strategies used to negotiate their places at home, within the South Sudanese Australian community, and in the broader Australian community. The findings underscore the tensions experienced by the young people as they navigate the cultural expectations and gendered norms while dealing with the impact of these experiences on their mental health. Expressions of resistance were observed as a coping mechanism, and the young people articulated future aspirations and a desire for transformation to address perceived injustices and inequities. In general, the findings align with existing studies that explored the identity and identity development of South Sudanese Australian young people, underscoring the need for both the South Sudanese Australian community and educational stakeholders to urgently address the persistent and, at times, increasing issues faced by these young people, including mental health issues, racism and discrimination, and social exclusion.

The next chapter concludes this thesis and presents the contributions to knowledge and practice, as well as recommendations, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

10.1 Introduction

This research explored the FoI of South Sudanese Australian young people living and schooling in the western suburbs of Melbourne, Australia. Understanding how these young people navigate their identity development is crucial, as they balance the cultural expectations of their families while trying to 'fit in' to the broader Australian society. Within educational contexts, South Sudanese Australian young people are frequently exposed to stereotypical deficit perspectives regarding their academic capabilities, as well as bullying, racism, and discrimination. They also often experience limited teacher support, a lack of understanding of South Sudanese cultural norms, and disproportionate disciplinary actions—all of which negatively affect their academic performance and engagement, school retention, and feelings of belonging (Abur, 2018; Baak, 2019; Pittaway & Dantas, 2021; Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission, 2008). Ongoing negative media portrayals that racially profile and criminalise these young people further exacerbate these issues, leading to an increase in mental health issues, as well as tensions and conflicts within their families. While certain initiatives, such as the Victorian DE's MEASP (DE, 2024f; [VFST], 2021), have been introduced, persistent issues affecting the South Sudanese Australian community have continued since the mid-2000s, with little evidence of any improvements (see, for example, Cassity & Gow, 2005; Harris & Nyuon, 2010). Indeed, current research and personal communications with members of the South Sudanese Australian community, including Dr Abur and participants interviewed for this research, indicate that the community is grappling with significant issues affecting their youth (see, for example, Gitau et al., 2023; Kaphle et al., 2024; Kasherwa et al., 2024; Macaulay, 2023; Mwanri et al., 2018).

In response to these issues, this research aimed to explore the lived experiences and FoI of South Sudanese Australian adolescents and utilise these experiences to provide counter-narratives that focus on the adolescents' assets to improve their educational outcomes. Secondly, this research sought to provide recommendations for educational stakeholders and advocate for culturally responsive structures and processes to transform the learning environments and outcomes and improve equity, inclusion and social justice for South Sudanese Australian adolescents.

Lastly, this research aimed to gain insights from South Sudanese Australian community members, school leaders and CLOs regarding their experiences with the educational system and understanding of the issues experienced by young people and their families.

While several studies have explored the identity and identity development of South Sudanese Australian young people (see, for example, Mude & Mwanri, 2020; Vaughan et al., 2021, 2023; S. Williams, 2022), none have explicitly applied the FoI framework. Furthermore, limited research has focused on South Sudanese Australians born in Australia, the so-called 'second-generation'. Although this research did not aim to directly compare the FoI and lived experiences of those born overseas with those born in Australia, the diversity of birthplaces among the student Knowledge Holders allowed for meaningful explorations, particularly concerning the significance of South Sudan in their identity formation. To my knowledge, no existing Australian-based studies have specifically explored differences in identity and identity development based on birthplace among young South Sudanese Australians.

The following sections present the key findings in relation to the research aims, objectives, and questions, as well as the implications for theory and practice and recommendations. Following this are the research's limitations and proposed opportunities for future research. This chapter and thesis conclude with a self-reflection on the transformative aspect of this research.

10.2 Main Findings and Implications for Practice and Theory

This research contributes to a two-decade-long body of research focused on the lived experiences of South Sudanese Australian community members. Much of this research arises from a deep concern regarding the significant challenges and injustices faced by this community. Yet, despite sustained scholarly efforts, substantial change remains elusive, with many challenges persisting or even intensifying for the 'second-generation' South Sudanese Australians. Although the context has somewhat shifted with this new generation (e.g., the young people did not have first-hand lived experiences of forced migration and resettlement)[67], systemic issues endure, underscoring the need for meaningful change. While I do not claim that this research will serve as a circuit-breaker, I do believe the insights shared by community members—both adults and youth—offer valuable perspectives for framing fresh dialogues between educational stakeholders and the community and within the community itself, particularly between young people and their parents or caregivers.

The significance of this research lies in its focus on addressing the disconnect experienced by young people within both the South Sudanese Australian community and the broader Australian community. Both adults and young people spoke candidly about this disconnect. As noted in Chapter 5, for

[67] It is important to consider the possibility of ITT despite not having first-hand lived experiences of forced migration and resettlement. Gitau et al. (2023) explored ITT and identity and stated, "Identity is a major casualty of trauma" (p. 12), meaning that through ITT, the identities of those without first-hand experiences of the effects of war can still be impacted.

instance, adult Knowledge Holder Mabor commented that the young people often say, “We don’t know how to talk to our parents. We don’t know how to talk to this generation; they don’t understand our language.” Young people expressed frustrations regarding not feeling loved and supported, being listened to, or trusted to make the right decisions regarding friendships and socialising. They feel these tensions, not only within their families but also in places like school, where conflicting expectations about who they are and aspire to be often clash. These tensions have a significant impact the young people’s identity development and mental health.

A key finding in this research pertains to the complex process of developing a hybrid identity in response to the South Sudanese Australian young people navigating the liminal spaces between the norms and values of the South Sudanese culture and the wider Australian society. Three primary groups of factors that occur in different settings contribute to these constructed hybrid identities. First, significant challenges exist within the home and South Sudanese Australian community, which can be understood as dark/existential FoI. These challenges include pressures to uphold cultural norms and values, speak the mother tongue, maintain cultural knowledge, and embody an ‘authentic’ South Sudanese identity rather than a ‘whitewashed’ version. These challenges may lead to “intra-ethnic othering” within the South Sudanese Australian community, potentially resulting in the development of a negative sub-ethnic identity (Pyke, 2010, p. 558) or a performative ethnic identity (Nguyen, 2015). Furthermore, these challenges can result in resistance to specific cultural norms and values, such as gendered roles, familial responsibilities, and arranged marriages.

The second group of factors influencing the development of hybrid identities relates to the dark/existential FoI experienced within the broader Australian society, with school being a particularly significant setting. Within these settings, the young people encounter racial profiling, criminalisation, Othering, racism, discrimination, and stereotypical portraits or assumptions regarding being a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ South Sudanese Australian. The contingent nature of their ‘Australian’ identity is also evident, as young people are often recognised and valued solely for their athletic achievements, while their academic capabilities are overshadowed by deficit perspectives. A general lack of teacher support and low academic expectations position the young people as ‘different’ and ‘lacking,’ which further reinforces their sense of marginalisation within the educational system.

Despite these dark/existential FoI that contribute to the complex process of hybrid identity formation, the young people do draw deeply from their connection to South Sudan and its cultural heritage, which are considered their geographical, practical and cultural FoI. They highly value the transmission

of cultural knowledge and skills from family and community members (CCW), which expresses their sense of belonging. Furthermore, most young people consider themselves 'Sudo', South Sudanese or South Sudanese Australian, thereby exercising agency in choosing which aspects of their FoI they use for self-definition, self-expression, and self-understanding (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a). In doing so, the young people establish a 'third space' (Bhabha, 1994) of self-definition that exists between the two oftentimes conflicting spaces. In this third space, they are neither strictly 'South Sudanese' nor exclusively 'Australian' but instead craft unique hybrid identities through reimagining and negotiating, often with elements of resistance. Ultimately, the hybrid identities are expressions of resilience and self-empowerment.

Another significant contribution of this research is its reframing of mental health issues among young South Sudanese Australians. The findings suggest that rather than primarily reflecting trauma passed down through intergenerational transmission, many mental health challenges faced by the young people stem from current systemic pressures, social marginalisation, and a sense of disconnect both within the South Sudanese Australian community and the broader Australian society. This reframing is crucial for recognising their mental health concerns as valid and unique to their lived experiences in Australia rather than viewing them solely as resulting from their families' forced migration histories. However, when considering the community as a whole, both adults and young people, it is evident that trauma still plays a role, particularly in its potential impact on parenting, family dynamics and educational engagement. Recognising this layered complexity is essential for understanding how young people navigate these intersecting challenges, which shape both their identity development and mental health in ways that are distinctive to their experiences in Australia.

In addition to contributing to knowledge, this research contributes to theory through the introduction of two additional sub-categories within the FoI framework. The first proposed sub-category is normative and expectational FoI. Unlike the established categories of invisible FoI (Esteban-Guitart, 2023c), dark FoI (Charteris et al., 2018), and existential FoI (Poole & Huang, 2018), this new sub-category more realistically captures the complex dynamics involved in navigating cultural expectations and gender norms and the impact on identity development. This new sub-category is described as the internalised and externally imposed norms and expectations that contribute to identity formation, self-definition, self-expression and self-understanding. Within the context of this research, these norms and expectations can refer to cultural traditions, gender roles, and social behaviours that are deemed acceptable or desirable within the South Sudanese Australian community. This additional sub-category highlights the importance of understanding how these often conflicting and intersecting

norms and expectations impact identity development. This understanding is particularly relevant within Australia's multicultural society.

The second suggested additional sub-category in this research builds on Yosso's (2005) notion of resistant capital. The findings of this research recognise the crucial role of resistant capital, particularly for South Sudanese Australian young women. While examples of resistant capital can be considered expressions of agency and imagination (Hedges, 2021), many young people, particularly young women, often find their agency constrained by cultural and social expectations. Furthermore, this research emphasised the importance of resistance in identity development, self-expression and self-understanding; therefore, the additional sub-category of resistant FoI is proposed. This resistance FoI is not necessarily expressed as oppositional behaviour but rather as expressions that indicate a critical consciousness (*conscientização*) (Freire 1970/2017) that enabled the young people to reflect on and critique certain cultural and gendered expectations and 'dark' experiences. Although they frequently lacked the ability to enact meaningful changes, they articulated their resistance in the context of envisioning and aspiring to a different future, one in which they would possess the agency to pursue specific goals and selectively adhere to cultural norms and expectations they deem necessary or relevant within Australian contexts.

In conclusion, this research underscores the significance of employing the FoI framework within a unique research context of South Sudanese Australian young people living and schooling in Melbourne's western suburbs. By utilising the FoI framework, this research has provided valuable insights into the complex and oftentimes confronting factors that contribute to the identity development of these young people. The proposed additions to the FoI framework are indicative of these complexities and can be used to facilitate meaningful dialogues, particularly within the home environment, the South Sudanese Australian community, and educational settings. Central to these conversations are the voices of the young people themselves, whose perspectives are essential in addressing and bridging the existing disconnects. It is encouraging to see that a recent initiative by the Victorian South Sudanese Australian Community Association, under new leadership, highlighted the importance of involving the young people in discussions and decision-making processes (Whiting, 2024). Lastly, alongside the proposed additional FoI sub-categories, this research also provides specific recommendations for action that directly respond to one of the research's sub-questions—What change would need to occur to improve educational outcomes, engagement, and participation of South Sudanese Australian adolescents? These recommendations are detailed in the subsequent section.

10.3 Synthesising the Recommendations

This section synthesises the recommendations suggested by the South Sudanese Australian students and community members, all of whom were explicitly asked to offer their insights in the interviews. The recommendations provided by the student Knowledge Holders have been presented in Section 6.5, while the recommendations from the six adult Knowledge Holders were presented as part of the 'calls to action' meta-theme in Section 8.2.3. In formulating the recommendations, I have drawn directly upon the language and perspectives shared by the Knowledge Holders.

The following recommendations aim to empower South Sudanese Australian students, particularly regarding their academic commitment, personal growth and development, community connections, and unique identities.

The South Sudanese Australian student Knowledge Holders encourage their peers to:

- Focus on their schoolwork.
- Attend school daily.
- Reach out to mentors and other support staff at school.
- Complete high school.
- Enrol in tertiary education.
- Seek professional help when they are struggling with their mental health.
- Make friendships that positively contribute to their identity development.
- Take pride in their appearance.
- Be confident about their cultural heritage, knowledge and skills.
- Communicate openly with their parents about school, future aspirations, and mental health.
- Learn from their parents and elders in the community.

Despite decades of research and recommendations, practical implementation has been impeded by financial constraints and policy priorities within the Australian educational system. This especially concerns the initiatives aimed at enhancing educational engagement and outcomes for South Sudanese Australian students, promoting parental educational involvement, and fostering culturally responsive liaisons with the South Sudanese Australian community. The outcomes of this research, however, clearly demonstrate that actively liaising with the South Sudanese Australian community—an approach recommended nearly twenty years ago by Cassity and Gow (2005)—is essential for making meaningful progress. Building on the insights provided by both the adult and student

Knowledge Holders, the following recommendations focus on establishing a strong partnership between schools, South Sudanese Australian students, their families, and CLOs.

The South Sudanese Australian Knowledge Holders encourage school leadership and teachers to:

- Employ South Sudanese Australian CLOs and ensure their roles and responsibilities match the needs of the students and their families.
- Employ South Sudanese Australian teachers.
- Provide cultural awareness training, led by South Sudanese Australian community members, including information regarding the impact and consequences of the parents'/caregivers' backgrounds, trauma and ITT.
- Liaise with the parents of the South Sudanese Australian community and value and acknowledge their knowledge and insights.
- Support and intervene with students and families early when issues arise.
- Apply an asset-based pedagogy when assessing the academic abilities of South Sudanese Australian students.
- Involve South Sudanese Australian parents in their children's educational journeys.
- Provide additional support to include South Sudanese Australian parents in the school community.
- Create a (culturally safe) space where the South Sudanese Australian students can meet.
- Invite South Sudanese Australian alumni who can serve as role models for current students, showcasing positive representations of success within the community.
- Incorporate Black history into the curriculum to broaden students' understanding of race, racism, and historical injustices, fostering empathy and awareness.

As indicated by the students, home plays a significant role in shaping their lived experiences and identity. Given the prevalence and intensity of dark/existential FoI emerging and occurring within the contexts of home and the broader South Sudanese Australian community, it is important for parents and community members to reflect on how they can best respond to these complex and evolving challenges. Building on the insights provided by the student Knowledge Holders, the following recommendations seek to encourage parents/caregivers and community members to actively engage with schools, consider the mental health needs of their children, balance roles and responsibilities at home, and be supportive of their educational and future aspirations.

The South Sudanese Australian student Knowledge Holders encourage their parents/caregivers to:

- Invest in their children's educational journeys.
- Invest in their children's emotional development.
- Hold realistic expectations regarding their children's academic capabilities.
- Improve communication with their children by listening to their concerns and valuing their insights and opinions.
- Consider their children's goals and aspirations when making decisions regarding tertiary education.
- Liaise with the school and maintain open lines of communication with teachers with teachers.
- Reach out to trusted community members or liaison officers when support is needed.
- Reflect on the impact of assigning domestic responsibilities to daughters and consider how these may negatively affect their mental wellbeing and ability to study.
- Connect with each other and utilise the community's cultural wealth, initiatives, and resources to address issues and concerns with the young people in the community.

10.4 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Studies

This section outlines the limitations of this research, many of which have been presented as critical considerations in earlier chapters, alongside reminders regarding the need for ongoing researcher reflexivity. Central to these considerations is the cultural appropriateness of concepts like identity, *perezhivanie*, trauma, and FoI—all of which emerged from western scholarship. While these concepts offer valuable perspectives and interpretations, their applications to South Sudanese Australian contexts inherently bring forth a disconnect, which is a limitation of this research. Similarly, this research was guided by the underpinnings of the transformative (Mertens, 2015) and critical theory (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) paradigms and the philosophies of arts-based research, including the portraiture methodology. While these paradigms and philosophies are ideologically oriented, transformative and committed to promoting social justice, equity and inclusion, they too are western-based concepts and approaches to conducting research and, therefore, considered limitations of this research. To address these limitations, I have framed my research within Freire's critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970/2017) and Tuhiwai Smith's (2021) guidelines on decolonising research. Despite these efforts to contextualise the research within decolonial and critically reflective frameworks, the use of western concepts and methodologies inevitably creates constraints and limitations.

Furthermore, as a researcher, I was positioned as an 'outsider'—one with the privilege and power to either “extend knowledge or perpetuate ignorance” (Tuhiwai Smith, 2021, p. 229). This position came with a profound responsibility, prompting me to seek ongoing feedback and guidance from South Sudanese Australian Scholar Dr William Abur. This collaboration was essential to ensure that my interpretations and presentations of the gathered knowledge did not reinforce stereotypical narratives or misrepresent the lived experiences of the South Sudanese Australian community members. Dr Abur provided written feedback on the completed outcomes chapters and affirmed that the voices of the students were represented in a manner that was respectful and culturally responsive to the South Sudanese Australian community.

Other limitations include the selection of the schools and sampling of the South Sudanese Australian students. The majority of the participating students are female and from the Dinka ethnic group, which impacts the diversity in gender and cultural perspectives. Furthermore, due to the sampling methods, which were guided by the ethical requirements set forth by the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, students who were experiencing personal issues or were involved with youth justice were not considered for the research. This sampling approach may limit the perspectives represented in this research, as several issues noted by the adult Knowledge Holders (see Chapter 5), such as school dropout, involvement with the police, and intergenerational conflicts, were not experienced by the participating student Knowledge Holders. Consequently, the lived experiences of the student Knowledge Holders cannot be generalised to all South Sudanese Australian young people, particularly those who are Dinka or female.

Several challenges required adjustments to the initial research proposal. Firstly, I decided against asking the students to keep a diary, considering that their unfamiliarity with me might make them hesitant to share their thoughts. I also anticipated that students might misplace the diaries, given that several students had already misplaced the consent forms, which delayed the start of the focus group meetings. Secondly, the planned interviews with the parents/caregivers of the participating students did not occur due to a lack of direct communication channels. The students also indicated difficulties in finding a suitable time for these interviews, mainly due to their parents’ long working hours and limited proficiency in English. Thirdly, completing the students’ art-based projects at Riverwalk College was extremely challenging because of time constraints, a lack of direct communication with the students (school-mediated) to finalise arrangements, frequent student absences, and limited staff availability to assist. holder

It is important to emphasise that the participating schools were under no obligation to assist me in conducting my research. I am truly grateful for the granted permission to work with the two schools and the assistance I received from both staff and students. Lastly, it is necessary to note the time pressure aspect of the research. COVID-19 delayed research activities with the schools and given that the 'data' collection had to be completed by the end of the approved academic school year, I had a relatively short time frame during which I could interact with the students.

Future studies could include schools from different suburbs in Melbourne, more male perspectives, and young people who, for example, are facing personal issues, are involved with youth justice, or are at risk of dropping out of school. Furthermore, studies could include more arts-based elements as well as a greater variety of self-selected projects. A longitudinal approach that includes larger cohorts of students across a wider age range could provide more insights into potential changes in FoI over time. After all, identity is not static; it evolves over time and is impacted by resources used for self-definition, self-expression, and self-understanding (Esteban-Guitart, 2021). Lastly, the initial research questions did not capture the complexities and nuances that emerged during the research. Therefore, future studies should consider formulating more specific research objectives and research questions that address, for example, differences in FoI between South Sudanese Australian young people born overseas and those born in Australia.

Despite the numerous limitations, this research has brought forth valuable insights that contribute to the existing body of knowledge involving South Sudanese Australian community members. Encouraging feedback from South Sudanese Australian community members underscored the necessity of my research. Their offers to assist in disseminating the research's outcomes to the South Sudanese Australian community upon the completion of my PhD confirms that the potential benefits for all involved stakeholders will not be diminished by the abovementioned limitations.

10.5 Concluding Statement: Self-Reflection and Transformations

I conclude this final section of my thesis with a self-reflection, which is well-suited to the praxis of transformative qualitative research. Four years ago, I embarked on my PhD journey with ambitious plans and commitments. I envisioned that through this research, I could contribute to the transformative positioning of South Sudanese Australian young people using asset-based and counter-narrative perspectives.

While I listened to the lived experiences of the community members, both the adults and the young people, I started to realise that my PhD journey was a shared journey; I learned as much about my

own perspectives and assumptions as I did about theirs. During the writing of the narrative portraits, my voice played a central role as the artist of the portraits (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Therefore, the portraits are also an expression of my identity because, as Hall (1997) stated, "Identity is always in part a narrative, always in part a kind of representation" (p. 49). In capturing the young women's stories, I found my narrative interwoven with theirs, reflecting my growing understanding and shifting perspectives as an educator, researcher and mother. Throughout this journey, I have come to appreciate that transformative research requires an openness to being changed by those we seek to understand. This self-reflective stance has enriched my research practice and reaffirmed my commitment to fostering equity and social justice in scholarship.

Even though this research did not explore FoI within classroom contexts and, therefore, I could not directly assess how teachers might utilise the students' FoI to contextualise learning, I was encouraged by Zhang-Yu et al. (2021), who suggested that FoI can serve as a powerful tool for fostering critical self-reflection among participants. Indeed, some students commented that participating in the focus group meetings and interviews provided an outlet for expressing themselves critically, something they felt they could not do at home. I hope that this experience has left an empowering impact on the students, helping them find strength in their voices and encouraging them to articulate their frustrations, resistance, aspirations, and dreams.

This notion of critical self-reflection resonates with Freire's (1970/2017) critical consciousness and is relevant not just for young people in their identity development but also for me as an educator, researcher and mother. As previously mentioned, Poole (2023) noted how FoI can lead to transformative perspectives amongst those using this framework. In a similar vein, Volman et al. (2023) stated that "FoI is not just a teaching method or a technique; it involves a critical consciousness and, for some teachers, a fundamental change of attitude towards students, teaching, and the curriculum" (p. 83). Although I always considered myself well-versed in inclusive teaching practices and regularly incorporated elements of CRT and critical pedagogy in my tertiary teaching to raise awareness among pre-service teachers, the lived experiences and, especially, the recommendations shared by the adult and student Knowledge Holders initiated a profound transformative process within me. This process deepened my understanding of the need for critical consciousness among teachers and the acknowledgement that teaching is indeed a "political and moral practice" (Giroux, 2017, p. xii).

Furthermore, this journey of critical consciousness extended beyond reflections on educational stakeholders and the urgent need for change to address the persistent issues faced by South Sudanese

Australian young people and their families within educational contexts. It also prompted me to critically reflect on certain deep-rooted issues mentioned by both adult and student Knowledge Holders. The heartfelt stories shared by some students left a profound impact on me and underscored the need for transformative shifts within the South Sudanese Australian community. While I recognise that, as an outsider, my call for such shifts could be perceived as potentially contrary to this research's decolonial stance, the explicit recommendations presented in Section 10.3 reflected the voices of the community—drawn from suggestions by adults and young people or synthesised through my analysis of their insights. Therefore, my urgent appeal to the South Sudanese Australian community to address these issues is, above all, an amplification of the community's own calls for meaningful change (see also the theme 'Calls for Action' in Chapter 8).

I wish to highlight one important recommendation shared by South Sudanese Australian community members: the call for positive presence and visibility in schools. This recommendation is currently being realised through Victoria University's Master of Applied Teaching program, an employment-based course delivered as part of the Victorian DE's 'Teach Today, Teach Tomorrow' initiative. This program commenced at the start of 2023 and acknowledges the urgent need for positive role models in educational settings; it aims to foster a culturally diverse teaching workforce across Victoria. For more than a year, I joined this program as a course coordinator and have had the privilege of witnessing how this initiative both recognises and utilises the unique knowledge and skills of South Sudanese Australian community members while positioning them as invaluable role models for young people in their community and other African-background communities.

My hope is that this research serves as a meaningful contribution to the critical and urgent dialogue surrounding the educational needs of South Sudanese Australian young people—an urgency made even more pressing by the persistent challenges many in this community continue to face after nearly two decades. The insights and outcomes from this research reaffirm my belief that research, when framed through critical and transformative lenses, not only informs but can actively contribute to building more equitable, inclusive, and culturally affirming spaces where all young people feel they belong. I look forward to contributing to the implementation of my research and working alongside the South Sudanese Australian community. I am confident that there is potential to create educational and other learning spaces where all students are acknowledged for their wealth of knowledge and skills and where they are supported to develop their identities, knowing that their diversity and uniqueness are celebrated and encouraged.

References

Abidogun, J. M. (2021). Women, gender, and knowledge production in Anglophone Africa and its diaspora. In O. Yacob-Haliso & T. Falola (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of African women's studies* (pp. 135-154). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-28099-4_67

Abromeit, J. (2011). *Max Horkheimer and the foundations of the Frankfurt School*. Cambridge University Press.

Abur, W. (2018). Systemic vilification and racism are affecting on the South Sudanese community in Australia. *International Journal of Scientific Research,* 7(11). 47-52. https://doi.org/1080671_266.pdf

Abur, W. (2019). *A new life with opportunities and challenges: The settlement experiences of South Sudanese-Australians*. Africa World Books.

Abur, W., & Mphande, C. H. (2020). Mental health and wellbeing of South Sudanese-Australians. *Journal of Asian and African Studies, 55*, 412–428. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909619880294

Abur, W., & Mugumbate, J. R. (2022). Experiences of Ubuntu and implications of African philosophy for social work in Australia. *Advances in Social Work and Welfare Education*, *23*(2), 21-37.

Abur, W., & Spaaij, R. (2016). Settlement and employment experiences of South Sudanese people from refugee background in Melbourne, Australia. *Australasian Review of African Studies, 37(*2), 107-18. https://doi.org/10.22160/22035184/aras-2016-37-2/107-128

Abushouk, A. I. (2006). Ideology versus pragmatism: The case of the Mahdist public treasury in the Sudan (1881-1898). *Die Welt Des Islam*, *46*(2), 148–167.

Acevedo, N., & Solórzano, D. G. (2023). An overview of community cultural wealth: Toward a protective factor against racism. *Urban Education*, *58*(7), 1470-1488. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085921101653

Adaku, A., Okello, J., Lowry, B., Kane, J. C., Alderman, S., Musisi, S., & Tol, W. A. (2016). Mental health and psychosocial support for South Sudanese refugees in northern Uganda: A needs and resource assessment. *Conflict and Health, 10*(18). https://doi.org/10.1186/s13031-016-0085-6

Alaak, Y. A. (2015). *Father of the Lost Boys*. Fremantle Press.

Alabi, A. (2005). *Telling our stories: Continuities and divergences in Black autobiographies.* Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403980946

Alim, H. S., & Paris, D. (2017). What is culturally sustaining pedagogy and why does it matter? In D. Paris & H. S. Alim (Eds.), *Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world* (pp. 1–21). Teachers College Press.

Alim, H. S., Paris, D., & Wong, C. P. (2020). Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A critical framework for centering communities. In N. S. Nasir, C. D. Lee, R. Pea & M. McKinney de Royston (Eds.), *Handbook of the cultural foundations of learning* (pp. 261-276). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203774977

Alvarez, A., Teeters, L. P., Penuel, W. R., & Esteban-Guitart, M. (2023). Considerations to engage a funds of identity approach as a vehicle toward epistemic justice in educational settings. *Learning, Culture and Social Interaction, 40*(100718). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lcsi.2023.100718

American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders: DSM-5.* American Psychiatric Association.

Amnesty International. (1995). *Sudan: "The tears of orphans": No future without human rights.* https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AFR54/002/1995/en/

Amnesty International. (2016). *"Our hearts have gone dark": The mental health impact of South Sudan's conflict.* https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr65/3203/2016/en/

Anofuechi, B. O., & Klaasen, J. S. (2024). A critical analysis of ubuntu as the nexus of identity development in present-day Africa. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, *80*(1). https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v80i1.8507

Anyieth, A. K., & Abur, W. (2022). The war trauma and mental health challenges for South Sudanese men in the diaspora. *People Centred – The Journal of Development Administration, 7(*3), 75–83.

Appiah, K. A. (2005). *The ethics of identity*. Princeton University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt7t9f0

Appiah, K. A. (2006). The politics of identity. *Daedalus, 135*(4), 15-22.

Appiah, K. A. (2018). *The lies that bind: Rethinking identity*. Profile Books.

Appiah, K.A. (2024). Understanding racism. *Inquiry, 67*(8), 2229-2242, https://doi.org/10.1080/0020174X.2024.2325621

Arnold, D. P. (2015). Critical theory. In J. D. Wright (Ed.), *International encyclopedia of the social & behavioral sciences* (pp. 293-303). Elsevier.

Arnot, M., & Pinson, H. (2005). *The education of asylum seeker and refugee children: A study of LEA and school values, policies and practices*. Cambridge University Press.

Aronson, B., & Laughter, J. (2016). The theory and practice of culturally relevant education: A synthesis of research across content areas. *Review of Educational Research, 86*(1), 163–206. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654315582066

Ashby, C. E. (2011). Whose "voice" is it anyway?: Giving voice and qualitative research involving individuals that type to communicate. *Disability studies quarterly*, *31*(4).

Atem, A. (2019). Negotiating trauma and cultural dislocation through memory: South Sudanese in Western Sydney. In K. Darian-Smith & P. Hamilton (Eds.), *Remembering migration: Oral histories and heritage in Australia* (pp. 155–166). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-17751-5_11

Atem, A., Balint, J., Cauchi, D., & Fuad, S. (2022). Diaspora peacebuilding through inter-ethnic harmony: The South Sudanese and Sri Lankan diasporas in Australia. In M. Phillips & L. Olliff (Eds.), *Understanding diaspora development: Lessons from Australia and the Pacific* (pp. 137-159). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-97866-2_7

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021). *People in Australia who were born in South Sudan: 2021 Census country of birth QuickStats*. Retrieved August 7, 2023, from https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/4111_AUS

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *Census of population and housing: Cultural diversity data summary, 2021.* Retrieved August 7, 2023, from https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/cultural-diversity-census/2021

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). (n.d.). *Student diversity*. https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/resources/student-diversity/

Australian Human Rights Commission. (2021). *Racism nobody wins: Definitions of key terms.* https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/ahrc_sr_2021_4_keyterms_a4_r2_0.pdf

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). (n.d.). *A school leader's guide for inclusive practices within schools.* https://www.aitsl.edu.au/teach/supporting-students-with-disability/leaders-supporting-students-with-disability/a-school-leader-s-guide-for-inclusive-practices-within-schools

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). (2022). *Building a culturally responsive Australian teaching workforce.* https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/comms/cultural-competency/aitsl_indigenous-cultural-competency_final-report

Ayazi, T., Lien, L., Eide, A. H., Eide, A. H., Ruom, M. M., & Hauff, E. (2012). What are the risk factors for the comorbidity of posttraumatic stress disorder and depression in a war-affected population? A cross-sectional community study in South Sudan. *BMC Psychiatry, 12*(175). https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-244X-12-175

Ayazi, T., Lien, L., Eide, A., Joseph, E., Shadar, S., & Hauff, E. (2014). Community attitudes and social distance towards the mentally ill in South Sudan: A survey from a post-conflict setting with no mental health services. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology, 49,* 771–780. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-013-0775-y

Ayazi, T., Lien, L., Eide, A., Swartz, L., & Hauff, E. (2014). Association between exposure to traumatic events and anxiety disorders in a post-conflict setting: A cross-sectional community study in South Sudan. *BMC Psychiatry, 14*(6). https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-244X-14-6

Ayrton, R. (2019). The micro-dynamics of power and performance in focus groups: An example from discussions on national identity with the South Sudanese diaspora in the UK. *Qualitative Research*, *19*(3), 323-339. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794118757102

Baak, M. (2011). Murder, community talk and belonging: An exploration of Sudanese community responses to murder in Australia. *African Identities, 9*(4), 417–434. https://doi.org/10.1080/14725843.2011.614415

Baak, M. (2016). Overcoming the 'hidden injuries' of students from refugee backgrounds: The importance of caring teacher-student relationships. In A. Sullivan, B. Johnson & B. Lucas (Eds.), *Challenging dominant views on student behaviour at school* (pp. 145–161). Springer.

Baak, M. (2019). Racism and Othering for South Sudanese heritage students in Australian schools: Is inclusion possible? *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 23*(2), 125-141, https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2018.1426052

Baak, M. (2021). Once a refugee, always a refugee? The haunting of the refugee label in resettlement. In J. Silverstein & R. Stevens (Eds.), *Refugee journeys: Histories of resettlement, representation and resistance* (pp. 51-70). ANU Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1h45md2.7

Baak, M., Miller, E., Sullivan. A., & Heugh, K. (2018). *Improving educational outcomes for students from refugee backgrounds in the South Australian Certificate of Education project: A case study of two Catholic schools.* University of South Australia. https://hdl.handle.net/11541.2/131254

Baak, M., Miller, E., Johnson, B., & Sullivan, A. (2023). Structure and agency in the development of education policies for refugee-background students. *The Australian Educational Researcher 50*, 561–579. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-021-00499-9

Baak, M., McDonald, S., Johnson, B., & Sullivan, A. (2023). Why school context matters in refugee education. *Educational Research for Policy and Practice, 22,* 283–299. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10671-023-09338-3

Baak, M. & Aslan, M. (2025). Refugee education for resettled refugees in settler colonial Australia: Beyond conditional inclusion. In J. Matthews & Q. Maire (Eds.). *A modern guide to refugee education* (pp. 184-204). Edward Elgar Publishing. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781803928401.00018

Bagnoli, A. (2004). Researching identities with multi-method autobiographies. *Sociological Research Online*, *9*(2), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.5153/sro.909

Bagnoli, A. (2009). Beyond the standard interview: The use of graphic elicitation and arts-based methods. *Qualitative Research, 9*(5), 547-570. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794109343625

Bagnoli, A., & Clark, A. (2010). Focus groups with young people: A participatory approach to research planning. *Journal of Youth Studies, 13*(1), 101-119. https://doi.org/10.1080/13676260903173504

Bartolomei, L., Pittaway, E., & Pittaway, E. E. (2003). Who am I? Identity and citizenship in Kakuma Refugee Camp in northern Kenya. *Development*, *46*(3), 87–93. https://doi.org/10.1177/10116370030463014

Bates, L. A., & Glick, J. E. (2013). Does it matter if teachers and schools match the student? Racial and ethnic disparities in problem behaviors. *Social Science Research*, *42*(5), 1180–1190. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2013.04.005

Beauboeuf–Lafontant, T. (1999). A movement against and beyond boundaries: "Politically relevant teaching" among African American teachers. *Teachers College Record, 100*(4), 702-723. https://doi.org/10.1111/0161-4681.00013

Becker, A. (2014). Funds of (difficult) knowledge and the affordances of multimodality: The case of Victor. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, *10*, 17–33.

Beglari, A., & Thai, H. (2000). The multicultural liaison officers' perspective in assessing refugee children in the schools. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees/Refuge: Revue Canadienne sur les Réfugiés*, *18*(6), 46-49.

Bell, D. A. (1980). Brown v. Board of Education and the interest-convergence dilemma. *Harvard Law Review, 93*(3), 518-533. https://doi.org/10.2307/1340546

Bell, D. A. (1992). *Faces at the bottom of the well: The permanence of racism*. Basic Books.

Belloni, R. (2011). The birth of South Sudan and the challenges of statebuilding. *Ethnopolitics, 10*(3-4), 411–429. https://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2011.593364

Benier, K., Blaustein, J., Johns, D., & Maher, S. (2018). *"Don't drag me into this": Growing up South Sudanese in Victoria after the 2016 Moomba 'riot'.* Centre for Multicultural Youth. https://cmy.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Dont-Drag-Me-Into-This-Research-Report-Oct-2018-FINAL.pdf

Berry, J. W. (1997). Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology: An international Review, 46*(1), 5–34. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.1997.tb01087.x

Berry, J. W. (2022). Family and youth development: Some concepts and findings linked to the ecocultural and acculturation models. *Societies*, *12*(6), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.3390/soc12060181

Berry, J. W., & Sam, D. L. (2016). Theoretical perspectives. In D. L. Sam & J. W. Berry (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of acculturation psychology* (pp. 11–29). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316219218.003

Berry Street. (n.d.). *Berry Street Education Model*. https://www.berrystreet.org.au/learning-and-resources/berry-street-education-model

Bešić, E., Gasteiger-Klicpera, B., Buchart, C., Hafner, J., & Stefitz, E. (2020). Refugee students' perspectives on inclusive and exclusive school experiences in Austria. *International Journal of Psychology*, *55*(5). 723-731. https://doi.org/10.1002/ijop.12662

Best, B., Bonefeld, W., & O'Kane, C. (2018). Introduction: Key texts and contributions to a critical theory of society. In B. Best, W. Bonefeld & C. O'Kane (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of Frankfurt School of critical theory* (pp. 1-15). SAGE Publications.

Beswick, S. (2001). "If you leave your country you have no life!" Rape, suicide, and violence: The voices of Ethiopian, Somali, and Sudanese female refugees in Kenyan refugee camps. *Northeast African Studies*, *8*(3), 69–98. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41931271

Beswick, S. (2004). *Sudan's blood memory: The legacy of war, ethnicity, and slavery in early South Sudan*. University Rochester Press.

Bhabha, H. (1994). *The location of culture*. Routledge.

Bhabha, H. (2005). Interrogating identity: The post colonial prerogative. In P. du Gay, J. Evans & P. Redman (Eds.), *Identity: A reader* (pp. 94-101). Sage.

Birks, M. J., Chapman, Y., & Francis, K. (2007). Breaching the wall: Interviewing people from other cultures. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing, 18*(2), 150-156. https://doi.org/10.1177//1043659606298617

Bloch, A., & Hirsch, S. (2017). The educational experiences of the second generation from refugee backgrounds. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 43*(13), 2131-2148. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1286972

Block, K., Cross, S., Riggs, E., & Gibbs, L. (2014). Supporting schools to create an inclusive environment for refugee students. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 18*(12), 1337–1355. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2014.899636

Blunden, A. (2016). Translating perezhivanie into English. *Mind, Culture, and Activity, 23*(4), 274-283, https://doi.org/10.1080/10749039.2016.1186193

Bonfiglio, A. Y., Munniksma, A., Volman, M., van Rooij, F., & Gaikhorst, L. (2024). Teachers' attention to students' funds of identity in Dutch primary school classrooms. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *144*, 104584. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2024.104584

Boonk, L., Gijselaers, H. J. M., Ritzen, H., & Brand-Gruwel, S. (2018). A review of the relationship between parental involvement indicators and academic achievement. *Educational Research Review, 24*, 10-30. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2018.02.001

Bourdieu P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241-258). Greenwood.

Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J.-P. (1977). *Reproduction in education, society and culture* (R. Nice, Trans.). Sage.

Breidlid, A., & Breidlid, H. (2013). Women in South Sudan: Education, empowerment and identity construction. In H. B. Holmarsdottir, V. Nomlomo, A. I. Farag & Z. Desai (Eds.), *Gendered voices*. *Comparative and international education* (pp. 99-115). SensePublishers. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6209-137-5_7

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77-101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). One size fits all? What counts as quality practice in (reflexive) thematic analysis? *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 18*(3), 328–352. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2020.1769238

Bridges, C. E., & Mather, P. (2015). Joining the struggle: White men as social justice allies. *Journal of College and Character, 16*(3), 155-168. https://doi.org/10.1080/2194587X.2015.1057155

Brenna, B. (2023). Portraiture. In J. M. Okoko, S. Tunison & K. D. Walker (Eds.), *Varieties of qualitative research methods* (pp. 395-399). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-04394-9_61

Broido, E. M. (2000). The development of social justice allies during college: A phenomenological investigation. *Journal of College Student Development, 41*(1), 3–18.

Browne, A. J., Varcoe, C., Smye, V., Reimer-Kirkham, S., Lynam, M. J., & Wong, S. (2009). Cultural safety and the challenges of translating critically oriented knowledge in practice. *Nursing Philosophy, 10*(3), 167–179. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1466-769x.2009.00406.x

Bruck, D., Deng S. A., Kot, B., & Grossman, M. (2021). Sleep difficulties among South Sudanese former refugees settled in Australia. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, *58*(2),172–186. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363461520903122

Burford-Rice, R., Augoustinos, M., & Due, C. (2020). "That's what they say in our language: One onion, all smell": The impact of racism on the resettlement experiences of South Sudanese women in Australia. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, *20*(2), 95–109. https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2020.1722146

Burnett, K. (2013). Feeling like an outsider: A case study of refugee identity in the Czech Republic. New issues in refugee research. *Policy Development and Evaluation Service United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 251*. https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/legacy-pdf/510947989.pdf

Butler, J. (1988). Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay in phenomenology and feminist theory. *Theatre Journal, 40*(4), 519–531. https://doi.org/10.2307/3207893

Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge.

Bylica, K. (2022). "You can only choose from the things you know": Engaging with students' dark and politicized funds of knowledge in the music. *Education and Urban Society, 55*(5), 617–640. https://doi.org/10.1177/00131245221087995

Byrd, C. M. (2016). Does culturally relevant teaching work? An examination from student perspectives. *SAGE Open 6*(3), 1-7. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244016660744

CairoScene. (2017, June 5). *"They call us black and filthy": Sudanese refugees in Egypt, trapped between racism and violence.* https://cairoscene.com/In-Depth/They-Call-Us-Black-and-Filthy-Sudanese-Refugees-in-Egypt-Trapped-Between-Racism-and-Violence

Came, B. (2000). Freeing the slaves of Sudan. *Maclean's*, *113*(15), 20-28.

Cassity, E., & Gow, G. (2005). Making up for lost time: The experiences of Southern Sudanese young refugees in high schools. *Youth Studies Australia*, *24*(3), 51–55.

Castro, M., Expósito-Casas, E., López-Martín, E., Lizasoain, L., Navarro-Asencio, E., & Gaviria, J. L. (2015). Parental involvement on student academic achievement: A meta-analysis, *Educational Research Review, 14*, 33-46. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2015.01.002

Cegielski, O., Maida, K., Morales, D. L., & Mendez, S. L. (2023). Creating a classroom for social justice: Secondary teacher perceptions of the environmental outcomes of culturally relevant education. *Educational Research: Theory and Practice, 34*(3), 103-116.

Chapman, T. K. (2005). Expressions of 'voice' in portraiture. *Qualitative Inquiry, 11*(1), 27-51. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800404270840

Chapman, T. K. (2007). Interrogating classroom relationships and events: Using portraiture and critical race theory in education research. *Educational Researcher, 36*(3), 156-162. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X07301437

Charteris, J., Thomas, E., & Masters, Y. (2018). Funds of identity in education: Acknowledging the life experiences of first year tertiary students. *Teacher Educator*, *53*(1), 6–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/08878730.2017.1367057

Chilton, C., & Leavy, P. (2020). Arts-based research practice: Merging social research and the creative arts. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 601–632). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190847388.013.27

Cho, S., & Yi, Y. (2020). Funds of knowledge and cultural capital: Working toward diversity and equity of knowledges. *Applied Linguistics*, *41*(5), 810–815. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amy062

Clarà, M. (2016). The many lives of the word perezhivanie. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, 23(4), 339–342. https://doi.org/10.1080/10749039.2016.1199700

Clark, S., Haw, A., & Mackenzie, L. (2024). The 'good refugee' ideal: How discourses of deservingness permeate Australia's refugee and asylum seeker narratives. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, *59*(1),148–163. https://doi.org/10.1002/ajs4.255

Cohen, R. (2022). *Global diasporas: An introduction* (3rd ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003256526

Cole, A. L., & Knowles, J. G. (2008). Arts-informed research. In J.G. Knowles & A. L. Cole (Eds.), *Handbook of the arts in qualitative research: Perspectives, methodologies, examples, and issues* (pp. 55-70). Sage Publications, Incorporated.

Colina Neri, R., Zipin, L., Rios-Aguilar, C., & Huerta, A. H. (2023). Surfacing deep challenges for social-educational justice: Putting funds, wealth, and capital frameworks into dialogue. *Urban Education*, *58*(7), 1512-1538. https://doi.org/10.1177/00420859211016520

Collins, R. O. (2017). *The Southern Sudan in historical perspective.* Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315135106

Columb, S. (2017). Excavating the organ trade: An empirical study of organ trading networks in Cairo, Egypt. *The British Journal of Criminology*, *57*(6), pp. 1301–1321. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azw068

Commission for Children and Young People. (2023). *2023–24 Youth Forum Report 1: A snapshot of consultations with young people as part of the South Sudanese Australian Youth Justice Expert Working Group.* https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/Submissions/South-Sudanese-Australian-Youth-Justice-Expert-Working-Group/2023-24-Youth-Forum-Report-1.pdf

Cooperman, H. (2018). Listening through performance: Identity, embodiment, and arts-based research. In M. Capous-Desyllas & K. Morgaine (Eds.), *Creating social change through creativity: Anti-oppressive arts-based research methodologies* (pp. 19-35). Palgrave.

Cooper, R., & Liou, D. D. (2007). The structure and culture of information pathways: Rethinking opportunity to learn in urban high schools during the ninth grade transition. *The High School Journal, 91*(1). 43-56. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40367922

Cope, V., Jones, B., & Hendricks, J. (2015). Portraiture: A methodology through which success and positivity can be explored and reflected. *Nurse Researcher. 22*(3), 6-12. https://doi.org/10.7748/nr.22.3.6.e1311

Côté, J. E. (2018). The enduring usefulness of Erikson's concept of the identity crisis in the 21st century: An analysis of student mental health concerns. *Identity, 18*(4), 251–263. https://doi.org/10.1080/15283488.2018.1524328

Couldry, N. (2009). Rethinking the politics of voice: Commentary. *Continuum*, *23*(4), 579–582. https://doi.org/10.1080/10304310903026594

Cranston, J., Labman, S., & Crook, S. (2021). Reframing parental involvement as social engagement: A study of recently arrived Arabic-speaking refugee parents' understandings of involvement in their children's education. *Canadian Journal of Education*, *44*(2), 371-404.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum, 1989*(1), 139–167.

Crotty, M. (1998). *Foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003115700

Cureton, A. E. (2020). Strangers in the school: Facilitators and barriers regarding refugee parental involvement. *The Urban Review, 52*(5), 924–949. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-020-00580-0

Curless, G., & Peen Rodt, A. (2013). Sudan and the not so comprehensive peace. *Civil Wars, 15*(2), 101–117. https://doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2013.817844

D'Andrea Martínez, P., Peoples, L. Q., & Martin, J. (2023). Becoming culturally responsive: Equitable and inequitable translations of CRE theory into teaching practice. *The Urban Review, 55*(4),476-504. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-023-00658-5

Darder, A. (2017). *Reinventing Paulo Freire: A pedagogy of love* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Darder, A., Mayo, P., & Paraskeva, J. (2016). The internationalization of critical pedagogy: An introduction. In A. Darder, P. Mayo & J. Paraskeva (Eds.), *International critical pedagogy reader* (pp. 1-14). Routledge.

Darder, A. (Ed.). (2019). Decolonizing interpretative research. In A. Darder (Ed.), *Decolonizing interpretative research: A subaltern methodology for social change* (pp. 3-36). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351045070

Darling-Wolf, F. (2008). Disturbingly hybrid or distressingly patriarchal? Gender hybridity in a global environment. In K. E. I. Smith & P. Leavy (Eds.), *Hybrid identities: Theoretical and empirical examinations* (pp. 63–80). Brill.

Daughtry, C. N. (2006). Conflict and community in church-based refugee havens in Cairo: The quest for space to be Dinka. *The Arab Studies Journal*, *14*(2), 39-59. https://www.jstor.org/stable/27933970

Davis, J. H. (2003). Balancing the whole: Portraiture as methodology. In P. M. Camic, J. E. Rhodes & L. Yardley (Eds.), *Qualitative research in psychology: Expanding perspectives in methodology and design* (pp. 199–217). American Psychological Association.

Davis, R. M. (2021). The 'bad' and exceptionally 'good': Constructing the African refugee. *Media International Australia*, *179*(1), 113–126. https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878X20926540

Delgado, R. (1989). Storytelling for oppositionists and others: A plea for narrative. *Michigan Law Review*, *87*(8), 2411. https://doi.org/10.2307/1289308 Ed

Delgado-Gaitan, C. (1993). Researching change and changing the researcher. *Harvard Educational Review, 63*(4), 389–412. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.63.4.b336053463h71081

Deng, F. (2009). *Customary law in the modern world: The crossfire of Sudan's war of identities.* Taylor & Francis Group. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203873571

Deng, M. A. W. (2021). Bride price in the patriarchal South Sudanese society: A legal perspective. *International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family*, *35*(1), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1093/lawfam/ebab039

Deng, S. A. (2015, October 28-30). *South Sudanese family dynamics and parenting practices in Australia* [Paper presentation]. African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific (AFSAAP) 38th Conference, Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia.

Deng, S. A. (2016a). *Fitting the jigsaw: South Sudanese family dynamics and parenting practices in Australia* [Doctoral dissertation, Victoria University]. Victoria University Research Repository. https://vuir.vu.edu.au/33260

Deng, S.A. (2016b). South Sudanese youth acculturation and intergenerational challenges. Proceedings of the 39th African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific (AFSAAP). Annual Conference, 5-7 December 2016, The University of Western Australia. https://www.academia.edu/33393336/South_Sudanese_youth_acculturation_and_intergenerational_challenges

Department of Education (DE). (2023). *Inclusive education for students with disabilities.* https://www.vic.gov.au/inclusive-education-for-students-with-disabilities

Department of Education (DE). (2024a). *Disability and inclusive education.* https://www.vic.gov.au/disability-and-inclusive-education

Department of Education (DE). (2024b). EAL—*Provision for newly arrived students.* https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/eal-provision/policy

Department of Education (DE). (2024c). *EAL support and funding.* https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/eal-support/policy

Department of Education (DE). (2024d). *Supporting students from refugee backgrounds.* https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/support/diversity/eal/Pages/ealsupportrefugee.aspx

Department of Education (DE). (2024e). *VCE vocational major and Victorian pathways certificate provision.* https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/vce-vocational-major-vpc-provision/policy

Department of Education (DE). (2024f). *The MEA handbook guidelines on the employment and roles of multicultural education aides in Victorian Government schools*. https://content.sdp.education.vic.gov.au/media/eal-mea-handbook-1483

Department of Home Affairs. (2023). *Settlements reports.* https://data.gov.au/data/dataset/8d1b90a9-a4d7-4b10-ad6a-8273722c8628/resource/1e724f46-26c0-48d3-ada7-721394820d26/download/settlement-data-reports-jul-2022-to-jun-2023-last-fy-by-migration-streams.xlsx

Dixson, A. D. (2021). But be ye doers of the word: Moving beyond performative professional development on culturally relevant pedagogy. *The Educational Forum, 85*(4), 355-363. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2021.1957633

Dmitrieva, J., Chen, C., Greenberger, E., & Gil-Rivas, V. (2004). Family relationships and adolescent psychosocial outcomes: Converging findings from Eastern and Western cultures. *Journal of Research on Adolescence. 14*(4), 425–447 https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-7795.2004.00081.x

Dover A. G. (2013). Teaching for social justice: From conceptual frameworks to classroom practices. *Multicultural Perspectives*, *15*(1), 3–11. https://doi.org/10.1080/15210960.2013.754285

Draper, A. K. (2004). The principles and application of qualitative research. *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*, *63*(4), 641-646. https://doi.org/10.1079/PNS2004397

Due, C. (2008). "Who are strangers?": Absorbing Sudanese refugees into a white Australia. *Australian Critical Race and Whiteness Studies Association, 4*(1), 1-13.

Due, C., Riggs, D. W., & Augoustinos, M. (2016). Experiences of school belonging for young children with refugee backgrounds. *The Educational and Developmental Psychologist*, *33*(1), 33–53. https://doi.org/10.1017/edp.2016.9

Durst, D. C. (2005). Hegel's conception of the ethical and Gramsci's notion of hegemony. *Contemporary Political Theory*, *4*(2), 175-191. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.cpt.9300112

Education Council. (2019). *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration*. https://www.education.gov.au/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration

Edward, J. K. (2014). *A strategy for achieving gender equality in South Sudan*. Sudd Institute. Retrieved June 29, 2024, from https://www.cmi.no/file/2617-Gender-EqualityfmtSR.pdf

Edwards, K. E. (2006). Aspiring social justice ally identity development: A conceptual model. *NASPA Journal, 43*(4), 39–60. https://doi.org/10.2202/1949-6605.1722

Edgeworth, K. (2015). Black bodies, White rural spaces: Disturbing practices of unbelonging for 'refugee' students. *Critical Studies in Education, 56*(3), 351–365. https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2014.956133

Eibner, J., & Jacobs, C. (2011, Jan 14). Will freedom come for Sudan's slaves? *Wall Street Journal.* https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/will-freedom-come-sudans-slaves/docview/839439865/se-2

El Aidi, A., & Yechouti, Y. (2017). Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony in Edward Said's orientalism. *Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, *6*(5), 1-9.

Elcheroth, G., & Reicher, S. (2017). *Identity, violence and power: Mobilizing hatred, demobilising dissent*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-31728-5

El-Masri, S. (2011). The legality of the International Criminal Court's decision against Omar Al-Bashir of Sudan. *International Journal: Canada's Journal of Global Policy Analysis*, *66*(2), 371–390. https://doi.org/10.1177/002070201106600208

Ensor, M. O. (2016). South Sudanese diaspora children: Contested notions of childhood, uprootedness, and belonging among young refugees in the US. In M. L. Seeberg & E. M. Goździak (Eds.), *Contested childhoods: Growing up in migrancy. Migration, governance, identities* (pp. 61-77). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-44610-3_4

Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity youth and crisis*. Norton.

Esteban-Guitart, M. (2012). Towards a multimethodological approach to identification of funds of identity, small stories and master narratives. *Narrative Inquiry, 22*(1), 173-180. https://doi.org/10.1075/ni.22.1.12est

Esteban-Guitart, M. (2016). *Funds of Identity: Connecting meaningful learning experiences in and out of school*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781316544884

Esteban-Guitart, M. (2021). Advancing the funds of identity theory: A critical and unfinished dialogue. *Mind, Culture, and Activity, 28*(2), 169-179. https://doi.org/10.1080/10749039.2021.1913751

Esteban-Guitart, M. (2023a). The funds of knowledge and identity approach. In M. Esteban-Guitart (Ed.), *Funds of knowledge and identity pedagogies for social justice* (pp. 7-22). *R*outledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003369851-3

Esteban-Guitart, M. (2023b). The multi-method autobiographical approach and its contribution to the funds of identity theory. In C. Damşa, A. Rajala, G. Ritella & J. Brouwer (Eds.). *Re-theorising*

learning and research methods in learning research (pp. 159-173). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003205838

Esteban-Guitart, M. (2023c). Invisible funds of identity in urban contexts. *Urban Education, 58*(7), 1449-1469. https://doi.org/10.1177/00420859211016536

Esteban-Guitart, M., Monreal-Bosch, P., & Vila, I. (2013). A qualitative study on transnational attachment among eight families of foreign origin. *PsyEcology, 4*(3), 245-266. https://doi.org/10.1174/217119713807749832

Esteban-Guitart, M., & Moll, L. C. (2014a). Funds of identity: A new concept based on the funds of knowledge approach. *Culture & Psychology*, *20*(1), 31-48. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067x13515934

Esteban-Guitart, M., & Moll, L. C. (2014b). Lived experiences, funds of identity and education. *Culture & Psychology*, *20*(1),70-81. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067x13515940

Esteban-Guitart, M., & Vila, I. (2015). The voices of newcomers: A qualitative analysis of the construction of transnational identity. *Psychosocial Intervention, 24*, 17–25. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psi.2015.01.002

Esteban-Guitart, M., Lalueza, J. L., Zhang-Yu, C., & Llopart, M. (2019). Sustaining students' cultures and identities. A qualitative study based on the funds of knowledge and identity approaches. *Sustainability, 11*(12), 1-12. https://doi.org/10.3390/su11123400

Esteban-Guitart, M., Monreal-Bosch, P., Palma, M., & González-Ceballos, I. (2020). Sustaining students' identities within the context of participatory culture. Designing, implementing and evaluating an interactive learning activity. *Sustainability, 12*(12), 4870. https://doi.org/10.3390/su12124870

Esteban-Guitart, M., Iglesias, E., Serra, J.M., & Suber, D. (2022). Community funds of knowledge and identity: A mesogenetic approach to education. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 54*(3), 302-317. https://doi.org/10.1111/aeq.12451

Evans, R. (2013). Towards a creative synthesis of participant observation and participatory research: Reflections on doing research with and on young Bhutanese refugees in Nepal. *Childhood, 20*(2), 169-184. https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568212459774

Fant, W. (2009). Slavery and the search for belonging in modern Sudan. *History in the Making*, *2*(4), 1-24.

Faroque, F., Petrie, A., & Miletic, D. (2007, October 2). Minister cuts African refugee intake. *The Age* https://www.theage.com.au/national/minister-cuts-african-refugee-intake-20071002-ge5yb1.html

Finlay, L. (2002). 'Outing' the researcher: The provenance, process, and practice of reflexivity. *Qualitative Health Research, 12*(4), 531–545. https://doi.org/10.1177/104973202129120052

Flanagan, F., Travers, A., Vallières, F., Hansen, M., Halpin, R., Sheaf, G., Rottmann, N., & Thit Johnsen, A. (2020). Crossing borders: A systematic review identifying potential mechanisms of intergenerational trauma transmission in asylum seeking and refugee families. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology, 11*(1), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1080/20008198.2020.1790283

Flint, A. S., & Jaggers, W. (2021). You matter here: The impact of asset-based pedagogies on learning. *Theory Into Practice*, *60*(3), 254–264. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2021.1911483

Fluehr-Lobban, C. (1990). Islamization in Sudan: A critical assessment. *Middle Eastern Journal, 44*(4), 610-623.

Frahm, O. (2012). Defining the nation: National identity in South Sudanese media discourse. *Africa Spectrum*, *47*(1), 21–49. https://doi.org/10.1177/000203971204700102

Freire, P. (1998). *Pedagogy of freedom: Ethics, democracy, and civic courage.* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Freire, P. (2005). *Teachers as cultural workers: Letters to those who dare teach.* Westview Press.

Freire, P. (2017). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M. B. Ramos, Trans.). Penguin Random House. (Original work published 1970).

Freire, P. (2021). *Education for critical consciousness*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Fusch, P. I., & Ness, L. R. (2015). Are we there yet? Data saturation in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, *20*(9), 1408-1416. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2015.2281

Gade, C. B. N. (2011). The historical development of the written discourses on Ubuntu. *South African Journal of Philosophy 30*(3), 303-329.

Gallo, S., & Link, H. (2015). "Diles la verdad": Deportation policies, politicized funds of knowledge, and schooling in middle childhood. *Harvard Educational Review, 85*(3), 357–382. https://doi.org/10.17763/0017-8055.85.3.357

Gatt, K. (2011). Sudanese refugees in Victoria: An analysis of their treatment by the Australian Government, *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice, 35(3),* 207–219. https://doi.org/10.1080/01924036.2011.591904

Garang, K. E. (2021). Birth of a state: Rethinking South Sudanese collective identity through identity anchors. *Modern Africa: Politics, History and Society*, *9*(2), 5-37. https://doi.org/10.26806/modafr.v9i2.330

Gay, G. (2002). Preparing for culturally responsive teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education, 53*(2), 106–116. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487102053002003

Gay, G. (2013). Teaching to and through cultural diversity. *Curriculum Inquiry, 43*(1), 48-70. https://doi.org/10.1111/curi.12002

Gay, G. (2015). The what, why, and how of culturally responsive teaching: International mandates, challenges, and opportunities. *Multicultural Education Review, 7*(3), 123-139. https://doi.org/10.1080/2005615X.2015.1072079

Gay, G. (2018). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice* (3rd ed.). Teachers College Press.

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures: Selected Essays*. Basic Books.

Gentemann, K. M., & Whitehead, T. L. (1983). The cultural broker concept in bicultural education. *The Journal of Negro Education*, *52*(2), 118–129. https://doi.org/10.2307/2295029

Gerber, N., Templeton, E., Chilton, G., Liebman, M. C., Manders, E., & Shim, M. (2012). Art-based research as a pedagogical approach to studying intersubjectivity in the creative arts therapies. *Journal of Applied Arts & Health, 3*(1), 39–48. https://doi.org/10.1386/jaah.3.1.39_1.

Gilliam, L. (2021). Being Muslim "without a fuss": Relaxed religiosity and conditional inclusion in Danish schools and society. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *45*(6), 1096–1114. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2021.1971733

Giroux, H. A. (1986). Critical Theory and the politics of culture and voice: Rethinking the discourse of educational research. *Journal of Thought*, *21*(3), 84–105. http://www.jstor.org/stable/42589192

Giroux, H. (2017). Foreword: Paulo Freire and the courage to be political. In A. Darder (Ed.), *Reinventing Paulo Freire: A pedagogy of love* (pp. xi-xvii). Routledge.

Gitau, L. W. (2018). *Trauma-sensitivity and peacebuilding: Considering the case of South Sudanese Refugees in Kakuma Refugee Camp*. Springer Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-49803-4

Gitau, L. W., Arop, A., & Lenette, C. (2023). "My dad was, is a soldier": Using collaborative poetic inquiry to explore intergenerational trauma, resilience, and wellbeing in the context of forced migration. *Social Sciences*, *12*(8), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci12080455

Goldthorpe, J. H. (2007). 'Cultural capital': Some critical observations. *Sociologica*, *1*(2), 1-24. https://doi.org/10.2383/24755

González, N., Andrade, R., Civil, M., & Moll, l. (2005). Funds of distributed knowledge. In N. González, L. C. Moll & C. Amanti (Eds.), *Funds of knowledge: Theorising practices in households, communities, and classrooms* (pp. 257-274). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Gottfried, M., Kirksey, J. J., & Fletcher, T. L. (2022). Do high school students with a same-race teacher attend class more often? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *44*(1), 149-169. https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737211032241

Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebook of Antonio Gramsci* (Q. Hoare and G. Nowell Smith, Eds. & Trans.). International Publishers.

Greenbank, C. A. (2018, August 11). *Police launch program to inspire first generation of South Sudanese officers.* Nine News. https://www.9news.com.au/good-news/taylors-hill-south-sudanese-refugees-victoria-police-melbourne-crime/65d02587-28a8-4c5a-9d4f-46beae837a47#:~:text=As%20the%20state's%20first%20South%20Sudanese%20officer%20joins%20the%20force

Groenewald, T. (2004). A phenomenological research design illustrated. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 3*(1), 42-55. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690400300104

Guba, E. G. (1990). The alternative paradigm dialog. In E. G. Guba (Ed.), *The paradigm dialogue* (pp. 17-27). Sage.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105–117). Sage.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging conflicts. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 191-216). Sage.

Guzmán, B. L., Kouyoumdjian, C., Medrano, J. A., & Bernal, I. (2021). Community cultural wealth and immigrant Latino parents. *Journal of Latinos and Education, 20*(1), 78-92. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2018.1541801

Hackl, A. (2022). Good immigrants, permitted outsiders: Conditional inclusion and citizenship in comparison. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *45*(6), 989-1010.: https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2021.2011938

Hall, S. (1997). Old and new identities, old and new ethnicities. In A. D. King (Ed.), *Culture, globalization, and the world-system: Contemporary conditions for the representation of identity* (New edition, pp. 41–68). University of Minnesota Press. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctttsqb3.7

Hall, S. (2021). Cultural identity and diaspora. In P. Gilroy & R. W. Gilmore (Eds.), *Selected writings on race and difference* (pp. 257–271). Duke University Press. (Original chapter published 1990). https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1hhj1b9.17

Hamilton, P. (2013). Fostering effective and sustainable home-school relations with migrant worker parents: A new story to tell? *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, *23*(4), 298–317. https://doi.org/10.1080/09620214.2013.815439

Hanzich, R. (2011). Struggles in South Sudan: Five months to resolve 55 years of structural violence. *Harvard International Review, 33*(1), 38-41.

Harrington, B. (2003). The social psychology of access in ethnographic research. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 32*, 592-625. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241603255677

Harris, A., Marlowe, J., & Nyuon, N. (2015). Rejecting Ahmed's 'melancholy migrant': South Sudanese Australians in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education, 40*(7), 1226–1238. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2014.881346

Harris, A., & Nyuon, N. (2010). Working it both ways: Intercultural collaboration and the performativity of identity. *The Australasian Review of African Studies*, *31*(1), 62–68.

Harris, A., & Nyuon, N. (2013). Still 'working the hyphen': Intercultural collaborations as creative research. In J. Marlowe, A. Harris & T. Lyons (Eds.)*, South Sudanese diaspora in Australia and New Zealand: Reconciling the past with the present* (pp. 85-100). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Hatoss, A. (2022). That word 'abuse' is a big problem for us: South Sudanese parents' positioning and agency *vis-à-vis* parenting conflicts in Australia. *Linguistics and Education, 67*(1001002), 1-11. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2021.101002

Hatoss, A., & Huijser, H. (2010). Gendered Barriers to educational opportunities: Resettlement of Sudanese refugees in Australia. *Gender and Education, 22*(2), 147–160. https://doi.org/10.1080/09540250903560497

Hatoss, A., & Sheely, T. (2009). Language maintenance and identity among Sudanese-Australian refugee-background youth. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *30*(2), 127-144. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434630802510113

Hatoss, A., O'Neill, S., & Eacersall, D. (2012). Career choices: Linguistic and educational socialization of Sudanese-Background high-school students in Australia. *Linguistics and Education: An International Research Journal, 23*(1), 16–30. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2011.10.003

Hedges, H. (2021). The place of interests, agency and imagination in funds of identity theory. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, *28*(2), 111–124. https://doi.org/10.1080/10749039.2020.1833931

Hedges, H., & Cooper, M. (2016). Inquiring minds: Theorizing children's interests. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 48*(3), 303-322. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2015.1109711

Held, M. B. E. (2019). Decolonizing research paradigms in the context of settler colonialism: An unsettling, mutual, and collaborative effort. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *18*. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406918821574

Herrmann, S. (2021). Misrecognising recognition. Foundations of a critical theory of recognition. *Critical Horizons*, *22*(1), 56–69. https://doi.org/10.1080/14409917.2021.1886670

Hesford, W. S. (2021). Reading the signs: Performative white allyship. *Quarterly Journal of Speech, 107*(2), 239-244. https://doi.org/10.1080/00335630.2021.1915447

Hoffman, J. W., & Martin, J. L. (2020). Critical social justice inquiry circles: Using counter-story as a counter-hegemonic project. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *26*(6), 687-694. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800419859028

Hogg, L. (2011). Funds of knowledge: An investigation of coherence within the literature. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 27*(3), 666-677. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.11.005

Hogg, L., & Volman, M. (2020). A synthesis of funds of identity research: Purposes, tools, pedagogical approaches and outcomes. *Review of Educational Research, 90*(6), 862-895. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654320964205

Holmes, A. G. D. (2020). Researcher positionality—A consideration of its influence and place in qualitative research—A new researcher guide. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, *8*(4), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.34293/education.v8i4.3232

Holt, P. M., & Daly, M. W. (2019). *A history of the Sudan: From the coming of Islam to the present day*. Routledge.

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom.* Routledge.

Horkheimer, M. (2002). *Critical theory: Selected essays* (M. J. O'Connell and others, Trans.). The Continuum Publishing Company.

Hove, S. (2019). Conflict in South Sudanese communities living in Australia. In P. Collins, V. Igreja & P. Danaher (Eds.), *The nexus among place, conflict and communication in a globalising world* (pp. 37-56). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-5925-5_3

Howell, D., Norris, A., & Williams, K. L. (2019). Towards Black gaze theory: How Black female teachers make Black students visible. *Urban Education Research & Policy Annuals*, *6*(1), 20-23.

Howard, T. C., & Rodriguez-Minkoff, A. C. (2017). Culturally relevant pedagogy 20 Years later: Progress or pontificating? What have we learned, and where do we go? *Teachers College, 119*(1), 1-32. https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811711900104

Huber, L. P. (2009). Challenging racist nativist framing: Acknowledging the community cultural wealth of undocumented Chicana college students to reframe the immigration debate. *Harvard Educational Review, 79*(4), 704-30. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.79.4.r7j1xn011965w186

Hudley, C. (2015). Introduction. In C. Hudley (Ed.), A*dolescent identity and schooling: Diverse perspectives* (pp. 1-6). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315764252

Human Rights Watch. (1995). Children of Sudan: Slaves, street children and child soldiers. https://www.hrw.org/reports/1995/Sudan.htm

Hviid, P., & Villadsen, J. W. (2014). Cultural identities and their relevance to school practice. *Culture and Psychology, 20*(1), 59-69. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X135159

Hwa-Froelich, D. A., & Westby, C. E. (2003). Frameworks of education: Perspectives of Southeast Asian parents and Head Start staff. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, *34*, 299-314. https://doi.org/10.1044/0161-1461(2003/025)

Idrus, F., Ramli, L. N., & Habib, N. J. (2023). Exploring preservice teachers' experiences of implementing culturally responsive teaching in the ESL classrooms. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *13*(3), 766-776. https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1303.26

Isik-Ercan, Z. (2012). In pursuit of a new perspective in the education of children of the refugees: Advocacy for the 'family'. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, *12*(4), 3025–3038.

Isobel, S., Goodyear, M., Furness, T., & Foster, K. (2019). Preventing intergenerational trauma transmission: A critical interpretive synthesis. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.14735

Jackson, A. Y., & Mazzei, L. A. (2009). Introduction: The limit of voice. In A. Y. Jackson & L. A. Mazzei (Eds.), *Voice in qualitative inquiry: Challenging conventional, interpretive, and critical conceptions in qualitative research* (pp. 1-13). Routledge.

Jaysane-Darr, A. (2022). "I would expect her to know that she's a Dinka": Defining successful reproduction and resettlement among South Sudanese refugees. In M. K. Watson & P.

Gopalan (Eds.), *Refugee resettlement in the United States: Loss, transition, and resilience in a post-9/11 world* (pp. 101-118). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003130239-10

Johnson, D. H. (1991). Salim Wilson: The Black evangelist of the north. *Journal of Religion in Africa*, *21*(1), 26. https://doi.org/10.2307/1581093

Johnson, D. H. (2013). New Sudan or South Sudan? The multiple meanings of self-determination in Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement. *Civil Wars*, *15*(2), 141–156. https://doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2013.817850

Johnson, D. H. (2016). *South Sudan: A new history for a new nation*. Ohio University Press.

Jok, J. M. (2001). *War and slavery in Sudan*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Jok, J. M. (2011). *Diversity, unity, and nation building in South Sudan.* United Institute of Peace. *https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/wps/usip/0029988/f_0029988_24270.pdf*

Jung, E., & Zhang, Y. (2016). Parental involvement, children's aspirations, and achievement in new immigrant families. *The Journal of Educational Research, 109*(4), 1–18. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00220671.2014.959112

Justin, P. H., & De Vries, L. (2017). Governing unclear lines: Local boundaries as a (re)source of conflict in South Sudan. *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, *34*(1), 31–46. https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2017.1294497

Kalunta-Crumpton, A. (2020). The inclusion of the term 'color' in any racial label is racist, is it not? *Ethnicities, 20*(1), 115-135. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796819884675.

Kaphle, S., Fanany, R., Kelly, J., Rawal, L., & Paudel, G. (2024). Living at the fence—navigating complexities while settling in new country: Lived experiences of South Sudanese refugees in Australia. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, *45*(4), 689–705. https://doi.org/10.1080/07256868.2024.2307947

Kasherwa, A., Lenette, C., Arop, A., & Duot, A. (2024). *"I can't even talk to my parents about It": South Sudanese youth advocates' perspectives on suicide through reflexive discussions and collaborative poetic inquiry.* Preprints. *https://doi.org/10.20944/preprints202409.1520.v1*

Kebbede, G. (1997). South Sudan: A war-torn and divided region. *Contributions in Black Studies, 15*, 47-64. https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14394/7443

Khawaja, N. G., & Milner, K. (2012). Acculturation stress in South Sudanese refugees: Impact on marital relationships. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 36*(5), 624–636. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2012.03.007

Khorana, S. (2022). How to make arts-based interventions appropriate for young refugees?: Towards a decolonial framework. *Journal of Youth Studies*, *25*(7), 963–976. https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2021.1929885

Kia-Keating, M., & Ellis, B. H. (2007). Belonging and connection to school in resettlement: Young refugees, school belonging, and psychosocial adjustment. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, *12*(1), 29–43. https://doi.org/10.1177/1359104507071052

Kincheloe, J. L. (2007). Critical pedagogy in the twenty-first century: Evolution for survival. In P. McLaren & J. L. Kincheloe, *Critical pedagogy: Where are we now?* (pp. 9-42). Peter Lang.

Kincheloe, J. L., & McLaren, P. (2000). Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research. In K. Hayes, S. Steinberg & K. Tobin (Eds.), *Key works in critical pedagogy* (pp. 285-326). Sense Publishers.

Kivunja, C., & Kuyini, A. B. (2017). Understanding and applying research paradigms in educational contexts. *International Journal of Higher Education*, *6*(5), 26-41. https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v6n5p26

Kolovos, B. (2024, July 12). Amid claims of a 'youth crime crisis', Victoria's approach is working, advocates say. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/article/2024/jul/12/amid-claims-of-a-youth-crisis-victorias-approach-is-working-advocates-say

Korstjens, I., & Moser, A. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and publishing. *European Journal of General Practice, 24*(1), 120-124. https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375092

Koumouris, G., & Blaustein, J. (2022). Reporting 'African gangs': Theorising journalistic practice during a multi-mediated moral panic. *Crime, Media, Culture, 18*(1), 105-125. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741659021991205

Kramer, R. S., Lobban, R. A., Jr, & Fluehr-Lobban, C. (2013). *Historical dictionary of the Sudan*. Scarecrow Press.

Kuol, L. B. D. (2019). When ethnic diversity becomes a curse in Africa: The tale of the two Sudans. *Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations 21*(1), 15–35.

Kuol, L. B. D. (2020). South Sudan: The elusive quest for a resilient social contract? *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding, 14*(1), 64-83, https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2019.1627692

Kurtz, D. V. (1996). Hegemony and anthropology: Gramsci, exegeses, reinterpretations. *Critique of Anthropology*, *16*(2), 103-135.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1992). Reading between the lines and beyond the pages: A culturally relevant approach to literacy teaching. *Theory into Practice*, *31*(4), 312-320. https://doi.org/10.1080/0040584920954355

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995a). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal, 32*(3), 465-491. https://doi.org/10.2307/1163320

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995b). But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory into Practice*, *34*(3), 159-165. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1476635

Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *11*(1), 7–24. https://doi.org/10.1080/095183998236863

Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). "Yes, but how do we do it?": Practicing culturally relevant pedagogy. In J. Landsman & C. Lewis (Eds.), *White teachers/diverse learners* (pp. 29–41). Stylus Publishers.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2014). Culturally relevant pedagogy 2.0: The remix. *Harvard Educational Review*, *84*(1), 74–84. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.84.1.p2rj131485484751

Ladson-Billings, G. (2021). Three decades of culturally relevant, responsive, & sustaining pedagogy: What lies ahead? *The Educational Forum, 85*(4), 351-354. https://doi.org/10.108/00131725.2021.1957632

Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. F. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. *Teachers College Record*, *97*, 47–68. https://doi.org/10.1177/016146819509700104

Lahman, M. K. E., De Oliveira, B., Cox, D., Sebastian, M. L., Cadogan, K., Rundle Kahn, A., Lafferty, M., Morgan, M., Thapa, K., Thomas, R., & Zakotnik-Gutierrez, J. (2021). Own your walls: Portraiture and researcher reflexive collage self-portraits. *Qualitative Inquiry, 27*(1), 136-147. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800419897699

Lawrence-Lightfoot, S. (1983). *The good high school: Portraits of character and culture*. Basic Books.

Lawrence-Lightfoot, S. (2005). Reflections on portraiture: A dialogue between art and science. *Qualitative Inquiry 11(*1), 3-15. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800404270955

Lawrence-Lightfoot, S. (2016). Commentary: Portraiture methodology: Blending art and science. *LEARNing Landscapes*, *9*(2), 19-27.

Lawrence-Lightfoot, S., & Davis, J.H. (1997). *The art and science of portraiture.* Jossey-Bass.

Leavy, P. (2014). Introduction. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 1-13). Oxford University Press.

Leavy, P. (2015). *Method meets art (2nd ed). Arts-based research practice*. Guilford Publications.

Leavy, P. (2017). *Research design: Quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, arts-based, and community-based participatory research approaches*. Guilford Publications.

Lee, M., Halsey, M., & Flynn, A. (2021). Streets of menace: Constructing and deconstructing youth gangs in two Australian cities. *Oñati Socio-Legal Series*, *11*(5), 1114-1132. https://doi.org/10.35295/osls.iisl/0000-0000-0000-1212

Lenette, C. (2019). *Arts-based methods in refugee research: Creating sanctuaries*. Springer.

Lenette, C. (2022a). Cultural safety in participatory arts-based research: How can we do better? *Journal of Participatory Research Methods*, *3*(1).

Lenette, C. (2022b). *Participatory action research: Ethics and decolonization*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197512456.001.0001

Leonardi, C. (2013). *Dealing with government in South Sudan: Histories of chiefship, community & state*. Boydell & Brewer Ltd.

Lincoln, Y. S. (1995). Emerging criteria for qualitative and interpretive research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 1*(3), 275-289.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage Publications.

Little, S., & Cheng, K. (2023). Digital funds of identity: Understanding a young child's plurilingual development through mediagrams. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, *18(*3), 208-222. https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2023.2276952

Liou, D. D., Nieves Martinez, A., & Rotheram-Fuller, E. (2016). "Don't give up on me": Critical mentoring pedagogy for the classroom building students' community cultural wealth. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 29*(1), 104-129. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2015.101784

Llopart, M., & Esteban-Guitart, M. (2017). Strategies and resources for contextualising the curriculum based on the funds of knowledge approach: A literature review. *The Australian Educational Researcher, 44*, 255–274. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-017-0237-8

Llopart, M., & Esteban-Guitart, M. (2018). Funds of knowledge in the 21st century societies: Inclusive educational practices for under-represented students. A literature review. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 50*(2), 145-161. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2016.1247913

Losoncz, I. (2019). *Institutional disrespect: South Sudanese experiences of the structural marginalisation of refugee migrants in Australia.* Palgrave. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-7717-4

Lovejoy, P. E. (2019). *Slavery in the global diaspora of Africa*. Routledge.

Lovell, J. L., & Scott-McLaughlin R. E. (2022). Intersectional allyship & the importance of relationships. In B. Palmer II (Ed.), *Practical social justice: Diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies based on*

the legacy of Dr. Joseph L. White (pp. 25-28). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003132899

Lucas, D., Jamali, M., & Edgar, B. (2013). A statistical profile of the Sudan-born in Australia. In J. M. Marlowe, A. Harris & T. Lyons (Eds.), *Sudanese diaspora in Australia and New Zealand: Reconciling the past with the present* (pp. 48-66). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Ludwig, B. (2016). "Wiping the refugee dust from my feet": Advantages and burdens of refugee status and the refugee label. *International Migration, 54*(1), 5-18. https://doi.org/10.111/imig.12111

Lynn, M., Jennings, M. E., & Hughes, S. (2013). Critical race pedagogy 2.0: Lessons from Derrick Bell. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *16*(4), 603–628. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2013.817776

Macaulay, L. (2021). Australian Sudanese and South Sudanese youths' perspectives on the youth/parent relationship and its influence on the transition to adulthood. *YOUNG*, *29*(2), 137-156. https://doi.org/10.1177/1103308820937540

Macaulay, L. (2023a). "You're judged a lot": Australian Sudanese and South Sudanese youths' perspectives on their experiences in public spaces. In M. De Backer, P. Hopkins, I. van Liempt, R. Finlay, E. Kirndörfer, M. Kox, M.C. Benwell & K. Hörschelmann (Eds.), *Refugee youth* (pp. 53-168). Bristol University Press. https://doi.org/10.51952/9781529221039.ch010

Macaulay, L. (2023b). "She just saw me-she didn't teach me": The perspectives of Australian Sudanese and South Sudanese youth on the student/teacher relationship in Australian schools. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, *50*(5), 1323-1341. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-022-00554-z

Macaulay, L., & Deppeler, J. (2020). Perspectives on negative media representations of Australian Sudanese and South Sudanese youths. *Journal of Intercultural Studies, 41*(2), 213-320. https://doi.org/10.1080/072566868.2020.1724908

Macaulay, L., & Deppeler, J. (2022). "Eighteen just makes you a person with certain privileges": The perspectives of Australian Sudanese and South Sudanese youths regarding the transition to adulthood. *Identities*, *29*(2), 223-242. https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2020.1844517

Macdonald, B. J. (2017). Traditional and critical theory today: Toward a critical political science. *New Political Science*, *39*(4), 511-522.

MacKenzie, N., & Knipe, S. (2006). Research dilemmas: Paradigms, methods and methodology. *Issues in Educational Research*, *16*(2), 193-205.

Madut, K. K. (2015). Institutional development, governance, and ethnic politics in South Sudan. *Journal of Global Economics, 3*(2). 1–6. http://dx.doi.org/10.4172/2375-4389.1000147

Madut, K. K. (2017). Spatiality of ethnic identity and construction of sociopolitical interaction in South Sudan. *Human Geographies*, *11*(2), 181–194. https://doi.org/10.5719/hgeo.2017.112.4

Madut, K. K. (2020). Determinants of early marriage and construction of gender roles in South Sudan. *SAGE Open*, *10*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020922974

Maher, S., Kindersley, N., Carver, F., & Deng, S. A. (2022). South Sudanese Australians: Transnational kinship during conflict and economic crisis. In M. Phillips & L. Olliff (Eds.), *Understanding diaspora development: Lessons from Australia and the Pacific* (pp. 161-183). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-97866-2_8

Mahmoudi, A., Khoshnood, A., & Babaei, A. (2014). Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy and its implications in curriculum planning. *Journal of Education and Practice*, *5*(14), 86-91.

Majavu, M. (2020). The 'African gangs' narrative: Associating Blackness with criminality and other anti-Black racist tropes in Australia. *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal*, *13*(1), 27-39. https://doi.org/10.1080/17528631.2018.1541958

Majok, S. A. (2018). Mental health in South Sudan: A ticking time bomb. *South Sudan Medical Journal*, *11*(3), 55. http://www.southsudanmedicaljournal.com/assets/files/Journals/vol_11_iss_3_aug_18/Editorial.pdf

Mama, A. (2001). Challenging subjects: Gender and power in African contexts. *African Sociological Review / Revue Africaine de Sociologie*, *5*(2), 63–73.

Mamdani, M. (2014). *South Sudan: No power-sharing without reform*. Makerere Institute of Social Research. https://misr.mak.ac.ug/news/south-sudan-no-power-sharing-without-reform-by-mahmood-mamdani

Mansouri, F., & Jenkins, L. (2010). Schools as sites of race relations and intercultural tension. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 35*(7). https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2010v35n7.8

Mapedzahama, V., & Kwansah-Aidoo, K. (2017). Blackness as burden? The lived experience of Black Africans in Australia. *Sage Open, 7*(3), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244017720483

Marlowe, J. (2011). South Sudanese diaspora in Australasia. *The Australasian Review of African Studies, 32*(2), 3-9.

Marmo, M. (2013). The ethical implications of the researcher's dominant position in cross-cultural refugee research. In K. Block, E. Riggs & N. Haslam (Eds.), *Values and vulnerabilities: The ethics of research with refugees and asylum seekers* (pp. 85–102). Australian Academic Press.

Marsh, M. M., & Zhulamanova, I. (2017). Follow the leader: Attending to the curriculum making potential of preschoolers. *Early Child Development and Care, 187*(5-6), 1004-1014. https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2016.1223069

Matthews, J. (2008). Schooling and settlement: Refugee education in Australia. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, *18*(1), 31–45. https://doi.org/10.1080/09620210802195947

Mayo, D. J. (1994). The British Southern Policy in Sudan: An inquiry into the Closed District Ordinances (1914-1946). *Northeast African Studies*, *1*(2–3), 165–185. https://doi.org/10.1353/nas.1994.0019

Mayo, P. (2020). Gramsci: Power, culture & education. *Actio Nova: Revista de Teoria de la Literatura y Literatura Comparada*, (4), 23-45. https://doi.org/10.15366/actionova2020.4.002

Mbiti, J. (1969). *African religions and philosophy*. Heinemann.

McArthur, J. (2021). Critical theory in a decolonial age. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *54*(10), 1681–1692. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2021.1934670

McMichael, C., Gifford, S. M., & Correa-Velez, I. (2010). Negotiating family, navigating resettlement: Family connectedness amongst resettled youth with refugee backgrounds living in Melbourne, Australia. *Journal of Youth Studies*, *14*(2), 179–195. https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2010.506529

McNiff, S. (2008). Arts-based research. In J.G. Knowles & A. L. Cole (Eds.), *Handbook of the arts in qualitative research: Perspectives, methodologies, examples, and issues* (pp. 29–40). Sage Publications, Incorporated.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Merriam, S. B. (2002). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis.* Jossey-Bass.

Merriam, S. B., Johnson-Bailey, J., Lee, M. Y., Lee, Y., Ntseane, G., & Muhamed, M. (2001). Power and positionality: Negotiating insider/outsider status within and across cultures. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 20*(5), 405-416.

Mertens, D. M. (1999). Inclusive evaluation: Implications of transformative theory for evaluation. *American Journal of Evaluation, 20*(1), 1–14.

Mertens, D. M. (2007a). Transformative considerations: Inclusion and social justice. *American Journal of Evaluation, 28*(1), 86-90. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098214006298058

Mertens, D. M. (2007b). Transformative paradigm: Mixed methods and social justice. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 1*(3), 212-225. https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689807302811

Mertens, D. M. (2009). *Transformative research and evaluation*. Guilford Publications.

Mertens, D. M. (2012). Transformative mixed methods: Addressing inequities. *American Behavioral Scientist, 56*(6), 802-813. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764211433797

Mertens, D. M. (2015). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Mertens, D. M. (2017). Transformative research: Personal and societal. *International Journal for Transformative Research*, *4*(1), 18-24. https://doi.org/10.1515/ijtr-2017-0001

Meyerhoff, M. (2015). Gender performativity. In A. Bolin & P. Whelehan (Eds.), *The international encyclopedia of human sexuality* (pp. 1-4). John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118896877.wbiehs178

Miller, E., Ziaian, T., Baak, M., & de Anstiss, H. (2021). Recognition of refugee students' cultural wealth and social capital in resettlement. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 28*(5). https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2021.1946723

Miller, E., Ziaian, T., de Anstiss, H., & Baak, M. (2022). Practices for inclusion, structures of marginalisation: Experiences of refugee background students in Australian secondary schools. *The Australian Educational Researcher, 49*, 1063–1084. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-021-00475-3

Miranda, P. (2018). *Getting by on the margins: Sudanese and Somali Refugees—A case report of refugees in towns: Cairo, Egypt*. Tufts University. https://reliefweb.int/report/egypt/getting-margins-sudanese-and-somali-refugees-case-report-refugees-towns-cairo-egypt

Mkabela, Q. N. (2015). Ubuntu as a foundation for researching African Indigenous psychology. *Indilinga African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems*, *14*(2), 284-291

Mnyaka, M., & Motlhabi, M. (2005). The African concept of *Ubuntu/Botho* and its socio-moral significance. *Black Theology*,*3*(2), 215–237. https://doi.org/10.1558/blth.3.2.215.65725

Mogga, J. L. K. (2019). The mental health treatment gap in South Sudan. *South Sudan Medical Journal*, *12*(1), 28-29.

Moll, L. C. (2005). Reflections and possibilities. In N. González, L. C. Moll, & C. Amanti, *Funds of knowledge: Theorising practices in households, communities, and classrooms* (pp. 275-287). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Moll, L. C. (2010). Mobilizing culture, language, and educational practices: Fulfilling the promises of Mendez and Brown. *Educational Researcher, 39*(6), 451-460. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X10380654

Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., González, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes to classrooms. *Theory into Practice 31*(2), 132-141. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405849209543534

Moll, L. C., & Greenberg, J. B. (1990). Creating zones of possibilities: Combining social contexts for instruction. In L. C. Moll (Ed.), *Vygotsky and education instructional implications and applications of sociohistorical psychology* (pp. 319-348). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139173674.016

Molla, T. (2019). Educational aspirations and experiences of refugee-background African youth in Australia: A case study. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *25*(8), 877–895. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2019.1588924

Molla, T. (2023). Racial othering and relational wellbeing: African refugee youth in Australia. *Social Sciences*, *12*(11), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci12110609

Molla, T. (2024). *African heritage Australian youth: Forced displacement, educational attainment, and integration outcomes*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003156703

Motsa, Z. (2017). When the lion tells the story: A response from South Africa. *Higher Education Research & Development, 36*(1), 28-35. http://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2017.1249070

Mude, W., & Mwanri, L. (2020). Negotiating identity and belonging in a new space: Opportunities and experiences of African youths in South Australia. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 17*(15), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17155484

Mugumbate, J. R., & Chereni, A. (2020). Now, the theory of Ubuntu has its space in social work. *African Journal of Social Work, 10*(1), v–xvii.

Muller, B., Munslow, B., & O'Dempsey, T. (2017). When community reintegration is not the best option: Interethnic violence and the trauma of parental loss in South Sudan. *The International Journal of Health Planning and Management*, *32*(1), 91-109. https://doi.org/10.1002/hpm.2311

Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN). (n.d.). *Education and students from refugee and migrant backgrounds: A briefing paper.* https://myan.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/education_issue_05.pdf

Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN). (2019). *2017-2018 youth settlement trends in Australia.* https://myan.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/national-snapshot-myan_2019full.pdf

Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN). (2020). *National Youth Settlement Framework: A guide for supporting and measuring good practice with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in Australia.* https://myan.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/myan0004-revised-nysf_fa_low-res.pdf

Muluka, B. O. (2021). *Forced migration and the dialectic of home and return: The case of South Sudanese refugees in Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement in Kenya*, 1991-2019, [Doctoral Dissertation, University of Leicester]. https://doi.org/10.25392/leicester.data.16602068.v1

Mupedziswa, R., Rankopo, M., & Mwansa, L. (2019). Ubuntu as a Pan-African philosophical framework for social work in Africa. In J. M. Twikirize & H. Spitzer (Eds.), *Social work practice in Africa: Indigenous and innovative approaches* (pp. 21-38). Fountain Publishers.

Murove M. F. (2012). Ubuntu. *Diogenes*, *59*(3-4),36-47. https://doi:10.1177/0392192113493737

Nyamwaya, M., & Kitinya Kirina, T. (2024). Decolonising gender and development: The influence of Ubuntu philosophy on the articulation of African feminism. In O. Mutanga & T. Marovah (Eds.),

Southern Theories: Contemporary and Future Challenges (pp. 117-.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003358879-8

Mwanri, L., Okyere, E., & Pulvirenti, M. (2018). Intergenerational conflicts, cultural restraints and suicide: Experiences of young African people in Adelaide, South Australia. *Journal of Immigrant Minority Health, 20*, 479–484. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10903-017-0557-9

Nasser-Eddin, N., & Abu-Assab, N. (2020). Decolonial approaches to refugee migration: Nof Nasser-Eddin and Nour Abu-Assab in conversation. *Migration and Society, 3*(1), 190–202. https://doi.org/10.3167/arms.2020.030115

National Health and Medical Research Council [NHMRC]. (2023). *National Statement on ethical conduct in human research.* https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/research-policy/ethics/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research

Ndhlovu, F. (2009). The limitations of language and nationality as prime markers of African diaspora identities in the State of Victoria. *African Identities, 7*(1), 17-32. https://doi.org/10.1080/14725840802583264

Ng, L. C., López, B., Pritchard, M., & Deng, D. (2017). Posttraumatic stress disorder, trauma, and reconciliation in South Sudan. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology, 52*, 705–714. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-017-1376-y

Ngunjiri, F. W. (2007). Painting a counter-narrative of African womanhood: Reflections on how my research transformed me. *Journal of Research Practice*, *3*(1), 1-13.

Nguyen, N. M. (2015). *I tweet like a white person tbh! #whitewashed*: Examining the language of internalized racism and the policing of ethnic identity on Twitter. *Social Semiotics*, *26*(5), 505–523. https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2015.1126046

Ngwenya, N., Dziva Chikwari, C., Seeley, J., & Ferrand, R. A. (2023). Are concepts of adolescence from the Global North appropriate for Africa? A debate. *BMJ global health*, *8*(12), 1-6. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2023-012614

Nolan, D., Burgin, A., Farquharson, K., & Marjoribanks, T. (2016). Media and the politics of belonging: Sudanese Australians, letters to the editor and the new integrationism. *Patterns of Prejudice, 50*(3), 253–275. https://doi.org/10.1080/0031322X.2016.1207925

Nugud, M. I. (2013). *Slavery in the Sudan*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137286031

Nunn, C. (2010). Spaces to speak: Challenging representations of Sudanese-Australians. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, *31*(2), 183–198. https://doi.org/10.1080/07256861003606366

Nyaba, A. (2019). *South Sudan: Elites, ethnicity, endless wars and the stunted state*. Mkuki na Nyota Publishers Ltd. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvh8r0ft

Nyadera, I. N. (2018). South Sudan conflict from 2013 to 2018: Rethinking the causes, situation and solutions. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution,18*(2), 59-86. https://www.accord.org.za/ajcr-issues/south-sudan-conflict-from-2013-to-2018/

Nyadera, I. N., Islam, Md. N., & Shihundu, F. (2023). Rebel fragmentation and protracted conflicts: Lessons from SPLM/A in South Sudan. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, *59*(8), 2428-2448. https://doi.org/10.1177/00219096231154815

Nyirenda, V., & Sesanti, S. (2023). Understanding gender identities in an African communitarian world view. *South African Journal of Philosophy, 42*(3), 176-191. https://doi.org/10.1080/02580136.2023.2275231

O'Byrne, R. (2014). "Dancing is like our identity. It shows us who we are": Performing identity among New Zealand's refugee-background South Sudanese Acholi. *Human Welfare, 3*, 5-21.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). (2023). An overview of diversity, equity and inclusion in education. In *Equity and Inclusion in Education: Finding Strength through Diversity.* OECD Publishing Paris. https://doi.org/10.1787/0c767cb5-en

Oikonomidoy, E., & Karam, F. J. (2020). Funds of identity and language development: The case of a Syrian refugee-background child. *International Journal of Early Years Education, 28*(2), 122-135. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2020.1765086

Oikonomidoy, E., & Karam, F. J. (2022). Structural barriers and processes of defunding of funds of identity of refugee-background children. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 52*(5), 633-649. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2022.204670

Oikonomidoy, E., & Karam, F. (2023). 'Flatbread and lollipops:' Social funds of identity in the trilingual journey of a refugee-background student. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching, 18*(3), 223-236. https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2023.2280844

Okeke, R. C., Idike, A. N., Akwara, A. F., Okorie, C. O., & Ibiam, O. E. (2021). Failure of states, fragility of states, and the prospects of peace in South Sudan. *SAGE Open*, *11*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211020483

Oliver, M., & Shapiro, T. (1995). *Black wealth/White wealth: A new perspective on racial inequality*. Routledge.

Oughton, H. (2010). Funds of knowledge—a conceptual critique. *Studies in the Education of Adults, 42*(1), 63-78. https://doi.org/10.1080/02660830.2010.11661589

Oyěwùmí, O. (2005). Visualising the body: Western theories and African subjects. In O. Oyěwùmí (Ed.), *African gender studies: A reader* (pp. 3-21). Springer.

Özçürümez, S., Tursun, Ö., & Tunç, A. (2023). Exploring the impact of teachers' past migration experience on inclusive education for refugee children. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2023.2221255

Paardekooper, B., de Jong, J. T. V. M., & Hermanns, J. M. A. (1999). The psychological impact of war and the refugee situation on South Sudanese children in refugee camps in northern Uganda: An exploratory study. *Journal of Child Psychology, Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines*, 40, 529–536.

Palmer, D., Coventry, G., Dawes, G., & Moston, S. (2020). *Crime, criminalization and refugees: The case of Sudanese Australians*. Springer Nature. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-6175-7

Paradis, E., Nimmon, L., Wondimagegn, D., & Whitehead, C. R. (2020). Critical theory: Broadening our thinking to explore the structural factors at play in health professions education. *Academic Medicine*, *95*(6), 842-845. https://doi.org/10.1097/ACM.0000000000003108

Paris, D. (2012). Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A needed change in stance, terminology, and practice. *Educational Researcher*, *41*(3), 93–97. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41477769

Paris, D. (2021). Culturally sustaining pedagogies and our futures. *The Educational Forum*, *85*(4), 364–376. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2021.1957634

Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (2014). What are we seeking to sustain through culturally sustaining pedagogy? A loving critique forward. *Harvard Educational Review, 84*(1), 85-100.

Park, J. J., Dizon, J. P. M., & Malcolm, M. (2020). Spiritual capital in communities of Color: Religion and spirituality as sources of community cultural wealth. *Urban Review,* 52, 127–150. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-019-00515-4

Parra López, A., Jones, T. M., Malorni, A., Diaz, A., & McCowan, K. (2024). The role of teacher critical racial consciousness in cultivating student–teacher relationships and school belonging for Black, Indigenous, and youth of Color. *Psychology in the Schools*, *61,* 2448–2472. https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.23175

Patton, M. Q. (2014). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Pearce, E., McMurray, K., Walsh, C. A., & Malek, L. (2017). Searching for tomorrow—South Sudanese women reconstructing resilience through photovoice. *Journal of International Migration & Integration, 18*, 369–389. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-016-0500-2

Perry, K. H. (2008). From storytelling to writing: Transforming literacy practices among Sudanese refugees. *Journal of Literacy Research*, *40*(3), 317–358. https://doi.org/10.1080/10862960802502196

Phillips, M. (2011). Convenient labels, inaccurate representations: Turning Southern Sudanese refugees into 'African-Australians'. *Australasian Review of African Studies, 32*(2), 57-79. https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.522668772187654

Phillips, M. (2013). Being South Sudanese in the diaspora: Exploring the relationship between pre-migration, identity and labelling. In J. Marlowe, A. Harris & T. Lyons (Eds.), *South Sudanese diaspora in Australia and New Zealand: Reconciling the past with the present* (pp. 67-84). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Phinney, J. (1990). Ethnic identity in adolescents and adults: A review of research. *Psychological Bulletin, 108,* 499-514.

Phinney, J. S. (1996). Understanding ethnic diversity. *American Behavioral Scientist, 40*(2), 143-152. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764296040002005

Pittaway, T., & Dantas, J. A. R. (2021). African youth gangs: The marginalization of South Sudanese young people in Melbourne, Australia. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies, 22*(1), 178–194. https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2021.2017534

Pittaway, T., & Dantas, J. A. R. (2022). The role of sport in coping and resilience amongst resettled South Sudanese youth in Australia. *Health Promotion International*, *37*(2). https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daab100

Pittaway, T., & Dantas, J. A. R. (2023). "I don't think marijuana counts as a drug": Drug & alcohol use amongst South Sudanese youth in Australia. *Journal of Ethnicity in Substance Abuse, 22*(3), 571-588. https://doi.org/10.1080/15332640.2021.1965932

Pittaway, T., Riggs, E., & Dantas, J. A. R. (2023). Intergenerational conflict among resettled South Sudanese in Australia. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, *60*(2), 215-225. https://doi.org/10.1177/13634615221105115

Poggo, S. S. (2002). General Ibrahim Abboud's military administration in the Sudan, 1958-1964: Implementation of the programs of Islamization and Arabization in the Southern Sudan. *Northeast African Studies, 9*(1), 67-101.

Poggo, S.S. (2009). *The first Sudanese Civil War.* Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230617988_3

Poole, A. (2017a). Funds of knowledge 2.0: Towards digital funds of identity. *Learning, Culture and Social Interaction, 13,* 50-59. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lcsi.2017.02.002

Poole, A. (2017b). "I want to be a furious leopard with magical wings and super power": Developing an ethico-interpretive framework for detecting Chinese students' funds of identity. *Cogent Education, 4*(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2017.1316915

Poole, A. (2020). Re-theorising the funds of identity concept from the perspective of subjectivity. *Culture & Psychology, 26*(3), 401-416. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X19839070

Poole, A. (2021). Towards a multimodal method for identifying and interpreting funds of identity derived from avatars. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education, 45*(5), 505-517. https://doi.org/10.1080/1743727X.2021.2011195

Poole, A. (2023). Revisiting the funds of identity approach in and for China. In M. Esteban-Guitart (Ed.), *Funds of knowledge and identity pedagogies for social justice: International perspectives and praxis from communities, classrooms, and curriculum* (pp. 57-68). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003369851-7

Poole, A., & Huang, J. (2018). Resituating funds of identity within contemporary interpretations of perezhivanie. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, *25*(2), 125–137. https://doi.org/10.1080/10749039.2018.1434799

Poppitt, G., & Frey, R. (2007). Sudanese adolescent refugees: Acculturation and acculturative stress. *Australian Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, *17*(2), 160–181. https://doi.org/10.1375/ajgc.17.2.160

Powell, J., & Menendian, S. (2016). The problem of othering: Towards inclusiveness and belonging. *Othering & Belonging, 1*, 14-39.

Pritchard, M. (2013). "Still, God helps you." *Wilson Quarterly, 37*(3), 17-51.

Pritchard, M., & Verjee, A. (2021). *South Sudan: From 10 states to 32 states and back again.* United States Institute of Peace. https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/03/south-sudan-10-states-32-states-and-back-agai

Pyke, K. D. (2010). What is internalized racial oppression and why don't we study it? Acknowledging racism's hidden injuries. *Sociological Perspectives*, *53*(4), 551-572. https://doi.org/10.1525/sop.2010.53.4.551

Ragelienė, T. (2016). Links of adolescents identity development and relationship with peers: A systematic literature review. *Journal of the Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 25*(2), 97–105.

Rasheed, D. S., Brown, J. L., Doyle, S. L., & Jennings, P. A. (2020). The effect of teacher–child race/ethnicity matching and classroom diversity on children's socioemotional and academic skills. *Child Development*, *91*(3), e597-e618. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.13275

Ray, V. (2022). *On critical race theory: Why it matters & why you should care*. Random House.

Redfield, R., Linton, R., & Herskovits, M. J. (1936). Memorandum for the study of acculturation. *American Anthropologist*, *38*(1), 149–152. http://www.jstor.org/stable/662563

ReliefWeb (1999). *Slavery, war and peace in Sudan: A Washington Office on Africa briefing paper*. Washington Office on Africa. https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/slavery-war-and-peace-sudan

Rights Advocacy Project. (2018). *States of refuge: Access to health, housing and education for people seeking asylum and refugees in Australia.* Liberty Victoria. https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2018-07/apo-nid181621.pdf

Rios-Aguilar, C., Marquez Kiyama, J., Gravitt, M., & Moll, L. C. (2011). Funds of knowledge for the poor and forms of capital for the rich? A capital approach to examining funds of knowledge. *Theory and Research in Education, 9*(2), 163-184.

Rissanen, I. (2023). Finland and Sweden: Muslim teachers as cultural brokers. In M. Gutman, W. Jayusi, M. Beck & Z. Bekerman (Eds.), *To be a minority teacher in a foreign culture: Empirical evidence from an international perspective* (pp. 425–438). Springer.

Riyami, T. A. (2015). Main approaches to educational research. *International Journal of Innovation and Research in Educational Sciences, 2*(5), 2349–5219.

Rizvi, S. (2023). 'Unruly' Ethnic Minorities: Exclusion Through Policy Constructions. In E. J. Done & H. Knowler (Eds.) *International Perspectives on Exclusionary Pressures in Education* (pp. 259-277). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-14113-3_14

Roberts, E. (2018). The 'transient insider': Identity and intimacy in home community research. In T. Loughran & D. Mannay (Eds.), *Emotion and the researcher: Sites, subjectivities and relationships*. *Studies in qualitative methodology* (Vol. 16, pp. 113-125). Emerald Publishing Limited. https://doi.org/10.1108/S1042-319220180000016008

Roberts, B., Damundu, E. Y., Lomoro, O., & Sondorp, E. (2009). Post-conflict mental health needs: A cross-sectional survey of trauma, depression and associated factors in Juba, Southern Sudan. *BMC Psychiatry*, *9*(7). https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-244X-9-7

Robinson, J. (2013). People of South Sudanese heritage living in Australia: Implications of demography for individual and community resilience. In J. Marlowe, A. Harris & T. Lyons, (Eds.). *South Sudanese diaspora in Australia and New Zealand: Reconciling the past with the present* (pp. 12-47). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Rodriguez, G. M. (2013). Power and agency in education: Exploring the pedagogical dimensions of funds of knowledge. *Review of Research in Education*, *37*(1), 87–120. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X12462686

Rossi, M. R. N. (2015). *The Mahdist Revolution*. Normanby Press.

Said, E. W. (1994). *Culture and imperialism*. Vintage Books.

Saidi, C. (2023). "The Father is also the Sister": A Non-binary Gendered History of Matrilineal Bantu Communities. *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, *32*(3), 229-247. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2024.2356410

Sano, K. (2019). 'One' but divided: Tribalism and grouping among secondary school students in South Sudan. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, *50*(2), 189-204. https://doi.org/10.1111/aeq.12288

Saubich, X., & Esteban-Guitart, M. (2011). Bringing funds of family knowledge to school. The living Morocco project. *REMIE—Multidisciplinary Journal of Educational Research, 1*(1), 79-103. https://doi.org/10.4452/remie.2011.04

Savic, M, Chur-Hansen A., Afzal Mahmood M., & Moore V. (2013). Separation from family and its impact on the mental health of Sudanese refugees in Australia: A qualitative study. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, *37,* 383–388. https://doi.org/10.1111/1753-6405.12088

Savic, M., Chur-Hansen, A., Mahmood, M. A., & Moore, V. M. (2016). "We don't have to go and see a special person to solve this problem": Trauma, mental health beliefs and processes for addressing 'mental health issues' among Sudanese refugees in Australia. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry, 62*(1), 76-83. https://doi.org/10.1177/0020764015595664

Schouten, P., & Bachmann, J. (2020). Buffering state-making: Geopolitics in the Sudd marshlands of South Sudan. *Geopolitics*, 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2020.1858283

Schwandt, T. R. (1990). Paths to inquiry in the social disciplines: Scientific, constructivist, and critical theory methodologies. In E. G. Guba (Ed.), *The paradigm dialogue* (pp. 258-276). Sage Publications.

Schwartz, S. J. (2005). A new identity for identity research: Recommendations for expanding and refocusing the identity literature. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 20*, 293–308. https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558405274890

Schwartz, S. J., Mason, C. A., Pantin, H., & Szapocznik, J. (2009). Longitudinal relationships between family functioning and identity development in Hispanic adolescents: Continuity and change. *The Journal of Early Adolescence, 29*(2), 177-211. https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431608317605

Schweitzer, R., Melville, F., Steel, Z., & Lacherez, P. (2006). Trauma, post-migration living difficulties, and social support as predictors of psychological adjustment in resettled Sudanese refugees. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, 40*(2), 179-187. https://doi.org/10.1080/j.1440-1614.2006.01766.x

Sellars, M., & Murphy, H. (2017). Becoming Australian: a review of southern Sudanese students' educational experiences. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *22*(5), 490–509. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2017.1373308

Seppälä, T., Sarantou, M., & Miettinen, S. (2021). Introduction: Arts-based methods for decolonising participatory research. In T. Seppälä, M. Sarantou & S. Miettinen (Eds.), *Arts-based methods for decolonising participatory research* (pp. 1-18). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003053408-1

Seri-Hersch, I. (2017). Education in colonial Sudan, 1900–1957. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History*. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.013.12

Shakespeare-Finch, J., & Wickham, K. (2010). Adaptation of Sudanese refugees in an Australian context: Investigating helps and hindrances. *International Migration*, *48*(1), 23-46. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.2009.00561.x

Shapiro, S., & MacDonald, M. T. (2017). From deficit to asset: Locating discursive resistance in a refugee-background student's written and oral narrative. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 16(2), 80–93.

Sharma, M., Koenen, K. C., Borba, C. P. C., Williams, D. R., & Deng, D. K. (2022). The measurement of war-related trauma amongst internally displaced men and women in South Sudan: Psychometric analysis of the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 304*, 102-112. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2022.02.016

Shepherd, S. M., Newton, D., & Farquharson, K. (2018). Pathways to offending for young Sudanese Australians. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, *51*(4), 481-501. https://doi.org/10.1177/0004865817749262

Shepherd, S. M., & Spivak, B. L. (2020). Estimating the extent and nature of offending by Sudanese-born individuals in Victoria. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology, 53*(3), 352-368. https://doi.org/10.1177/0004865820929066

Shirrell, M., Bristol, T. J., & Britton, T. A. (2024). The effects of student–teacher ethnoracial matching on exclusionary discipline for Asian American, Black, and Latinx Students: Evidence from New York City. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *46*(3), 555-580. https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737231175461

Shumbamhini, M., & Chirongoma, S. (2024). Ubuntu, gender equality and sustainable development in Africa: An African feminist perspective. In E. Chitando, B. Okyere-Manu, S. Chirongoma & M.

W. Dube (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Ubuntu, inequality and sustainable development* (pp. 781–798). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-69573-5_47

Sidhu, R., & Taylor, S. (2007). Educational provision for refugee youth in Australia: Left to chance? *Journal of Sociology, 43*(3), 283-300. https://doi.org/10.1177/1440783307080107

Smith, K. E. I. (2008). Hybrid identities: Theoretical examinations. In K. E. I. Smith & P. Leavy (Eds.), *Hybrid identities: Theoretical and empirical examinations* (pp. 3–12). Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004170391.i-411.6

Soedirgo, J., & Glas, A. (2020). Toward active reflexivity: Positionality and practice in the production of knowledge. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, *53*(3), 527-531. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096519002233

Solórzano, D.G. (1997). Images and words that wound: Critical race theory, racial stereotyping, and teacher education. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 24*(3), 5-19. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23478088

Solórzano D. (1998). Critical race theory, race and gender microaggressions, and the experience of Chicana and Chicano scholars. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *11*(1), 121–136. https://doi.org/10.1080/095183998236926

Solórzano, D. G., & Delgado Bernal, D. (2001). Examining transformational resistance through a critical race and LatCrit theory framework: Chicana and Chicano students in an urban context. *Urban Education, 36*(3), 308–342. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0042085901363002

Solórzano, D., & Villalpando, O. (1998). Critical race theory, marginality and the experience of students of Color in higher education. In C. A. Torres & T. Mitchell (Eds.), *Sociology of education: Emerging perspectives* (pp. 211-224). State University of New York Press.

Solórzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2001). From racial stereotyping and deficit discourse toward a critical race theory in teacher education. *Multicultural Education, 9*(1), 2-8. https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/racial-stereotyping-deficit-discourse-toward/docview/216501989/se-2

Solórzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2002). Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for education research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *8*(1), 23-44. https://doi.org/10.1177/107780040200800103

Sommer, M., & Schwartz, S. (2011). *Dowry and division: Youth and state building in South Sudan*. United Nations Institute of Peace. https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/134640/SR_295.pdf

Straka, A. (2019). Structuring arts-based analysis in portraiture research. *Qualitative Research Journal*, *20*(1), 76-85. https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-05-2019-0045

Subero, D., Vila, I., & Esteban-Guitart, M. (2015). Some contemporary forms of the funds of knowledge approach. Developing culturally responsive pedagogy for social justice. *International Journal of Educational Psychology, 4*(1), 33-53. https://doi.org/10.4471/ijep.2015.02

Sudan Tribune. (2011, July 10). *Salva Kirr takes oath, grants amnesty to rebels.* https://sudantribune.com/article39035/

Tamale, S. (2020). *Decolonization and Afro-feminism*. Daraja Press.

Tankink, M. T. A. (2013). The silence of South-Sudanese women: Social risks in talking about experiences of sexual violence. *Culture, Health & Sexuality, 15*(4), 391-403. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2012.752936

Tate, W. F. (1997). Critical race theory and education: History, theory, and implications. *Review of Research in Education*, *22*, 195. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X022001195

Tatham, C. (2023). A systematic literature review of third space theory in research with children (aged 4-12) in multicultural educational settings. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/14681366.2023.2283798

Taye, T. A. (2020). Ubuntu: An approach for identity-based conflicts in the contemporary Africa. *African Identities*, *19*(4), 419–435. https://doi.org/10.1080/14725843.2020.1801383

Taylor, E. (2023). The foundations of critical race theory in education: An introduction. In E. Taylor, D. Gillborn & G. Ladson-Billings (Eds.), *Foundations of critical race theory in education* (3rd ed.) (pp. 1-10). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/b23210-1

Taylor, P. C. (2008). Multi-paradigmatic research design spaces for cultural studies researchers embodying postcolonial theorising. *Cultural Studies of Science Education, 3*, 881–890. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11422-008-9140-y

Taylor, P. C., & Medina, M. (2011). Educational research paradigms: From positivism to pluralism. *College Research Journal*, *1*(1), 1-16. https://doi.org/10.13140/2.1.3542.0805

Taylor, S. (2008). Schooling and the settlement of refugee young people in Queensland: "… the challenges are massive". *Social Alternatives, 27*(3), 58-65.

Taylor, S., & Sidhu, R. K. (2012). Supporting refugee students in schools: What constitutes inclusive education? *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 16*(1), 39–56. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603110903560085

Tempany, M. (2009). What research tells us about the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of Sudanese refugees: A literature review. *Transcultural Psychiatry, 46*(2), 300-315. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363461509105820

Temple, B., & Moran, R. (2006). Introduction. In B. Temple & R. Moran (Eds.), *Doing research with refugees: Issues and guidelines* (pp. 1-20). The Policy Press.

Tobin, G. A., & Begley, C. M. (2004). Methodological rigour within a qualitative framework. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *48*(4), 388-396.https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2004.03207.x

Tolman, S. (2019). Considerations for using critical pedagogy as the vehicle to promote social justice in higher education. In J. Hoffman, P. Blessinger & M. Makahnya (Eds.), *Strategies for fostering inclusive classrooms in higher education: International perspectives on equity and inclusion* (pp. 197-212). Emerald Publishing Limited. https://doi.org/10.1108/S2055-364120190000016016

Travis, S. (2020). Portrait of a methodology: Portraiture as critical arts-based research. *Visual Arts Research, 46*(2), 100-114 https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/visuartsrese.46.2.0100

Troutt Powell, E. M. (2012). *Tell this in my memory: Stories of enslavement from Egypt, Sudan, and the Ottoman Empire*. Stanford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1515/9780804783750

Tuhiwai Smith, L. T. (2021). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous People.* (3rd ed.). Zed Books. https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350225282

Tutlam, N. T., Flick, L. H., Xian, H., Matsuo, H., Tutdeal, N., & Glowinski, A. (2022). Emotional and behavioral disorders among US-born children of South Sudanese parents resettled as refugees. *Global Social Welfare, 9*, 219–228. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40609-022-00228-9

Twali, M. S. (2019). The role of identity transformations in comparative victim beliefs? Evidence from South Sudanese diaspora. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology, 7*(2), 1021–1043. https://doi.org/10.5964/jspp.v7i2.865

Udah, H. (2017). 'Not by default accepted': The African experience of othering and being othered in Australia. *Journal of Asian and African Studies, 53*(3), 384-400. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909616686624

Udah, H., & Singh, P. (2018). 'It still matters': The role of skin colour in the everydat life and realities of black African migrants and refugees in Australia. The Australian Review of African Studies, 39(2). 19-47. https://doi.org/10.22160/22035184/ARAS-2018-39-2/19-47

United Nations (UN). (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 agenda for sustainable development*. https://sggs.un.org/2030agenda

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2005). *Guidelines for inclusion: Ensuring access to education for all.* United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Special Education. Paris. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000140224

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2009). *Policy guidelines on inclusion in education.* United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Paris. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000177849

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2011). *Building a better future: Education for an independent South Sudan.* United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Paris. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000193052

United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR). (n.d.). *South Sudan*. Retrieved June 22, 2024, from https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/ssd

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (1951). *Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (adopted 28 July 1951, entered into force 22 April 1954).* United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 189, p. 137. https://www.unhcr.org/media/convention-and-protocol-relating-status-refugees

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2023). *Five things to know about the crisis in Sudan*. https://www.umhcr.org/news/stories/five-things-know-about-crisis-sudan

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2024a). *Global trends: Forced displacement in 2023.* Retrieved June 19, 2024, from, https://www.unhcr.org/global-trends-report-2023

United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR). (2024b). *Refugees and asylum-seekers from South Sudan.* Retrieved December 8, 2024, from https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/southsudan

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2024c). *What is resettlement?* https://www.unhcr.org/handbooks/ih/getting-started/what-resettlement

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2024d). *Refugee context in Egypt.* Retrieved December 8, 2024, from https://www.unhcr.org/eg/about-us/refugee-context-in-egypt

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2024e). *Kenya registered refugees and asylum-seekers as of 31 May 2024.* Retrieved June 22, 2024, from https://www.unhcr.org/ke/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2024/06/Kenya-Statistics-Package_31-May-2024.pdf

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2022). *Australia: People of African descent living under siege of racism, say UN experts*. Retrieved October 29, 2023, from https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/12/australia-people-african-descent-living-under-siege-racism-say-un-expertsHR

United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan. (2014). *Conflict in South Sudan: A Human Rights report*. https://unmiss.unmissions.org/conflict-south-sudan-human-rights-report-8-may-2014)

United Nations (UN) News. (2023). *Sudan crisis threatens to hobble South Sudan's transition, UN mission chief says.* https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/06/1137952

United Nations (UN) Secretary-General. (2022). *Situation in South Sudan: Rep. of the Secretary-General,* UN Doc. A/2022/918. Retrieved December 7, 2022, from https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3997000?v=pdf

United Nations (UN) Secretary-General. (2023a). *Situation in South Sudan: Report of the Secretary-General,* UN Doc. S/2023/657. Retrieved September 11, 2023, from https://unmiss.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/secretary-generals_report_on_south_sudan_11_september_2023.pdf

United Nations (UN) Secretary-General. (2023b). *Children and armed conflict in South Sudan: Rep. of the Secretary-General*, 163, UN Doc. S/2023/99. Retrieved February 10, 2023, from https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4006537?v=pdf

United Nations (UN) Secretary-General. (2024). *Situation in South Sudan: Report of the Secretary-General,* UN Doc. S/2024/776. Retrieved December 8, 2023, from https://unmiss.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/secretary-generals_report_on_the_situation_in_south_sudan_25_october_2024.pdf

University of New South Wales (UNSW). (n.d.). *Cultural diversity teaching practices*. Retrieved 18 February, 2024, https://www.edi.unsw.edu.au/diversity-inclusion/cultural-inclusion/cultural-diversity-teaching-practices

Valencia, R. R. (2010). *Dismantling contemporary deficit thinking: Educational thought and practice.* Taylor & Francis.

Van de Vijver, F. J. R., Berry, J. W., & Celenk, O. (2016). Assessment of acculturation. In D. L. Sam & J. W. Berry (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of acculturation psychology* (pp. 93–112). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316219218.007

Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy.* State University of New York.

Vargas, C. M. (1999). Cultural interpretation for refugee children: The multicultural liaison program, Ottawa, Canada. *Refuge*, *18*(2), 32-42.

Vaughan, G., Nyanhanda, T., Kaphle, S., Kelly, J., Rawal, L.B., & William, M. (2021). South Sudanese or Australian or both or caught in between? A qualitative study examining identity among South Sudanese refugees living in Sydney, Australia. *Research Square.* https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-1112825/v1

Vaughan, G., Nyanhanda, T., Rawal, L. B., Kaphle, S., Kelly, J., & Mude, W. (2023). Cultural identity as a determinant of health among South Sudanese in Sydney, Australia. *Health & Social Care in the Community*. https://doi.org/10.1155/2023/4981800

Veerman, E., Volman, M., Gaikhorst, L., & Karssen, M. (2023). The contribution of two funds of identity interventions to well-being related student outcomes in primary education. *Learning, Culture and Social Interaction*, *38*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lcsi.2022.100680

Vélez-Ibáñez, C. G. (1988). Networks of exchange among Mexicans in the US and Mexico: Local level mediating responses to national and international transformations. *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development, 17*(1), 27-51. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40553124

Vélez-Ibáñez, C. G., & Greenberg, J. B. (1992). Formation and transformation of funds of knowledge among US-Mexican households. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 23*(4), 313-335. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3195869

Verhoeven, M., Volman, M., & Poorthuis, A. M. G. (2019). The role of school in adolescents' identity development: A literature review. *Educational Psychology Review*, *31*(1), 35–63. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-018-9457-3

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA). (n.d.a). *Qualifications: VCE*. https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/vce-vcal-handbook/sections/Pages/01QualificationsVCE.aspx

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA). (n.d.b). *Victorian senior secondary certificate reform*. https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/victorianseniorsecondarycertificatereform/Pages/Index.aspx

Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission. (2008). *Rights of passage: The experiences of Australian-Sudanese young people*. https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2009-01/apo-nid3038.pdf

Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (VFST). (2015a). *Educating children from refugee backgrounds: A partnership between schools and parents.* https://foundationhouse.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/EDUCATING_CHILDREN_REFUGEE_BACKGROUND_A4_ONLINE.pdf

Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (VFST). (2015b). *Schools and families in partnership: A desktop guide to engaging families from refugee backgrounds in their children's learning.* http://www.foundationhouse.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/SCHOOLS_FAMILIES_PARTNERSHIP_DESKTOP-GUIDE_WEB_cr.pdf

Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (VFST). (2017). *A framework for community capacity building.* Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture.

Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (VFST). (2021). *Guidelines for school staff working with Multicultural Education Aides (MEAs).* https://sifr.foundationhouse.org.au/app/uploads/2021/08/Guidelines-for-school-staff-working-with-Multicultural-Education-Aides-MEAs.pdf

Victoria State Government. (2024a). *South Sudanese Australian youth justice advisory group.* https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/SSAYJ

Victoria State Government. (2024b). *South Sudanese Australian community investment.* https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/SSAYJ/grants

Villalpando O., Solórzano D. (2005). The role of culture in college preparation programs: A review of the literature. In W. Tierney, Z. Corwin & J. Colyar (Eds.), *Preparing for college: Nine elements of effective outreach* (pp. 13–28). SUNY Press.

Villegas, A. M., & Lucas, T. (2002). Preparing culturally responsive teachers: Rethinking the curriculum. *Journal of Teacher Education, 53*(20), 20-32. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487102053001003

Voicu, C.-G. (2013). Cultural identity and diaspora. *Philobiblon: Transylvanian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Humanities*, *18*(1), 161–174.

Volman, M., Gaikhorst, L., & Veerman, E. (2023). Funds of knowledge/identity pedagogies and social justice in Dutch primary education. In M. Esteban-Guitart (Ed.), *Funds of knowledge and identity pedagogies for social justice: International perspectives and praxis from communities,*

classrooms, and curriculum (pp. 69-85). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003369851-8

Volman, M., & 't Gilde, J. (2021). The effects of using students' funds of knowledge on educational outcomes in the social and personal domain. *Learning, Culture and Social Interaction, 28*(100472). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lcsi.2020.100472

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society*. Harvard University Press.

Wagner, W., Hansen, K., & Kronberger, N. (2014). Quantitative and qualitative research across cultures and languages: Cultural metrics and their application. *Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science*, *48,* 418–434. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12124-014-9269-z

Wandel, T. (2001). The power of discourse: Michel Foucault and critical theory. *Cultural Values, 5*(3), 368-382. https://doi.org/10.1080/14797580109367237

Wanga-Odhiambo, G. (2013). *Resilience in South Sudanese women: Hope for daughters of the Nile.* Lexington Books.

Weber, L., Blaustein, J., Benier, K., Wickes, R., & Johns, D. (2021). *Place, race and politics*. Emerald Publishing Limited. https://doi.org/10.1108/9781800430457

Weinstein, C. S., Tomlinson-Clarke, S., & Curran, M. (2004). Toward a conception of culturally responsive classroom management. *Journal of Teacher Education, 55*(1), 25-38. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487103259812

Whiting, N. (2024, September 4). *After years of division Victoria's South Sudanese Community Association has a fresh chance to connect*. ABC News. https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-09-04/south-sudanese-victoria-community-association/104297156

Williams, C. L., & Berry, J. W. (1991). Primary prevention of acculturative stress among refugees: Application of psychological theory and practice. *The American Psychologist*, *46*(6), 632-641.

Williams, R. (1999). Cultural safety—what does it mean for our work practice? *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, 23*(2), 213-214. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-842X.1999.tb01240.x

Williams, S. (2022). Australian Identity politics playing tricks for young South Sudanese Australians. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, *43*(5), 657-674. https://doi.org/10.1080/07256868.2022.2063821

Wilson, D., & Neville, S. (2009). Culturally safe research with vulnerable populations. *Contemporary Nurse, 33*(1), 69-79. https://doi.org/10.5172/conu.33.1.69

Windle, J. (2008). The racialisation of African youth in Australia. *Social Identities, 14*(5), 553–566. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504630802343382

Wiseman, J., & Cassidy, S. (2019). *"School is where you need to be equal and learn": Insights from students of refugee backgrounds on learning and engagement in Victorian secondary schools.* Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture. https://www.foundationhouse.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/STUDENT-PERSPECTIVE-RESEARCH-PROJECT-REPORT_A4_WEB.pdf

World Health Organisation. (n.d.). *Gender and health*. https://www.who.int/health-topics/gender#tab=tab_1

Wolf, E. (1966). *Peasants.* Prentice Hall.

Yak, G. (2016, 28 May). *Education barriers facing South Sudanese refugees in Australia* [Paper presentation]. Refugee Communities Advocacy Network conference, Melbourne, Australia.

https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/educational-barriers-facing-south-sudanese-refugees-australia/

Yared, H., Grové, C., & Chapman, D. (2023). Who belongs in schools? How the education system fails racially marginalised students. In C. Boyle & K. A. Allen (Eds.), *Research for inclusive quality education* (pp. 163-179). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-5908-9_13

Yohani, S. (2013). Educational cultural brokers and the school adaptation of refugee children and families: Challenges and opportunities. *Journal of International Migration & Integration, 14*, 61–79. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-011-0229-x

Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 8*(1), 69-91. https://doi.org/10.1080/1361332052000341006

Yosso, T. J., & Garcia, D. A. (2007). "This is no slum!": A critical race theory analysis of community cultural wealth in culture clash's "Chavez Ravine". *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies*, *32*(1), 145–179. https://doi.org/10.1525/azt.2007.32.1.145

Yosso, T., Villalpando, O., Delgado Bernal, D., & Solórzano, D. G. (2001). Critical race theory in Chicana/o education. *NACCS Annual Conference Proceedings*, *9*. https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/naccs/2001/Proceedings/9

Young, J. (2003). Sudan: Liberation movements, regional armies, ethnic militias & peace, *Review of African Political Economy, 30*(97), 423-434.

Young, J. (2005). John Garang's legacy to the peace process, the SPLM/A & the south. *Review of African Political Economy, 32*(106), 535-548. https://doi.org/10.1080/03056240500467039

Young, J. (2006). *The South Sudan defence forces in the wake of the Juba declaration.* Small Arms Survey, Graduate Institute of International Studies. https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1012384/1002_1257159823_swp-1-ssdf.pdf

Yuval-Davis, N. (1999). The 'multi-layered citizen'. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, *1*(1), 119-136.

Yuval-Davis, N. (2010). Theorizing identity: Beyond the 'us' and 'them' dichotomy. *Patterns of Prejudice, 44*(3), 261-280. https://doi.org/10.1080/0031322X.2010.489736

Zambakari, C. (2015). South Sudan and the nation-building project: Lessons and challenges. In S. Adejumobi (Ed.), *National democratic reforms in Africa: Changes and challenges* (pp. 89-127). Palgrave MacMillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137518828_4

Zengin, M., & Ataş-Akdemir, Ö. (2020). Teachers' views on parent involvement for refugee children's education. *Journal of Computer and Education Research, 8*(15), 75-85. https://doi.org/10.18009/jcer.649547

Zhang-Yu, C., García-Díaz, S., García-Romero, D., & Lalueza, J. L. (2021). Funds of identity and self-exploration through artistic creation: Addressing the voices of youth, *Mind, Culture, and Activity, 28*(2), 138-151. https://doi.org/10.1080/10749039.2020.1760300

Ziaian, T., Puvimanasinghe, T., Miller, E., De Anstiss, H., Esterman, A., & Dollard, M. (2021). Identity and belonging: Refugee youth and their parents' perception of being Australian. *Australian Psychologist, 56*(2), 123-136. https://doi.org/10.1080/00050067.2021.1893601

Zipin, L. (2009). Dark funds of knowledge, deep funds of pedagogy: Exploring boundaries between lifeworlds and school. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 30*(3), 317-331. https://doi.org/10.1080/01596300903037044·

Zipin, L., Brennan, M., & Sellar, S. (2020). Young people pursuing futures: Making identities labors curricular. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, *28*(2), 152-168. https://doi.org/10.1080/10749039.2020.1808687

Appendix A: Overview of South Sudan's History

Most scholars covering South Sudan's history have done so by presenting the information in chronological order. However, from the literature, five main contributing factors, which are often intersected and layered, emerged that have shaped the current social and political landscape in South Sudan:

1. Enslavement of the Southern Sudanese from the 12th century onwards
2. Foreign and colonial occupation
3. Arabisation and Islamisation
4. Ethnic marginalisation and ethnic conflicts

Enslavement of the Southern Sudanese from the 12th Century Onwards

According to ancient documents and oral testimonies, such as stories and songs, the people of southern Sudan[68] have been subjected to slave raids and subsequent slavery since the 12th century (Beswick, 2004; Johnson, 2016; Troutt Powell, 2012). For example, evidence from oral sources (songs) regarding slave raiding has been found among the Dinka,[69] a Nilotic ethnic community who originally resided around current-day central Sudan but were forced to migrate to the south by following the White Nile during the 13th century to escape Muslim slave raiders (Beswick, 2004; Johnson, 2016; Kramer et al., 2013).

Before the Turco-Egyptian invasion in 1820-21 by the autonomous viceroy of Egypt, Muhammad 'Ali Pasha (Kramer et al., 2013; Leonardi, 2013), parts of northern and southern Sudan were ruled by kingdoms and sultanates that often conducted slave raids to isolated communities (Johnson, 2016). Particularly, the Baggara, pastoralists who moved around in the Islamic Sultanate of Wadai, which stretched from Lake Chad in the West to the Nile in the East, attacked ethnic communities, including Dinka, in southern Sudan and used the enslaved people as a means to pay their taxes to the ruling Sultans (Beswick, 2004).

Slave raids continued after the invasion of the Turco-Egyptian Empire in 1820-21, with Viceroy Muhammad 'Ali Pasha focused on acquiring new territory and exploiting its resources, similar to the methods employed by the European colonists (Holt & Daly, 2019). Under his rule, thousands of men,

[68] As noted in Chapter 1, I will use the term 'southern Sudan' when referring to the historical events before the Independence of South Sudan in 2011.

[69] The Dinka are one of more than 60 ethnic communities in current-day South Sudan, each with different linguistic and cultural customs (Jok, 2011). Ethnic communities consist of several "groupings", which are further divided into "subclans" (Beswick, 2004, p. 43). It is important to note that the names currently used to identify different ethnic names for groups of people in South Sudan are in English and are not Indigenous self-names: for example, Naath (Nuer) and Jieng (Dinka) (Johnson, 2016).

women and children were enslaved, and local Muslim Sudanese often assisted in the slave raids (Leonardi, 2013; Rossi, 2015; Troutt Powell, 2012). Slavery was common practice in the Ottoman Empire, and 'black-skinned' slaves were stigmatised and considered of less value than 'white-skinned' slaves (Troutt Powell, 2012). Females were mainly used as domestic slaves (Johnson, 2016), whereas enslaved men worked on the land, trained to fight in the Egyptian army, or were transported to other parts of the Ottoman Empire, where they served their masters (Leonardi, 2013). There are also records indicating that slaves from Sudan were found in Western Africa, from where they were shipped to Northern and Southern America to countries such as Brazil (Lovejoy, 2019).

Though the *Abolition of the Slave Trade Act* was signed in 1807, and the slave trade had become illegal,[70] Northern Sudan was still heavily involved in looting villages and enslaving people from the southern parts in the 1860s, with Khartoum being the central marketplace (Jok, 2001). However, when Isma'il Pasha, one of Muhammad 'Ali's successors, became the Viceroy of Egypt in 1863, some efforts were made to end the slave raids and slave trade (Collins, 2017; Rossi, 2015). The Turco-Egyptian rule in Sudan ended when the fundamentalist Islamic Mahdi took control of Sudan in 1881 (Abushouk, 2006; Holt & Daly, 2019). While the Mahdi victory was not considered a liberation for the southern Sudanese as slave raids continued (Beswick, 2004), certain reforms were made, such as prohibiting the export of slaves (Nugud, 2013). The Mahdi were defeated in 1898 by British and Egyptian armed forces, and a British-appointed governor-general governed Sudan (Abushouk, 2006; Holt & Daly, 2019; Kramer et al., 2013). To a certain extent, the British supported the abolition of slavery; however, Nugud (2013) asserted that the British had no intention to end slavery entirely as slave labour was considered "part of the religious creed and customs of this country" (p. 90). Abolishing slavery in Sudan was also costly, as the slave owners needed to be compensated, and the British were concerned about possible retaliations of slave owners. Consequently, the enslavement of southern Sudanese was still common practice at the beginning of the 20th century (Nugud, 2013).

Jok (2001) stated that the contributing factors to the existence of slavery in Sudan pertain to "racial set-up, religious, ideological conflict, poverty, labor exploitation, and political instability" (p. 6). In particular, the socially perceived racial, religious and cultural 'inferiority' of the 'black' Sudanese strongly contributed to the re-emergence of slavery in 1983, when the Second Civil War in Sudan erupted. The Baggara, who are Arabic-speaking Muslims and pastoralists, once again attacked and raided villages, predominantly those belonging to Christians and Dinka (Jok, 2001). Women and children were abducted and enslaved, and sexual violence against girls and women was widespread

[70] This Act stipulated that the transportation of slaves was henceforth deemed illegal. However, abolitionists pushed for the emancipation of slaves (Nugud, 2013).

(Beswick, 2004; F. Deng, 2009). Boys were abducted and most often trained in the military as child soldiers. Besides the Baggara, the Popular Defence Forces (PDF), also called the *Mujahideen* (holy warriors), were used to fight and conquer those considered enemies of the Arabs and Islam (Jok, 2001). The Sudanese government frequently claimed that the raids resulted from ethnic conflicts between the Baggara and the Dinka and were a justified consequence of the civil war or the allegations were refuted altogether as malicious propaganda (Came, 2000; Fant, 2009; Jok, 2001). However, Jok (2001) stated that the government supported the Baggara and used the raids to assist the "ethnic cleansing against the Dinka and the Nuba" that would assist in the Arabisation and Islamisation of the southern Sudanese (p. 23).[71] Most shockingly, however, is how the Sudanese government was able to deceive international bodies and aid organisations until well into the 1990s. Eventually, in 1999, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) acknowledged and reported the modern-day slavery occurring in Sudan (Eibner & Jacobs, 2011).

Centuries of enslavement of the southern Sudanese people have severely impacted the social structures of the different ethnic groups, including forced relocation and the disruption of family lineages. Furthermore, without diminishing and/or generalising the unique lived experiences recorded in the personal narratives of those enslaved during the Second Civil War (e.g., Jok, 2001; Pritchard, 2013), it can be concluded that slavery caused a loss of cultural and religious identity, mainly due to the enslaved being given an Arabic name, forced to follow Islam and speak Arabic (Fant, 2009). Only a limited number of studies have reported on the impact of slavery in Sudan, which could partially be explained by the fact that the Sudanese government has always attempted to deny it. As indicated above, however, there are published personal narratives from escaped or redeemed slaves that share how they were subjected to inhumane atrocities, including, among others, being forced to walk for days (even children as young as three years old), subjected to rape or witnessing a rape, genital mutilations, maiming, whippings and beatings, witnessing murders and forced to kill others (Came, 2000; Eibner & Jacobs, 2011; Pritchard, 2013).

After the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005, the slave raids stopped; however, it was estimated that until 2011, 35,000 southern Sudanese were still enslaved in Sudan[72], and no system was put in place to free and return those in bondage (Eibner & Jacobs, 2011). Release from bondage

[71] See also a 2001 report from Anti-Slavery https://www.antislavery.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/isthereslaveryinsudanreport.pdf, an article in the *Wall Street Journal* by Michael Rubin: https://www.michaelrubin.org/1211/dont-engage-rogue-regimes, a report from the Human Rights Watch https://www.hrw.org/legacy/backgrounder/africa/sudanupdate.htm, and Amnesty International https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AFR54/002/1995/en/

[72] An article from Came (2000) states that Christian Solidarity International estimates that in 2000, around 15,000 enslaved people were still living in bondage in Sudan, though some claimed this figure is much higher.

was mostly a result of organisations such as Christian Solidarity International, which has purchased[73] and redeemed 30,021 South Sudanese slaves since 1995, though this practice is widely criticised by international bodies such as UNICEF and relief agencies (Jok, 2001; ReliefWeb, 1999).

It is important to state that raiding and pillaging of neighbouring ethnic communities for cattle, women, and children is a common feature among the many pastoralist ethnic groups in southern Sudan, including the Dinka and Nuer, and continues to this day (Beswick, 2004; UN Secretary-General, 2024). Furthermore, during the Second Civil War, not only the Baggara and the northern Sudanese government forces raided villages to capture young boys, but the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) employed similar practices and 'recruited' boys, some as young as nine years old, to train as child soldiers (Jok, 2001). Though the SPLA has repeatedly denied this, countless written and published accounts of South Sudanese children who were abducted and used as child soldiers indicate otherwise. For example, an extensive report from Human Rights Watch (1995) examined the various forms of exploitation faced by children in Sudan, including their recruitment and use by both the SPLA and government forces. These abhorrible practices continue in current-day South Sudan, with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) reporting on conflicts between armed groups and national armed forces and the forced recruitment of children to work as cooks, bodyguards and soldiers (UN Secretary-General, 2023b).

Foreign and Colonial Occupation

The second factor contributing to the continuous struggle for peace in South Sudan is the history of foreign and colonial occupation. Before 1820, southern Sudan had been mostly out of reach of foreign invaders, mainly due to the *Sudd.* This is a vast swamp area that is permanently flooded and untraversable, long preventing explorers from locating the origin of the Nile (Beswick, 2004; Johnson, 2016; Leonardi, 2013; Schouten & Bachmann, 2020). However, as discussed in the previous section, some parts of geographical southern Sudan were ruled by sultanates and kingdoms (Johnson, 2016) that organised slave raids on ethnic communities (Beswick, 2004).

The Turco-Egyptian invasion in 1820-21 marked the beginning of the colonial occupation of northern and southern Sudan (Beswick, 2004). The Turco-Egyptian rule lasted until 1881-1882 when the Mahdi started a holy war (*jihad*) against the foreign invaders (Abushouk, 2006; Holt & Daly, 2019). The Mahdi ruled Sudan until 1898 when they were defeated by the British and Egyptian armed forces,

[73] Enslaved Southern Sudanese, mostly women and children, are bought (redeemed) by Christian Solidarity International for about 50,000 Sudanese pounds (US$50) per person (Came, 2000). Although it is reported that South Sudanese, including Dinka, have redeemed their abducted children (ReliefWeb, 1999).

establishing the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium (Abushouk, 2006; Holt & Daly, 2019; Kramer et al., 2013; Leonardi, 2013). Initially, Britain focused on restoring law and order in Sudan, suppressing and defeating any possible resistance (Holt & Daly, 2019; Kramer et al., 2013), and limiting the power of local chiefs to employ customary law (Collins, 2017). The British 'successfully' subdued even the geographically remote ethnic communities in southern Sudan, who frequently retreated to the swamps (Collins, 2017); however, there were no efforts in the economic development of the south (Poggo, 2009). During the subsequent years, the British marked out administrative borders and created states, counties and communities that were decided upon based on ethnic identities, which, to date, represents one of the main contributing factors to ongoing conflicts (Justin & De Vries, 2017; Pritchard & Verjee, 2021; UN Secretary-General, 2024), particularly in the mineral-rich areas, such as Abyei (Johnson, 2016).

Another aspect of British colonial rule that has adversely impacted current-day South Sudan is the introduction of Indirect Rule (Native Administration)[74] from the 1920s onwards. (Leonardi, 2013; Zambakari, 2015). According to Zambakari (2015), Indirect Rule:

> divided a majority into minorities, turning the tribe into an administrative mechanism that enabled a minority to rule over a majority [...] Through indirect rule, the British managed to segment various groups in Sudan into distinct tribes with defined tribal homelands. (p. 97)

Zambakari (2015) continued by stating that the implemented Indirect Rule in Sudan is a major contributing factor to the continuous ethnic conflicts in present-day South Sudan.

In addition to promoting ethnonationalism through Indirect Rule, the British introduced the Southern Policy (Mayo, 1994), which was enforced for 16 years and used to segregate northern and southern Sudan (Johnson, 2016). For example, a separate education policy was implemented whereby the British developed government schools in northern Sudan while delegating educational matters in southern Sudan to the missionaries, as education for the 'Black' was not considered a priority (Johnson, 2016; Seri-Hersch, 2017). After 1926, the British government became more involved in educational matters in southern Sudan and decided that missionary teachers had to use vernacular languages as the primary language for instruction (Seri-Hersch, 2017). English was only allowed in

[74] Practically, Indirect Rule delegated power to chiefs (traditional leaders); however, many ethnic communities lacked chiefs, and those who had, often struggled immensely to conform to the demands of British standards, including collecting taxes (Collins, 2017; Holt & Daly, 2019; Leonardi, 2013). In addition, many ethnic communities and kingdoms had been disturbed and divided through arbitrary state borders, therefore adding to internal conflicts (Mayo, 1994). Another aspect of Indirect Rule was the allocation of judicial authorities to the chiefs, who were organised into judicial districts and attended local court cases within their territory, where apart from British law, limited use of customary law was permitted (Collins, 2017). This system was, in a way, modelled on British administrative units' set-up and enforced "territorialisation of authority and community" (Leonardi, 2013, p. 107), which had a significant negative impact on Southern Sudan.

intermediate schools, as it was considered a requirement for those wanting to become teachers and administrators (Daly & Holt, 2019; Johnson, 2016). Under the Southern Policy, the judiciary system was once again allowed to enforce customary law (Johnson, 2016). Mayo (1994, p. 167) stated that "the Southern Policy, though imposed by the colonial power, had attempted to preserve the culture and language of the non-Arab majority of the south." However, Zambakari (2015) and Fluehr-Lobban (1990) stated that the Southern Policy was a British measure aimed at maintaining control and halting the spread of Islam rather than developing the south and improving the infrastructure, including education and health care. The systematic marginalisation of the southern Sudanese that caused immense inequities between the north and the south was a main contributing factor to the outbreak of the First Civil War in 1955 (Losoncz, 2019).

On 12 January 1953, Sudan became self-governing and entered a transitional period of three years before self-determination was established (Collins, 2017; Holt & Daly, 2019). The colonial rule in Sudan ended on 1 January 1956, when Sudan became Independent (Kramer et al., 2013). However, independence from the British did not conclude the struggles of the southern Sudanese; colonial occupation continues to impact the current-day fragile peace in South Sudan.

Arabisation and Islamisation

The third contributing factor to current-day struggles is the Arabisation and Islamisation of southern Sudan. The Islamisation of current-day Sudan has been an ongoing process since the seventh century (Holt & Daly, 2019). The Turco-Egyptian invasion in 1820-21 officially brought Islam and the *shari'a* (Islamic Law) into Sudan; however, the southern Sudanese could still use customary practices aligning with the ethnic communities' customary and religious beliefs and were not forced to implement the *shari'a* (F. Deng, 2009). Poggo (2002) stated that in the years after the invasion, the acquisition of slaves from southern Sudan was more important than spreading Islam, and therefore the *shari'a* was not strictly enforced. It is worth noting that the extensive practices of slave raids and the slave trade by the Turco-Egyptian troops[75] created the association of Arabisation and Islamisation with slavery and contributed to southern Sudanese's strong aversion and distrust of the northern Sudanese, who are predominantly Arabic Muslims (Fluehr-Lobban, 1990).

In 1881, 'Abdallahi ibn Muhammad, who named himself "the Imam, the Successor of the Apostle of God, the Expected Mahdi" (Holt & Daly, 2019, p. 87), started a revolt against the Turco-Egyptian administration. In 1885, the Mahdi and his loyal followers conquered Khartoum and established an

[75] A report from the British Anti-Slavery Society mentioned that 20,000 slaves were taken from Sudan in 1883 (Fluehr-Lobban, 1990).

independent Islamic Mahdist state in Sudan (Fluehr-Lobban, 1990). The fundamentalist Mahdi ruled for thirteen years, and its major aim was to Islamise southern Sudan – and the rest of the world – by *jihad* (Holy War), though the south was not officially part of the Mahdist state (Holt & Dalt, 2019; Poggo, 2002).

During the British occupation under the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium from 1899 to 1956 (Leonardi, 2013), the introduction of the Southern Policy (Mayo, 1994) can be considered a countermeasure against Arabisation and Islamisation. The Southern Policy was employed by the British to 'protect' southern Sudan from northern Sudan by restricting speaking Arabic and practising Islam, promoting the use of English and vernacular languages, applying the customary laws (Johnson, 2016), and advancing conversion to Christianity (Poggo, 2002). However, after Sudan's independence from the British in 1956, one of the Sudanese government's initiatives was to employ Arabisation and Islamisation (F. Deng, 2009). In 1957, the Department of Religious Affairs was established with the purpose of spreading Islam in southern Sudan by building mosques, Islamic studies schools (*ma'ahads*) and Koronic schools (*khalwas*) (Poggo, 2002). After the military coup led by General Ibrahim Abboud in 1958, the Arabisation and Islamisation processes intensified, and the Arabic language was imposed as the language of instruction in schools, which profoundly impacted the educational system in the South (Fluehr-Lobban, 1990; Poggo, 2002). Arabic was also used in administrative offices and in the army. This hindered the southern Sudanese in obtaining positions as they had only been instructed in English and were not fluent in spoken and written Arabic (Poggo, 2002). Lastly, Islamic law replaced customary laws, and from 1962 onwards, Christian missionaries were expelled from Sudan (Fluehr-Lobban, 1990; Holt & Daly, 2019).

In 1972, the Addis Ababa Agreement, which marked the end of the First Civil War (see Section 2.2.1.5), determined southern Sudan's regional autonomy and ended Arabisation and Islamisation (Fluehr-Lobban, 1990). However, religious freedom was only momentary. In 1983, former President Jaafar Nimeiri imposed the *shari'a* and abrogated southern Sudanese autonomy, thus leading to the beginning of the Second Civil War (Fluehr-Lobban, 1990; Okeke et al., 2021). In the following years, intense fighting broke out between the government forces and the newly formed Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the SPLA, which convened into the SPLM/A (Beswick, 2004). The war took a turn for the worse when a coup d'état by the fundamentalist National Islamic Front under the leadership of Omar Bashir intensified the fighting, and nomadic tribes, including the Baggara, were supported and encouraged to raid southern Sudanese villages and capture mainly the women and children and to kill the men (Beswick, 2004; F. Deng, 2009; Hanzich, 2011). In addition to enslavement,

the people in southern Sudan suffered immensely under the harsh and cruel enforcement of the *shari'a*, which included amputations and whipping (Fluehr-Lobban, 1990). Only in 2005, when the CPA was signed, did southern Sudan gain a certain degree of autonomy and was allowed to employ a secular legal system instead of the *shari'a* (F. Deng, 2009).

Ethnic Marginalisation and Ethnic Conflicts

The British rule (1899-1956) directly contributed to ethnic conflicts that are still persisting in and impacting the South Sudanese, including those living in the diaspora. Firstly, the British promoted group identity (or tribalism) through the imposed Indirect Rule, which led to certain groups obtaining privileges and power at the expense of other ethnic groups (Zambakari, 2015) and reinforced ethnic identities or, at times, created new identities (Justin & De Vries, 2017). Secondly, the marking out of administrative borders, which created states, counties and communities based on ethnic identities and disregarded ethnic territories, caused major conflicts and disrupted existing social structures (Justin & De Vries, 2017; Pritchard & Verjee, 2021; UN Secretary-General, 2024). Both the international and internal borders drawn by the British and formally accepted at Sudan's independence in 1956 are the foundation for the current-day border and state conflicts, including the oil reserves in the disputed territory of Abyei (Johnson, 2016). Thirdly, the Southern Policy, which was aimed at segregating northern and southern Sudan, resulted in the south being marginalised and not receiving the same development and infrastructure that the north received (Fant, 2009; Johnson, 2016).[76] For example, the separate education policy that was employed in southern Sudan resulted in a major underdevelopment of the educational system (Seri-Hersch, 2017). As noted earlier, this disadvantaged and marginalised the southern people, particularly when obtaining administrative positions in the government. After Sudan's independence in 1956, the mostly violently implemented processes of Arabisation and Islamisation marginalised the southern Sudanese ethnically, socially, religiously and economically. These impacts were most intense after the implementation of the *Shari'a* Law in 1983 (Jok, 2001; Wanga-Odhiambo, 2013).

Ethnic conflicts were present in the history of the southern Sudanese well before the arrival of the colonial powers. For example, when the Dinka migrated to the south to escape recurrent slave raids and droughts, they settled in areas where other ethnic groups, including the Nuer, were already residing, resulting in ethnic conflicts, with some continuing to this day (Beswick, 2004). However, ethnic marginalisation and ethnic conflicts took a turn at the beginning of the Second Civil War when this became politicised. In 1983, when the SPLM and the SPLA (together named the SPLM/A) were

[76] A good example of preferential development of northern Sudan was the opening of science, law, engineering and agriculture schools in Khartoum in 1939 as well as the upgrading of Gordon Memorial College to Khartoum University College (Wanga-Odhiambo, 2013).

formed, the founder and leader, Dr John Garang, assigned the majority of the leadership positions to Dinka, which offended the Nuer and other, much smaller ethnic groups (Young, 2003). This ultimately led to a split in the SPLM/A in 1991, killing thousands of southern Sudanese, particularly Nuer (Young, 2003; 2005). Similarly, after South Sudan's independence in 2011, the SPLM again used an ethnocentric approach to governance, which Madut (2015, p. 3) referred to as the "politics of identity" or "ethno politics" in appointing government and military positions.

The southern Sudanese were, to a certain extent, united in their fight against northern Sudan, which assisted in developing a certain unified identity (Johnson, 2013). However, the Second Civil War also promoted the development of an ethnic identity that took precedence over a national identity and is considered one of the main contributing factors[77] to the ongoing ethnic conflicts (Frahm, 2012; Nyadera, 2018). Therefore, since gaining independence, the ethnic marginalisation that plagued the South Sudanese for centuries has merely been readdressed with a continued focus on politicising ethnicity, making it seemingly impossible to end the local conflicts (Muller et al., 2017).

[77] Nyadera (2018) stated that several scholars have provided statements related to the contributing factors for the recurrent conflicts, including the control of oil supplies and access to weapons. Nyadera (2018) suggested there are other key factors that contribute to the conflicts and need to be addressed in order to achieve sustainable peace in South Sudan, including an inadequate sense of nationalism due to ethnic identity being stronger than national identity.

Appendix B: Plain Language Statement for South Sudanese Australian Community Members

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

INFORMATION TO THE SOUTH SUDANESE AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY MEMBERS INVOLVED IN THE RESEARCH

You are invited to participate

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled: Exploring South Sudanese Australian adolescents' identities and how this can impact their educational experiences.

We would like to invite you because you are a member of the South Sudanese Australian community in Melbourne, and we believe that your knowledge and experiences are valuable to the research project.

This project is being conducted by student researcher Annemarie Agborchi as part of a PhD study at Victoria University under the supervision of Dr Helen Widdop Quinton and Dr Sarah Tartakover from the Faculty of Arts and Education.

Project explanation

This study will explore the identity of South Sudanese Australian students living in Melbourne. The main purpose of this study is to discover how the students identify and express themselves and which people, places, activities and things are important to them. The collected data will be used to improve schooling experiences by connecting school to their daily lives and activities. Also, the study aims to challenge ideas that exist among some people that young people of African origin are not able to do well in school.

The research will contribute to the limited number of studies currently exploring the identities of South Sudanese Australian adolescents.

What will I be asked to do?

One or two 60-minute face-to-face interview(s) with open-ended questions. The interview(s) will be recorded.

What will I gain from participating?

By participating in this study, you will be able to share your knowledge, expertise, experiences and observations, which will provide valuable information concerning the identities of South Sudanese Australian adolescents.

The collected information will provide insights into how the overall schooling experience of students from (former) refugee backgrounds and underrepresented students in general can be improved.

How will the information I give be used?

The interviews will be transcribed and stored in a password-protected file.
If you prefer, a pseudonym will be given to conceal your identity and to ensure confidentiality.

What are the potential risks of participating in this project?

It is possible that you might feel uncomfortable talking about your experiences and/or observations or it might make you feel angry, sad or unsettled.

If, at any time, you feel uncomfortable, you are welcome to have a break or stop the interview. Be assured that you can withdraw from the research at any time and that this will not disadvantage you in any way.

COVID-19 can spread easily in the community and have severe consequences. We will take any practical precautionary measure to reduce the risk of you being infected with COVID-19 while in our facilities during your participation in the research; however, we cannot guarantee that you will not be infected. To minimise the risk, we will ask you to notify us if you have been recently diagnosed (less than 14 days) with COVID-19, have been identified as a close contact with someone with COVID-19, or have signs or symptoms suggestive of COVID-19. You will be phone screened for these criteria 24 hours prior to each in-person visit and will also complete the form again on arrival.

If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, you will not be allowed to participate in the study until you are cleared of COVID-19 and your medical doctor provides us with a letter of approval.

How will this project be conducted?

The study will use interviews with open-ended questions to gather information.

Who is conducting the study?

Victoria University

Annemarie Agborchi

Email: Annemarie.agborchi@students.vu.edu.au
Phone: 0420 649 072

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the Chief Investigator, Dr Helen Widdop-Quinton
Email: Helen.Widdop-Quinton@vu.edu.au, phone: 0412 842355
If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

Appendix C: Consent Form for Participants Involved in the Research

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN THE STUDY

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS:

We would like to invite a study that will look into the identity of South Sudanese Australian students living in Melbourne. The main purpose of this study is to discover how adolescents identify and express themselves and which people, places, activities and things are important to them. The collected data will be used to improve schooling experiences by connecting school to their daily lives and activities. Also, the study aims to challenge ideas that exist among some people that young people of African origin are not able to do well in school.

The study will consist of one recorded 40 - 60-minute Zoom interview.

It is possible that you might feel uncomfortable during the interview as some of the questions might be personal and could make you sad or unsettled. Be assured that we can stop the interview at any time and continue at a later moment.

CONSENT FROM PARTICIPANT

I certify that (***please tick if you agree***):

☐ I am at least 18 years old, and I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study:
Exploring South Sudanese Australian adolescents' identities and how this can impact their educational experiences by Annemarie Agborchi and her supervisors, Dr Helen Widdop Quinton and Dr Sarah Tartakover from Victoria University and associate investigator Dr William Abur from Deakin University.

☐ I understand what the study is about and what is expected of me during the time of data collection.

☐ I agree to participate in a 40 - 60-minute interview that will be recorded.

☐ I understand that the one-on-one interviews can make me uncomfortable or upset and that I can ask to stop or take a break at any time.

☐ I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered.

☐ I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not disadvantage me in any way.

☐ I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential and that my real name is not used if I decide to do so.

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

Name:

Signed:

Date:

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher, Annemarie Agborchi, Email: annemarie.agborchi@students.vu.edu.au; Phone: 0420 649072.

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email Researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

Appendix D: Interview Questions for South Sudanese Australian Community Members

Interview questions and topics for members of the South Sudanese Australian community:

- Introduce myself, background, family, teacher and researcher
- Introduce research
- Explain this data collection phase
- Go over the information sheet and the consent form
  - Recorded, pseudonym, data used in the thesis and possible future publications
- If you have Any questions you are not willing to answer, please indicate, or if you would like to take a break.

Interview questions/topics:

1. Please tell me about yourself and your family.
2. Please tell me about your journey to Australia.
3. What is the role of the South Sudanese community in Melbourne for you?
4. Which parts of the South Sudanese culture are important for the community?
5. How would you describe the South Sudanese Australian young people here in Melbourne?
6. What are current issues/barriers for South Sudanese Australian young people?
7. Specific to education:
   - Teacher expectations
   - Teaching style
   - Engagement, belonging, connectedness
   - Curriculum
   - Tertiary education plans
   - Employment/unemployment
   - Cultural
   - Discrimination/racism
   - Interrupted schooling
   - COVID/lockdown
8. How would you describe the identities of the South Sudanese young people?
9. What can schools do for the South Sudanese Australian students at school?
10. Social issues with families, friends, media representation, police?

Topics: Importance of South Sudanese culture, schooling, parenting, representations in the media of South Sudanese Australian adolescents, cultural identity.

Appendix E: Plain Information Sheet for Students

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

INFORMATION TO THE SOUTH SUDANESE AUSTRALIAN ADOLESCENTS INVOLVED IN THE RESEARCH

You are invited to participate

We would like to invite you to participate in a research project titled Exploring South Sudanese Australian adolescents' identities and how this can impact their educational experiences.

This project is being carried out by student researcher Annemarie Agborchi as part of her PhD study at Victoria University under the supervision of Dr Helen Widdop Quinton and Dr Sarah Tartakover from the Faculty of Arts and Education and with associate researcher Dr William Abur from Melbourne University.

Project explanation

This study will look into the identity of South Sudanese Australian students living in Melbourne. The main purpose of this study is to discover how you identify and express yourself and which people, places, activities, and things are important to you. It is anticipated that the collected data will be used to improve the schooling experiences of South Sudanese Australian students by connecting school to your daily lives and activities. Also, the study aims to challenge ideas that exist among some people that young people of African origin are not able to do well in school.
At the moment, there are not many studies that explore the identities and schooling experiences of South Sudanese Australian adolescents living in Melbourne, and this study hopes to contribute valuable and useful new information.

What will I be asked to do?

The study will collect information from you for about two terms. During the study, you will be asked to participate in five meetings (focus group discussions) with other South Sudanese Australian students from your school. This means there will be meetings where we discuss topics related to our identities for about 60 minutes each time. You will be given a diary, and we would like you to write your reflections (opinions and ideas) on the focus group discussions to share with the researchers later. You can also use the diary to write or draw any time you like.
Also, we plan two 60-minute individual interviews with you. We can schedule a third interview if there are still some topics you would like to talk about. These interviews are just like having a conversation, and there are no wrong or right answers. During the first interview you will be asked to make some simple drawings in which you identify which people, places, activities and things are important to you. Lastly, in this study, we will ask you to use different forms of artistic expression, such as drawing, painting, photographing, videoing, poetry, music, or dance. These artistic expressions will be used to explore how you identify and express yourself. You will be presented with several options, and you can choose your preferred ways of expressing your thoughts and ideas.

What will I gain from participating?

By participating in this study, you will be able to share your knowledge, expertise, experiences and observations, which will provide valuable information concerning your funds of identity and lived experiences.

The collected information will also provide insights into how the overall schooling experience of students from South Sudanese Australian backgrounds and underrepresented students, in general, can be improved.

How will the information I give be used?

The interviews will be transcribed (written down word-by-word) and stored in a password-protected file.
If you prefer, a pseudonym (false name) will be given to conceal your identity and to ensure confidentiality.
At the end of the project, a thesis (written document) will present the collected data. We hope to organise an exhibition that will show all the artwork created by you and the other participants. You can decide not to be identifiable (recognised) in the artwork that you have created.

What are the potential risks of participating in this project?

It is possible that you feel uncomfortable talking about your experiences and/or observations or it might make you feel angry, sad or unsettled.

If, at any time, you feel uncomfortable, you are welcome to have a break or stop the discussion meetings or interviews. Be assured that you can withdraw from the research at any time and that this will not disadvantage you in any way.

If you feel you need some support because you feel unsettled, you can approach the wellbeing support team at your school. You are also always welcome to contact the researcher if something is bothering you about the project. Feel free to ask any questions at any time.

Because of COVID-19, we must follow the rules to reduce the risk, as it can spread easily in the community and have severe consequences. We will take any practical precautionary measures to reduce the risk of you being infected with COVID-19 while participating in the research. However, we cannot guarantee that you will not be infected. To minimise the risk, we will ask you to inform us if you have been recently diagnosed (less than 14 days) with COVID-19, have been identified as a close contact with someone with COVID-19, or have signs or symptoms that might suggest you have COVID-19. We will socially distance during the discussion meetings and interviews.

How will this project be carried out?

The study will use discussion meetings and interviews to gather information. Also, the participants in the study will create written and/or visual artwork.

Who is organising the study?

Victoria University

Annemarie Agborchi

Email: Annemarie.agborchi@students.vu.edu.au
Phone: 0420 649 072

Any questions about your participation in this project may be directed to the Chief Investigator, Dr Helen Widdop-Quinton
Email: Helen.Widdop-Quinton@vu.edu.au, phone: 0412 842355
If you have any questions or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

Appendix F: Student and Parent/Caregiver Consent Form

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

CONSENT AND ASSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS INVOLVED IN THE RESEARCH

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS:

We would like to invite you to be part of a study that will look into the identity of South Sudanese Australian students living in Melbourne. The main purpose of this study is to discover how you identify and express yourself, and which people, places, activities and things are important to you. The collected data will be used to improve schooling experiences by connecting school to your daily lives and activities and to make recommendations to principals, teachers and teachers in training.

During the study you will be asked to participate in five group discussions with other South Sudanese students. You will be given a diary and we would like you to write your reflections on the group discussions. Also, you will have two 60-minute interviews to be held at an appropriate location that suits you. If you wish, we can schedule a third interview if there are still some topics you would like to talk about. Lastly, this study will ask you to use different forms of artistic expressions, such as drawing, painting, photographing, videoing, poetry, music or dance. These artistic expressions will be used to study how you identify and express yourself.

Your participation in this study is voluntary, meaning you can leave the study at any time, and you will not be disadvantaged in any way if you decide that you no longer wish to participate.

It is possible that you might feel uncomfortable during the focus group meetings or interview as some of the questions might be personal and could make you sad or unsettled. Be assured that we can stop the focus group meetings and interviews at any time and continue at a later moment. There is a support team at your school who can assist if you would like to talk about the things that have made you sad or unsettled.

ASSENT FROM STUDENT

I certify that (***please tick if you agree***):

☐ I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study: Exploring South Sudanese Australian adolescents' identities and how this can impact educational experiences by Annemarie Agborchi and her supervisors Dr Helen Widdop Quinton and Dr Sarah Tartakover from Victoria University and Associate Investigator Dr William Abur from Melbourne University.

☐ I understand what the study is about and what is expected of me during the time of data collection.

☐ I certify that I have had the opportunity to ask questions.

☐ I agree to participate in the five focus group meetings.

☐ I agree to write my reflections on the focus group discussions in the provided diary and I have been informed that I can use the diary to write or draw if I wish to do so.

☐ I agree to participate in the two interviews

☐ I agree to create an artwork(s) of my choice (written and/or visual) that will be used to explore my identity.

☐ I understand that the focus group discussions with other South Sudanese Australian students and the one-on-one interviews might make me feel uncomfortable or upset, and I can ask to stop or take a break at any time.

☐ I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not disadvantage me in any way.

☐ I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential and that my real name is not used if I decide to do so.

☐ I have been informed of the possible risks of participating in the study and that I can approach the support team at my school for help if required.

☐ I agree that the created art can be used in the thesis (written document about the research).

☐ I understand that I can decide not to be identifiable in the created art (e.g., in photographs) if I decide to do so.

☐ I agree to exhibit my created art in an exhibition (online or face-to-face) at the end of the project.

☐ I understand that because I am younger than 18 years old, my parent/(s)/caregiver(s) have to give their consent (permission) so I can participate in this project.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

CONSENT FROM PARENT/CAREGIVER

I certify that (***please tick if you agree***):

☐ I am voluntarily giving my consent for my child ..... to participate in the study: Exploring South Sudanese Australian adolescents' identities and how this can impact educational experiences by Annemarie Agborchi and her supervisors, Dr Helen Widdop Quinton and Dr Sarah Tartakover from Victoria University and with Associate Investigator Dr William Abur from Melbourne University.

☐ I understand what the study is about and what is expected of my child during the time of data collection.

☐ I have had the opportunity to ask questions.

☐ I give permission for my child to participate in the five focus group meetings

☐ I give permission for my child to write his/her reflections on the focus group discussions in the provided diary, and he/she can use the diary to write or draw if he/she wishes to do so.

☐ I give permission for my child to participate in the two interviews.

☐ I give permission for my child to create written and/or visual art that will be used to explore his/her identity.

☐ I have been informed of the possible risks of taking part in the study for my child and that he/she can use the support team at school if required.

☐ I understand that my child can withdraw from the study at any time and that this will not disadvantage him/her in any way.

☐ I have been informed that the information that my child will provide will be kept confidential and that his/her real name is not used if he/she decides to do so.

☐ I give permission for the art created to be used in the thesis (a written document about the research).

☐ I understand that my child can decide not to be identifiable in the created art (e.g., photographs).

☐ I give permission to exhibit the created art by my child in an exhibition (online or face-to-face) at the end of the project.

☐ I understand that because my child is younger than 18 years old, I have to give consent (permission) for him/her to participate in the project.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher, Annemarie Agborchi.
Email: annemarie.agborchi@students.vu.edu.au
Phone: 0420 649072.

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email Researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

Appendix G: Questions for Focus Group Meetings

Topic 1: Our identities Prompts:

- How do we express ourselves?
- How do we identify ourselves?
- What is an identity?
- What are things/elements that can influence our identity? (People, places, things, activities, things that you can't see).
- Is having an identity important?
- How do you think other people see you, your identity?
- Part of our identity is where we come from. Where do you consider you come from? Is it South Sudan or Australia?

Topic 2: Our identities and school

Prompts:

- How do you express yourself at school?
- Is that different from at home or with your friends?
- Do your friends at school understand your identity?
- Do your teachers at school understand your identity?
- What are some of the things other people say about South Sudanese people?
- Do you feel supported at school? Work, subject selection, VCE/VCAL
- Any issues that you feel judged by peers and/or teachers because of you being SS?

Topic 3: Our identities and family

Prompts:

- How do we express ourselves with our families?
- Is it different from when we are at school and with friends?
- What does your family value about your identity?
- How does your family identify themselves?
- How is your family involved with the school? (Attend parent-teacher meetings, information sessions, subject selection, further studies).

Topic 4: Our identities and the community

Prompts:

- What is the identity of the South Sudanese community?
- Do you share that identity with them?
- Is the identity of the community different here than in South Sudan?
- Is the/a South Sudanese identity important to you?

- Are there activities in the South Sudanese community that you and your family attend?
- Any signs of division in the community?
- What about those families who have children who are not doing so well?
- How does the negative media affect the South Sudanese community?

Appendix H: Interview Questions and Arts-Based Activities for the South Sudanese Australian Students

Questions:

1. Please tell me a bit about yourself.
2. Please tell me about your family.
3. Please tell me about your journey to Australia (for the students who were born overseas).
4. How is school going?
5. What do you like at school? (Feelings/emotions/observations).
6. What do you find hard at school? Specific subjects or topics?
7. How would you describe the relationships with your teachers?
8. Is there a teacher that stands out? In what way?
9. What are your grades at the moment?
10. What do you do after school and at the weekends?
11. Please tell me about your friends.
12. What would you like to do when you finish high school?
13. What would be the best way for you to express yourself through the use of art (e.g., in a painting, a poem, a song, photo collage)? Why did you choose this?

Topics to discuss:

Subjects (curriculum), student-student relationships, student-teacher relationships, discrimination (incl. othering and racism), representation in the media of South Sudanese adolescents, opinions on and possible improvements of teaching (style and approach) and school policies.

Identity drawing Instructions:

Could you try to draw who you think you are at this point in your life? You may add, if you want to, the people, objects, institutions, and things that, for you, are the most important or the most significant.

Geomap drawing Instructions:

Can you make a map that indicates any spaces and places that are important for you? You can draw yourself in the middle or just draw a circle and write 'Me' or your name. To give me an idea of how important these places are, can you write or draw them in various distances from the middle, whereby a short line indicates that it is a very important place, and a long line indicates that it is not too important, but still relevant for you.

Discussing the created artefacts:

- Tell me about what you created here (ask for specific details in the drawings).
- Tell me about what you created here (ask for specific details such as people in photos, videos, meaning of created art, use of colour, space, meaning of text [poem, song, story], expressed feelings [happiness, anger, frustration, confusion]).
- How did you include parts of yourself, your identity, in this artefact?

Appendix I: Interview Questions for School Leadership

1. Please tell me about yourself and your position as (Assistant) Principal at this school.
2. Please tell me about your experience with the South Sudanese Australian students and their families at your school.
3. What can you, as (Assistant) Principal, do for the South Sudanese Australian students at your school?

Topics to cover/discuss:

- Engagement and academic performance
- Teacher expectations
- Parent involvement
- Curriculum and contextualising of curriculum to engage students
- Role of teachers
- Differences in cultures
- Discrimination and racism
- Inclusive pedagogies.

Appendix J: Interview Questions for (Homeroom) Teachers

1. Please tell me about yourself and your position as a (homeroom) teacher at this school.
2. You know that my research is with South Sudanese students at this school. As you've read in the information, my reseach is related to the identities of South Sudanese students. As the teacher of [insert name student] who is participating in the research, can you share some of your observations and experiences regarding [insert name student]?
3. The students have shared some valuable information with me regarding their backgrounds, their journeys to Australia for those who weren't born here, and their life as South Sudanese adolescents in Australia both in and out of the school setting. How do you perceive the importance of knowing the background of your students, this could be cultural and ethnic, religious, and even if they or their families before them arrived here as refugees?
4. What are your observations regarding engagement, school and behaviour performance of [insert name student]? (I understand that you're not allowed to give private information but just some general observations).
5. Are your expectations for [insert name student] the same as for other students?
6. What do you think you can do as a homeroom/advisory teacher for [insert name student]?

Topics to cover/discuss:

- Curriculum and contextualising of curriculum to engage students
- Role of teachers
- Differences in cultures
- Discrimination and racism
- Inclusive pedagogies.

Appendix K: Interview Questions for South Sudanese Australian CLOs

1. Please tell me something about yourself.
2. Please describe your responsibilities as a Community Liaison Officer here at school.
3. How would you describe the South Sudanese Australian adolescents at this school?
4. The students have talked a few times about the position of girls at home and in the community. They mentioned their roles and responsibilities and how this can impact the time they can allocate to their schoolwork. What are your observations and experiences regarding this?
5. The topic of marriage and arranged marriage has been brought up as well by some of the female students [explain in more detail when required]. What are your observations and experiences regarding this?

Topics to cover/discuss:

- Engagement and academic performance
- Issues observed
- Teacher expectations
- Curriculum and contextualising of curriculum to engage students
- Role of teachers/ role of principal
- Discrimination and racism
- Inclusive pedagogies.

Appendix L: Overview of the Expressed Funds of Identity by the Student Knowledge Holders

<table>
<tr><th>FoI sub-categories</th><th>Expressed in the collected knowledge</th></tr>
<tr><td>Geographical FoI</td><td>- South Sudan, Sudan (e.g., mention of birthplaces, villages and towns)
- Egypt, Kenya, Libya
- Australia, Victoria, South Australia, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth
- School*, mosque, church, homes of family and friends</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Exemplar quotes

South Sudan:
- “I’m pretty sure you know I’m from South Sudan. I was born in Bor [...]. It’s a small community” (Interview with Amiot).
- [Why is South Sudan important for you?] “Because that's my own country; I was born there. That's where my dad was buried” (Interview with Abul).
- “Much easier being with, like, your own kind and yeah, understand everything. And it wouldn't be a struggle as it is here in Australia. Because you know, to be he has to fit in the description of, like, people. Yeah, you know, you feel, like, you have to try so hard to be that person that they want you to, but back home you just be like a free bird” (Interview with AD).
- “I’ll be going to Sudan for like one month and then Egypt because everyone is there” (Saint, FGM 2, Western College).

Australia:
- “I was born in Australia; I was born here in Melbourne in Dandenong Hospital” (Interview with Aduk).

School:
- “I love going to school” (Interview with Amiot).
- “At school, that's, like, when I can be silly” (Aluat, FGM 3, Riverwalk College).
- “At school, I’m, like, more confident, I guess” (Interview with Aker).</td></tr>
<tr><td>Practical FoI (identity practices)</td><td>- Playing sports: basketball, AFL, running
- Listening to music (including creating playlists)
- Working
- Shopping
- Hobbies
- Watching TV (Netflix)
- Writing in a journal or on notes on a phone
- Praying and visiting the mosque and church (also institutional FoI)
- Speaking different Languages
- Talking to friends</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Exemplar quotes

Sports:</td></tr>
</table>

- "I'm really into sports, and my favourite sport is volleyball. I do like running long distance and short distance" (Interview with Abul).

Listening to music and watching TV:

- "Because we're in Australia now. We're teenagers, we listen to rap, R&B, anything that we find interesting, just like any other person" (Aluat, FGM 1, Riverwalk College).
- "I love listening to music and watching movies" (Interview with AD).
- "I also express myself through music. I also like to read. If I'm having a bad day I go to a quiet place and start to read" (Abuk, FGM 1, Western College).
- "We listen to Congolese music too. We listen to every, as long as the music is fire we're going to listen to" (Aluat, FGM 1).

Speaking different languages:

- "We not only speak Dinka, but we can also, like, speak Swahili and Arabic [...] Because some of us have been to Kenya too. Because when I was in Africa, I also went to Uganda and Kenya and Nairobi" (Aluat, FGM 1, Riverwalk College).
  "If it gets hard with English, it's, like, a comfort thing for me knowing that that person can speak that [Dinkan]. And I can learn things from them. You know coming here, you can forget about your language, you can forget things you say, speaking. For me, personally, I've been here for, like, ten years and I've forgotten half of my language. And to find people who are, like, in my little circle, they can teach me the language, they can teach me words again and that connects me to my culture. Coming here, you forget about your culture" (AD, FGM 2, Western College).

Writing in a journal or on notes on a mobile phone:

- "I write in my diary as much as I can, sometimes maybe every day. Could be, like, honestly, once a week depends on my mood" (Interview with Abuk).
- "So, I would just be blasting my playlist, like any playlist I feel like that day and just write" (Abuk, FGM 1, Western College).

Talking to friends:

- "I feel, like, expressing how I feel and just talking, like, to somebody, or, just everybody. Just express how I feel because I feel, like, for me, how I do in certain situations I do, like, talking it out and seeing how other people do stuff as well, is there any way I can let it out instead of bottling up my emotions and, like, letting it sit within myself and then, it drains me, it's better to talk it out" (Saint, FGM 1, Western College).

Cultural FoI (artefacts)	- South Sudanese food - South Sudanese dances - South Sudanese music - South Sudanese jewellery - South Sudanese decorated living room - South Sudanese knitted accessories and decorations - Bakhoor - Year 12 jacket

Exemplar quotes

South Sudanese food:

- "I feel that's something I'll always have, I would always want cultural food [...] but I would want to cook other stuff too, but I can never forget about my country" (Abul, FGM 1, Riverwalk College).

- "Yeah, it's also part of who I am. Not only tastes better, but I just, I'm missing without it" (Aluat, FGM 1, Riverwalk College).
- "After school, my mom would cook, and then I would just smell it from far away. Then I would run and then just go eat. It, actually, it does. It's, like, it's a memory that can never be erased in my mind" (Amiot, FGM 1, Riverwalk College).

South Sudanese dances:

- "It's actually more about how we feel. You know? If there's something going on in the community, right? And then they invite people to go there and dance, it's, like, they're celebrating something. But at the same time, it represents our culture and background" (Amiot, FGM 1).
- "Yeah, it's Dinka dancing and stuff" (Aduk, FGM 1).

South Sudanese jewellery:

- "There's beads to put around your neck and waist" (Amiot, FGM 1, Riverwalk College).

South Sudanese knitting and decorations:

- "They're knit, something, I don't know. It's colourful. It's, like, what's it called? Wool. They knit things with wool. They knit blankets or whatever. They make little square-type things [...] Yeah, different shapes and different colours. And then they'll put it on the chairs" (Aduk, FGM 1, Riverwalk College).
- They [parents] flex, but it's a reminder of home yeah (Abuk, FGM 3, Western College).

Bakhoor:

- "It's, like, this normal air freshener, but African version" (Aduk, FGM 1, Riverwalk College).

Year 12 jacket:

- "So, it's kind of, like, I've made it to year 12, I'm graduating in November. I have done. I'm passing on my classes. So it's kind of, like, the jacket is a big thing for me. It's, like, you've made it" (Interview with AD).

Social FoI	- Family (including extended family and those overseas) - Friends

Exemplar quotes

- "I love my mum; I go to school for her, 10% for myself" (Moya, FGM 3, Western College).
- "That's why I always look up to my Mum" (Interview with Saint).

Institutional FoI	- Mosque (Islamic faith) - Church (Christian faith) - School*

Exemplar quote

- "So, I go to the mosque and do my prayers and stuff" (Moya, FGM 1, Western College).

Dark/existential FoI	- Experiences with discrimination and racism at school - Experiences with stereotypical assumptions about South Sudanese people - Experiences with teachers' assumptions regarding the 'good' and the 'bad' South Sudanese

	- Experiences with losing the ability the ability to communicate in their mother tongue - Experiences and observations of divisions in the South Sudanese Australian Community - Experiences with negative attitudes and restrictions towards girls from parents and community members - Experiencing mental health issues of students, including depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts - Experiences with having to grow up too quickly due to responsibilities at home - Experiences with sickness and passing of family members - Experiences with a lack of parental involvement and interest in education - Experiences with differential treatment and assumptions/negative attitudes from teachers regarding abilities (deficit approach) - Personal or familial experiences of war, including escaping to safety, displacement, life in a refugee camp, and living with family members who have trauma or PTSD - Experiences with parental unemployment and its impact on family life - Experiences of being separated from mother and/or siblings - Knowledge of the custom of arranged marriages for teenage girls - Experiences of being considered 'whitewashed' by family or community members - Experiences with being targeted and racially profiled when out in public, e.g., in shops - Experiences with and/or knowledge of gangs and/or gang-related violence

Exemplar quotes

Experiences with discrimination and racism at school:

- "It's more important for teachers to acknowledge that they treat us differently; when you're Black because your skin colour is black, they punish you differently" (Abuk, FGM 2, Western College).

Experiences with stereotypical assumptions about South Sudanese:

- "It's either basketball or modelling. At first, it's like, 'Okay'. And then when it starts getting too much, it's annoying" (Aluat, FGM 1, Riverwalk College).
- "They assume everyone steals" (Abraham, FGM 4, Riverwalk College).
- "They say South Sudanese people have to be dark. If you're not skinny, tall, if you're not playing basketball, you're not Sudanese." (AD, FGM 1, Western Colllege)
- "It's because they like grouping; they don't point out individuals. They like to group everyone as a whole, which is why I just hate how they are always grouping people" (Interview with Abraham).
- "It's the image of what they should look like, what a South Sudanese person should look like. If they see an African person, they assume you have an afro, you're tall, you're black, you're like this" (Moya, FGM 1, Western College).
- "They want you to be a different kind of South Sudanese, you know, identify as someone different. When you say you're South Sudanese, they're like, Oh. Clearly, you can see their face, disappointment, because they assume you're that South Sudanese" (AD, FGM 1, Western College).

- "I feel no matter who you are you'll always have a negative. It's, like, anyone stating that. It's, like, having darker skin in general. It's a negative statement behind it. You're more aggressive; you're more violent. I've seen it. I don't know, it can be an assumption made by me, but every time, 'cause I live in [suburb], and it's predominantly a white area, so I go around on walks with my dog, and people walk on the other side, not on the same side with me" (Moya, FGM 1, Western College).

Experiences with teachers' assumptions regarding the 'good' and the 'bad' South Sudanese:

- "I had that teacher one time. I was just doing my work, and he comes up to me and goes, 'Oh, where are you from?' And I said, 'I'm from South Sudan'. And he goes, 'Oh, so you're one of the good ones?' Like literally! What do you mean, the good ones?" (Saint, FGM 1, Western College).

Experiences and observations of divisions in the South Sudanese Australian Community:

- "In Melbourne it's, like, at first, like, when everyone first came to Melbourne, it was fine, everyone's happy. And two kids, like, started dying and, like, getting stabbed and stuff by other Sudo and like gang rivals and stuff." (Aduk, FGM 4)

Experiences with negative attitudes and restrictions towards girls from parents and community members:

- "The only freedom we have is school, our work, get married, get kids" (AD, FGM 2, Western College).
- "Because what if an auntie drives by? It's literally one phone call, and it's around the whole community" (Saint, FGM 2, Western College).
- "It's so, like, my daughter's tall, she can be a basketball player too. It's not, like, to, my daughter's smart, she can be a basketball player too. It always has to revolve around marriage, never revolve around your future, or my daughter's gonna be really good at this or good at that [...] And it's, like, that's not fair. Why do we have, like, marriage towards us?" (Interview with AD).
- "It's the assumption that I don't know, that they [boys] don't get into trouble, I don't know. They don't get pregnant!" (Abuk, FGM 2, Western College).
- "My brothers are allowed out. Yeah. Any time they want!" (Interview with Aker).
- "She [mother] thinks the cultural way [...] she's, like, she has that mindset, like, I don't know how to explain it. Like, she's fresh. She's South Sudanese, she's strict" (Interview with Aker).
  "The thing is, most of the time, they don't really care about, like, that [going to university]. They just care about the guy that you're marrying that's going; they think that's the best future. They don't care about your actual dream" (Aluat, FGM 3, Riverwalk College).

Experiences with having to grow up too quickly due to responsibilities at home:

- **"**My mom's like, you know, she only wants to look after the child for a few months when they're born and just hand it off the next person, like, to look after them [...] Why me? [...] I'm sick of it!" (Interview with Abuk)
- "Having to grow up so quick; to, like, not being seen as a child all of my life." (Interview with Abuk)
- "I've had a kid on my hip ever since I was like, what, six years old? I'm tired!" (Interview with Abuk)

Personal or family experiences of war, including escaping to safety, displacement, life in a refugee camp, and living with family members who have trauma or PTSD:

- "My mom almost died in the war" (Aluat, FGM 4, Riverwalk College).

- “My dad, may he rest in peace, would talk about it, but he would always tell me about it and show me photos of him in the war and his medals” (Abraham, FGM 4, Riverwalk College).
- “Apparently, my grandma was stolen by the Nuer people, yeah. All I know is that she said she got stolen. They were hitting her back with the gun and stuff, telling her to do stuff” (Abur, FGM 4, Riverwalk College).
- “My mom has it” [PTSD] (Aduk, FGM 4, Riverwalk College).
- “My dad, from war he got dementia, so he's just forgetting everything but kept remembering the war, the sounds” (Abraham, FGM 4, Riverwalk College).
- “I think most, most, elders suffer from PTSD and stuff like that, and they can't really tell them all your things, like, you know” (Abuk, FGM 4, Western College).
- “I came to Australia in 2017, November. Before that, I lived in Kakuma refugee camp” (Interview with Abul).
- “My mom talks about it. My mum was born during the war. That's where she got her name. Her name's Atang, which means war” (name withheld**, FGM 4, Riverwalk College).
- “I think [my uncle] was a boy” [One of the Lost Boys of Sudan] (Abul, FGM 4, Riverwalk College).
- “My uncle, yeah, he used to drive, like, them. What do you call them? They're like Jeep. He used to drive one of those. He got shot in that. He was inside, and they shot inside. So he got shot on the shoulder. He went into a river, and he stayed there for days because people were still there. So he had to stay in the river for a few days” (Abul, FGM 4, Riverwalk College).
- “Actually, it's from the smell of the body. Because, I remember we went on this bus and then there was a bunch of soldiers lying down. There was blood everywhere. And then there was this one smell that literally just went up my nose, and I smell it right now. And it was just disgusting. And I was five years, I was young, but I still remember the smell” (Amiot, FGM 4, Riverwalk College).

Experiences with sickness and passing of family members:

- “My dad is dead. I think he was a smoker. So, he probably got a lung disease” (Abul, FGM 4, Riverwalk College).
- “My dad, he was good for our childhood, and then he got dementia. So, he was making it really difficult, like, throughout, like for me Year 5, 6, 7. Just making it really difficult. And then, Year 7 is when he passed. And then that hit us all pretty hard. My brother wouldn't even talk. My sister was never home” (Interview with Abraham).
- “She's [grandmother] sick, and she's had, I think, three operations” (Interview with Abul).
- “I don't have a dad. He passed a while ago” (Interview with Aker).

Experiences of being separated from mother and/or siblings:

- “She's not in Australia. I'm the only one that's here. My siblings are back with my mom” (Abul, FGM 4, Riverwalk College).
- “And the last time I saw my dad was 2013. We, basically, we left South Sudan because of war, and I don't know why my dad didn't want to come with us, but he wanted to stay back home” (Interview with Abul).
- “I've never met one of my little brothers, the one that was born after my dad died. I've never met him, and I didn't really have a lot of memory about my dad because mostly I was with my grandma” (Interview with Abul).
- “She is back home; my mum is in South Sudan with my other siblings.” [Is there a chance she is also coming to Australia?] “We tried but is hard with, like, just how they're doing it now to bring family over here. They just make it so difficult. And then with pricing as well to make money so high. And it's, like, you pay it, but they didn't do what they said they what they do. So, it's hard to find that company that will do it for you. And you know that you're guaranteed that they'll bring your mom” (Interview with AD).
- “I literally don’t speak with my dad” (Moya, FGM 1, Western College).

Experiences with differential treatment and assumptions/negative attitudes from teachers regarding abilities (deficit approach):

- "Let's say a white kid would approach them and say, I don't like my class I'm in. They'd, like, 'Yeah, we change it for you'. And they change their class. And I go and say that I don't like the class that I'm in. Oh, you have no option but to be in it. So, it's kind of, like, I didn't, like, I stopped caring what they, what they think. And I just started skipping" (Interview with AD).
- "When you're Black because your skin colour is black, they [teachers] punish you differently" (Abuk, FGM 2, Western College).
- "They probably won't expect anything from you. The teachers know you're not going to do work, so they don't bother" (Aduk, FGM 4, Riverwalk College).
- "In a way, teachers view South Sudanese students older than they are, you're not really a child, you're an adult, you should deal with the consequences as an adult" (Abuk, FGM 2, Western College).
- "Cause obviously I'm not getting that praise here at school" (Saint, FGM 2, Western College).
- "But then at the same time, some teachers think that we're dumb" (Aduk, FGM 2, Riverwalk College).

  "In my old school, there's this one lady. My English teacher. If I ask for help, she'll just tell me to reread something else. So, tell me to reread the work that we've been through. And then if any, but the other white kids need help, because I grew up in a white school, if they need help, she'll literally go help them" (Chanel, FGM 2, Riverwalk College).

Experiences with parental unemployment and the impact on family life:

- "My brother, he stays home with us because he helps my mom pay the bills because my mom just now got a job. It finally worked out, but it took 10, 15 years for her to actually get a job" (Interview with Abraham).
- "So, mom would, would've to stay home [because of the sickness of her husband and the English language barrier]. We have to provide the money. And that's why it caused a lot of fights in the house" (Interview with Abraham).
- "We had our struggles, like, when we were young. We never really had all this like with normal kids. So, she [older sister] just wanted to make it a reality. When we were kids, she'd always buy us stuff. It wasn't our mom buying us our clothes, it was my older siblings so that they would provide for us, get us food and stuff like that" (Interview with Abraham).

Experiences with being targetied and racially profiled when out in public (e.g., in shops):

- "When you're in a group, and there's, like, two white and two black people. If the white one stole, they would follow the black ones because they assume they stole" (Abraham, FGM 4, Riverwalk College).
- "I'm conscious of how I dress, not black, always ID to verify who I am" (AD, FGM 2, Western College).
- "When we are outside because they stereotype us because they might be gangs and stuff. So I go shop, it happens a lot. When I go shops, there'll be managers following me and stuff like I'm going to steal. I don't steal. I just go buy stuff, and they think I'm going to steal" (Aduk, FGM 4, Riverwalk College).

Experiences with being considered 'whitewashed' by friends, family or community members:

- "When you can't speak our language, they'll call you whitewashed" (Abraham, FGM 1, Riverwalk College).
- "If you're called whitewash, you go cry" (Aduk, FGM 1, Riverwalk College).
- "If you're hanging out with Indian or Asian I'm still considered whitewashed" (Moya, FGM 1, Western College).

- “It’s sad, ‘cause they're telling you that you're not black, basically [...]. Because if you don't talk your language, if you don't cook your cultural food, you don't like your cultural food” (Aduk, FGM 1, Riverwalk College).
- “It’s like, if you’re black and you’re hanging out with white kids, then you’re whitewashed” (AD, FGM 1, Western College)
- “I want to represent my culture. And since I was born here, yeah, I kind of look, like, I'm a bit whitewashed. So I want to find ways that I can be still seen as I love my country and all this stuff. So it doesn't look like I'm kind of pushing away my country” (Interview with Chanel).

Experience with and knowledge of gangs:

- “One of my older cousins, he got mixed up with it. He actually learnt his lesson. He went to juvie a couple of times, but now actually, his life is straight now” (Interview with Abraham).
- “Like, one of my cousins got killed because he snitched on his gang or whatever. Or he didn't really snitch; he just didn't want to get caught in it because he was in the gang. And then he wants to get out of it. And so he just decided to, like, just tell everything and said he would be fine, and they went after him. It's, like, if you get caught stitching or whatever” (name withheld**, FGM 4, Riverwalk College).
- “It's called a gang or like a bunch of people from a gang come up to you, and they start asking me stuff, like, did they know what side you come from; east side, west side, anything. Stuff like that. And then I think it depends a lot on who you know. It's like, if I was to get pressed, I have a cousin. His name is [name withheld]. He's six-nine [...] So he's buff and really tall. If you were trying to get me, obviously, he [the cousin] beat you up. So, they'll ask me who are they. And if I said I know [name of cousin], and they'll back off because they'll get scared” (name withheld**, FGM 4, Riverwalk College).
- “He [cousin] tried to lose the gang, but he couldn't because they tried to kill and stuff. So his parents were going to take him to Africa. I think it was two days before he was supposed to leave, but they killed him” (name withheld**, FGM 4, Riverwalk College).

Experiences with losing the ability the ability to communicate in their mother tongue:
:

- [Do you communicate regularly with your mum?] “Not regularly because there's not much mother tongue anymore because I've been in Australia for like 10 years, and I left back home when I was eight. So having, like, the mindset of a child, you learn a new language and then you forget that you have another language” (Interview with AD).

Knowledge of the custom of arranged marriages for (teenage) girls:

- “There is, like, arranged marriage. So, like, a month ago, my uncle was talking with my auntie in Africa. So, my auntie, she, like, had a daughter she, like, about yeah, she's 16 years old and she has her daddy. So, they said they don't have money, and they, like, give their daughter out to a total stranger, to, like, someone who's like older than [her]. So, my uncle literally just went off at the mother and the father for thinking about selling their child for money” (Amiot, FGM 3, Riverwalk College).
- “My cousin, she was about to get, what's it called, she about to get put in arrange marriage. My grandma, she found this guy, like, it's like 50-year-old guy, 50, like, around 50. I know she’s 18. [Annemarie: Your grandmother arranged it?]. Grandma, yeah. She wanted her to get married, yeah. It didn't happen. [Annemarie: So, what was the reason for your grandmother to do that then?] She wants money” (Chanel, FGM 3, Riverwalk College).
- “But sometimes [...] they think, like, the guy is, like, a good person. Like, I don't know. Just it's not always about, like, the money” (Abul, FGM, Riverwalk College).
- “Someone from Africa called my mom and said that they should bring me there to get married.” [When asked whether her parents would agree to this] “No, I trust my family. I don't think

they're the type of person, like, can do that. Especially my mom. Even if my dad wanted to do it, she probably wouldn't let him" (Aluat, FGM 3, Riverwalk College).
- "Like, your whole family talks about it and everything, and then, like, when they're ready, that's when they want to tell you. They plan it without you knowing and then tell you [...] They could be doing it any second" (Abul, FGM 3, Riverwalk College).
- "The thing is, most of the time they don't really care about, like, that [going to university]. They just care about the guy that you're marrying that's going, they think that's best future. They don't care about your actual dream" (Aluat, FGM 3, Riverwalk College).
- "The parents are, like, this is my family, this is my religion, I'm gonna send my daughter back to get married. 'Cause they feel, like, your parents have that pressure if they don't do that they gonna be hated in the community" (AD, FGM 2, Western College).
- "The thing is they'll give you an arranged marriage when you can't find someone" (Moya, FGM 3, Western College).
- "And sometimes they even send you back home, to marry, and you stay there for a few years and come back, and you're married, and you're pregnant, and you already have a two-year-old child" (Abuk, FGM 2, Western College).

Experiences with a lack of parental involvement and interest in education or selecting subjects
- "I do it [schoolwork and selecting exam subjects] all myself most of the time. I would tell her [mother], she just wouldn't care. She doesn't care what I'm doing as long as she gets money, she doesn't care" (Abraham, FGM 3, Riverwalk College).
- "They didn't do schoolwork and studd like that." (Interview with Abuk)

Experiencing mental health issues of students: depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts
- "Yeah, 'cause I have mental health issues, so my doctor was like, you might like to have a diary" (Abuk, FGM 1, Western College).
- "I think it was a mixture of both like stress, as well as having to grow up so quick. To, like, not being seen as a child all of my life" (Interview with Abuk).

Digital FoI	- Phone used for playing music, writing notes, taking photos and communicating with friends - Laptops used for studying and watching music and shows on YouTube and Netflix - The created collages that included photos and written elements were created on the students' phones and laptops

Exemplary quotes
- "Just watch anything on my laptop" (Interview with Aker).
- "I watch Netflix movies, and I watch anime on Netflix and online websites basically" (Interview with Abul).

Agency and imagination	- Agency in identifying educational pathways and arranging to make changes in subjects and exam pathways - Agency in saving money for anticipated plans - Imagination regarding anticipated agency (e.g., different parenting style)

Exemplar quotes

Agency in identifying educational pathways and arranging to make changes in subjects and exam pathways:

- "They will arrange. If I need something, I'll call them. If I need a reference, I'll call them" (AD, FGM 2, Western College).
- "So, I had those two options. I was questioning why can't I do VCAL. They kept saying VCAL is full, VCAL is full, VCAL is full. And I was, like, no, I'm not buying this. So, then I talked to another teacher and she said we have a couple of spots in VCAL" (Saint, FGM 2, Western College).
- "If I struggle, I can go to her [school career counsellor]. I ask her, 'What do I do?'" (AD, FGM 2, Western College).
- "No, I don't do further maths. I've replaced it with food studies. 'Cause, like, I only need Unit 1 and 2 for maths so I can go into my bachelors of nursing" (Abuk, FGM 2, Western College).

Agency in saving money for anticipated plans:

- "To pay for my braces [...] Well, I know the braces cost six grand" (Interview with Aker).
- "I split it in half, and then I keep my savings for the house and for my future" (Interview with Abraham).

Imagination regarding anticipated agency (e.g., parenting)

- "That's want I want to change; I want my kids to know that they don't have to do things because I did it" (Interview with AD).

Invisible FoI	Gender-assigned roles and expectations***

Exemplar quote

- "Also, girls are mostly expected to know how to cook, clean. Boys don't do cooking" (Abul, FGM 1, Riverwalk College).

* School can also be considered a social institution; however, it is also a geographical location since it can be located on a map.

** Names are not included here to protect the students' identities since some opted not to use a pseudonym.

*** Although it can be considered an invisible FoI, since the female students were well aware of the gender-assigned roles and expectations, this topic was grouped under another sub-category.

Appendix M: Overview of the Expressed Community Cultural Wealth by the Student Knowledge Holders

Types of CCW	Expressed by the students in the focus groups, interviews, and artefacts
Aspirational capital	- Planning for subjects to be selected in Year 10 aligning with plans for tertiary studies. - Plans for tertiary education, including nursing, law, social work, veterinary sciences. - Ambitious job plans that include lawyer, social worker, nurse, model, rapper, detective, veterinarian, basketball player, singer, starting a business (also included in artefacts, see Appendices O and P). - Plans to do things differently than their family (e.g., not getting married, not having children).
Exemplar quotes - "Afterwards, I would like to study law" (Interview with Amiot). - "I like something to do with, like, business or something" (Interview with Aker). - "Legal studies, because I want to do law. I want to be a lawyer" (Interview with Abul). - "I actually didn't know. I wanted to do engineering, but then I realised all the maths and everything I had to do for it. And then that's when I turned modelling. Modelling was my backup" (Interview with Aduk). - "Some of my family is not doing what I'm doing now. No one in my family. I want to graduate school and graduate uni" (AD, FGM 3, Western College). - "I want to be the first person [to go to university]" (Saint, FGM 3, Western College). - "I'm going to start [sign up with a modelling agency] probably these holidays to next year because this term, my whole year's kind of been mucked up with moving and then going to hospital and stuff. It's, like, all this year's just, like, focus, trying to get back on track and then next year, I'm just going that way" (Interview with Aduk).	
Linguistic capital	- Speaking their ethnic background language because it allows them to speak with family still in South Sudan, in refugee camps or displaced in Africa. It also allows them to talk to elderly South Sudanese Australian community members who do not know English well. - The created artefacts that included written expressions of identity and related aspects.
Exemplar quotes - "When I was born, I spoke Dinka, no English at all. And when I was, like, two years old, my brother was born. When I went to kindy, I had started to learn English a little bit more, but my English was really bad. And my brother knew English very well, but I didn't. So then, over the years, I started growing with my English and losing my Dinka. So, then, like, a couple of years ago, I didn't know Dinka at all much. So then now my parents put us, like, a Dinka school because we had a Dinka school in Adelaide [...] a Dinka class where they would teach you, according to your level of Dinka speaking, they would teach you the alphabet, they'll teach you like numbers, letters, all this stuff, and greetings" (Interview with Chanel). - "We not only speak Dinka, but we can also, like, speak Swahili and Arabic [...] Because some of us have been to Kenya too. Because, when I was in Africa, I also went to Uganda and Kenya and Nairobi" (Aluat, FGM 1, Riverwalk College).	

- "If it gets hard with English, it's, like, a comfort thing for me knowing that that person can speak that [Dinkan]. And I can learn things from them. You know coming here, you can forget about your language, you can forget things you say, speaking. For me, personally, I've been here for, like, ten years and I've forgotten half of my language. And to find people who are, like, in my little circle, they can teach me the language, they can teach me words again and that connects me to my culture. Coming here, you forget about your culture" (AD, FGM 2, Western College).
- "I speak Arabic as well" (Moya, FGM 1, Western College).
- "My mum does not speak English. So, for me to not know Dinkan, it's so important for me to remember that cause when I need to speak to her, like, I can just sit down and speak to her, 'cause she doesn't speak English. Dinkan is an important thing for me. So if you classify as a South Sudanese, it's not a, you must know Dinkan, you have that part in you. And it's helpful, let's say you go to the shopping mall and there's an old Sudanese lady who can't speak English, that's where that part kicks in, where that part is helpful, that Dinkan part. I can speak to her, I can help her. It's just a good skill to have in life" (AD, FGM 1, Western College).

Familial capital	- Transmission of cultural knowledge regarding cooking, dancing, and dressing in traditional clothing. - Family displaying South Sudanese decorations in the house - Deciding on the names of the children. - Learning languages (e.g., Dinka, Arabic) from parents.

Exemplar quotes

Transmission of cultural knowledge regarding cooking, dancing, and dressing in traditional clothing:

- [And who taught you how to cook, your grandma?] "My cousin, and grandma too" (Interview with Abul).
- "So sometimes we get together at home, sometimes on a certain day when we kind of feel like it. And then we would like put a video on or something, and my mom would just show us, and we'd just copy her or my grandma sometimes back them. But there's a lot of South Sudanese that we know we always hang around with, so we kind of already know this stuff" (Interview with Chanel).
- "My mom's been teaching me all this stuff [cooking]" (Interview with Chanel).
- "She [mother] plays music at home all the time. All my aunties come over, and they just blast music on speakers, or they have her on the TV, They just play, put it up all the way, and the volume all the way" (Interview with Aduk).
- "Well, I learn them [dances] from videos and events. Like, sometimes when we have these events, like random events[...]. So we went along and there was some people who went and go into traditional clothing and did some dance. You know going along on the, like, so there's like tables around, and there's like a space, yeah. And there's a huge space in the middle, the stages. So they all, like, start dancing, moving our feet and we've got, like, these cans that we have. So we strap cans, like, finished cans that you drink with. You put it in, like, elastic, and you put around your leg, which makes it a nice sound" (Interview with Chanel)
- "They, like, always tell us stories about the things that have been and the stuff that they did in their families" [stories and cultural knowledge] (Interview with Aluat).
- "Well, they're [makes jewellery from beads] pretty, and I want to represent my culture. And since I was born here, yeah, I kind of look, like, I'm a bit whitewashed. So I want to find ways

that I can be still seen as I love my country and all this stuff. So it doesn't look like I'm kind of pushing away my country" (Interview with Chanel).

Deciding on the names of the children:

- "They mostly just call like the, like if the grandma from the dad's side is alive or, like, just anyone from like the dad's side that is, like, older than the rest of the family" (Abul, FGM 3, Riverwalk College).

Learning languages (e.g., Dinka, Arabic) from family members:

- [How did you learn Dinka?] "Well, I was kind of just listening, and that's how I would learn. And mom would just speak only Dinka. So then I would, like, eventually catch on" (Interview with Chanel).

Social capital	- Role models within the community that the students draw from.

Exemplar quotes

- "They will arrange. If I need something, I'll call them. If I need a reference, I'll call them" (AD, FGM 2, Western College).
- "So, I had those two options. I was questioning why can't I do VCAL. They kept saying VCAL is full, VCAL is full, VCAL is full. And I was, like, no, I'm not buying this. So, then I talked to another teacher and she said we have a couple of spots in VCAL" (Saint, FGM 2, Western College).
  "If I struggle, I can go to her [school career counsellor]. I ask her, 'What do I do?'" (AD, FGM 2, Western College).

Navigational capital and informational capital	- Navigating the subject selections and exam pathways. - Finding out alternative pathways to enter the preferred university courses. - Utilising staff in school who can advocate for the students. - Knowledge regarding utilising the Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS) to apply for a preferred course at university.

Exemplar quotes

- "I was questioning why can't I do VCAL. They kept saying VCAL is full, VCAL is full, VCAL is full. And I was, like, no, I'm not buying this. So, then I talked to another teacher and she said we have a couple of spots in VCAL. And then, two of my other friends were going through the same situation. And then, they finally put me in VCAL, and I was, literally, I did not want to repeat, and I did not want to move to another school. So I said OK, I'm just gonna go to VCAL. I ended up finding a different pathway 'cause I want to do nursing. So, I found a different pathway to get to nursing. So, like, I'll be going to uni doing one year of Health and Science and then get into my second year of Bachelor of Nursing" (Saint, FGM 2, Western College).
- "No, I don't do further maths. I've replaced it with food studies. Cause, like, I only need units 1 and 2 for maths so I can go into my bachelors and nursing and stuff like that" (Abuk, FGM 2, Western College).
- "I can, if I struggle, I can go to her [career advisor]. I ask her what do I do. She reaches out to the teacher. When you reach out to a teacher, they don't understand. When another teacher reaches out, they understand. So [name of career advisor] is the teacher, like, when

you're failing, can you help me? Or [name of career advisor], my career path is this, what can I do? She can help you. You need that teacher who can show you things, alternatives, show you another path" (AD, FGM 2, Western College).
- "I'm going through SEAS [...]. I was talking to [name career advisor], and she said I would definitely qualify for that" (Interview with Abuk).
- "I haven't planned that yet [university course]. That's why I need to talk to [name of career advisor] about that. She actually put me in the right path" (Interview with Abraham).
- "If you can't talk to any of the other teachers and they don't understand you, you could talk to them" [South Sudanese Australian Community Liaison Officers] (Chanel, FGM 2, Riverwalk College).

Resistant capital	- Resistance against the restrictions placed on girls and the freedom granted to boys to go out. - Resistance against the assumption that girls get pregnant when socialising. - Resistance against expected roles and responsibilities of girls - Resistance against the expectation of marriage for girls. - Resistance against South Sudanese cultural values and norms that the students do not consider suitable/relevant in Australia. - Resistance against South Sudanese Australian parents who do not take responsibility for their children's upbringing. - Resistance against stereotypical portraits and assumptions of South Sudanese Australian young people by the broader Australian community.

Exemplar quotes

Against status and restrictions placed on girls and the freedom of boys to go out:

- "The only freedom we have is school, our work, get married, get kids" (AD, FGM 2, Western College).
- "My brothers are allowed out, yeah. Any time they want!" (Interview with Aker).
- "That's [going out] considered freedom because we don't have to prove which friends you're going out with. They're protecting you but it gets kind of, they're suffocating me. I wanna breathe. But you say that, and you've disrespected your parents. If you tell them that you're suffocating, that you wanna breathe, you've disrespected your parent" (AD, FGM 2, Western College).
- "Boys can go out whenever they want to!" (Saint, FGM 2, Western College).
- "And that's the issue with parents nowadays, they don't understand that sometimes we need that little bit of release, just release me for a bit. Just time out to go shopping by myself" (AD, FGM 2, Western College).
- "Boys can leave the house to do something; girls have to stay in the house" (AD, FGM 4, Western College).
- "Most of us are staying in and cooking and cleaning and babysitting all day" (Chanel, FGM 2, Riverwalk College).
- "I have a little brother; I think he's twelve or something. He gets so much swag. Some days he's not even going to school. Mum's OK with it. Doesn't want to go to school? Doesn't have to. Once he comes home, he drops his bags and goes to his friends, comes back, like, 12 or something" (Abuk, FGM 2, Western College).

Against the assumption of parents that girls get pregnant when socialising:

- “It’s the assumption that I don’t know, that they [boys] don’t get into trouble, I don’t know. They don't get pregnant!” (Abuk, FGM 2, Western College).
- “Because parents feel that if I go out, I get pregnant” (AD, FGM 2, Western College).

Against roles and responsibilities of girls:

- “Boys are so lucky. Yeah, they don’t have to clean, don’t have to look after any kids. They have so much excuses, they get away with a lot. And that’s not fair” (Saint, FGM 2, Western College).
- “Unpaid babysitter” (Abuk, FGM 4, Western College).
- “Yeah, like, if we try to, like, tell, like, my brothers to clean or whatever, they'll [parents] just be, like, stop relying on the kids. When I'm getting relied on by you guys. Like, you guys are relying on me to look after the whole house!” (Saint, FGM 4, Western College).
- “Yes! 100%. Like I said, when I'm leaving, I'm leaving with no, no hesitation [...] I'm just leaving because I'm tired. I just had enough” (Saint, FGM 4, Western College).
- “My mom knew that we're with her kids, like, she knew like we don't want another sibling. I'm, like, what is that? The one that was before her, she's only, like, two years old, you know. It's, like, repeated, like, maternal, like, need, and stuff like that. Like, I'm, I'm sick of it!” (Abuk, FGM 4, Western College).
- “Yeah 100%. I'm changing it” [parenting] (Saint, FGM 4, Western College).
- “I also, like, when things are stereotype of, like, I need a man. Like, I tell my little sisters every single day, like, what's a man to you, you don't need them. I want them to learn love and stuff like that” (Abuk, FGM 4, Western College).
- “I actually wish I was a boy. No, seriously, the boys in my house relax. Literally, they watch TV all if I just sit down, watch TV for a little bit, I'm automatically lazy. If I just sit down, relax just for a little bit, they're going to call me lazy. They're going to call me all this stuff” (Chanel, FGM 3, Riverwalk College).
- “If you don’t have a girl, your mum does it, men are not allowed in the kitchen” (AD, FGM 3, Western College).

Against expectation that all girls need to get married:

- “The only freedom we have is school, our work, get married, get kids” (AD, FGM 2, Western College).
- “It's so, like, my daughter's tall, she can be a basketball player too. It's not, like, to, my daughter's smart, she can be a basketball player too. It always has to revolve around marriage, never revolve around your future, or my daughter's gonna be really good at this or good at that [...] And it's, like, that's not fair. Why do we have, like, marriage towards us?” (Interview with AD).
- “The thing is, most of the time, they don't really care about, like, that [going to university]. They just care about the guy that you're marrying that's going; they think that's the best future. They don't care about your actual dream” (Aluat, FGM 3, Riverwalk College).
- “That’s all what we’ve been told when we were younger. You’re gonna be a mother, pop out ten kids, some of us don’t even want kids” (Abuk, FGM 2, Western College).
- “And then they'll use an example when you get married. If you get an argument with them, they'll tell you, are you gonna be like that when you get married? Why does it always end up married? Why can't you ask me? Or are you gonna be like that when you live alone? How are you going to do this? I'm always saying when I get married, they're comparing it to marriage. They're not comparing it to, like, actually life. Like the thing that when I leave school, I don't want to depend on a man. Have you not learned that I might just be single?” (AD, FGM 4, Western College).

- "And sometimes they even send you back home, to marry, and you stay there for a few years and come back, and you're married, and you're pregnant, and you already have a two-year-old child" (Abuk, FGM 2, Western College).
- "I don't want to get married, I've told my mother and my brother. I don't want to get married. Cause what's the point in me getting married, to prove what? [...] Why should we get married to prove that we are good? Because getting married is about proving that you're good" (AD, FGM 2, Western College).

Against cultural values and norms that the students do not consider suitable/relevant in Australia:

- "We're literally all based on community, what the community, what other people say. You know what other South Sudanese say about them. And that's where it doesn't add up to me cause, obviously, I have been raised in a western life, western culture. And that's where it clashes because I can't do that. What do you mean I have to act in a certain way to show some people, you need to keep a good name to yourself? Why can't you just show your true colours? Why do you guys have to hide them? We get judged consistently, like, for my own people. How? Are we not supposed to stick up for one another?" (Saint, FGM 2, Western College).
- "And that's another thing in our culture: men are so much better; they can marry as many wives as they like. We can't! We do that, and we're cheating" (AD, FGM 2, Western College).
- "And it's something that's normalised in our culture to have multiple wives, you know, it's fine. Because the more wives you have, the more the merrier. That's what they say, the more, the merrier. And it's not a good thing" (AD, FGM 4, Western College).
- "Finishing school, prove your parents and the community right that you can do this. It's not about oh, you know what, like, you know what, my mom's right, I'm not gonna finish school because I'm failing. It's about saying, you know what? I'm going to prove my mom wrong. I'm gonna prove the community wrong. I'm gonna finish school, I'm gonna get a job[...]. So it's, like, prove to the community right, like, there's no way you got to you have to prove them wrong" (Interview with AD).
- "That's what I want to change; I want my kids to know that they don't have to do things because I did it; the kids can choose" (AD, FGM 4, Western College).
- "I'll take all the good things but not the bad. And I'll not make up things" (Saint, FGM 4, Western College).
- "And then they're [caregivers] just like, 'Shut up. You don't know what you're talking about'. But actually, I know what I'm talking about, and they don't understand it" (Interview with Amiot).
- "My oldest brother just went to Sudan to get an arranged marriage. And this was designed back when he was like a little kid. The person that he married, he met her as a child and then he went back two years ago to get married. He didn't know her for his whole life but they got married. The same with my mum and dad, they didn't know each other until they got married." [Annemarie: Will that happen to you as well?] "Hell no, the only thing, I have to make a deal with my mom that she's a Sudanese person. If she's not Sudanese, she's not cooking me food" (Moya, FGM 3, Western College).
- "The issue is with females, it's hard for you guys because are told like this and that [...] You don't have a choice" (Moya, FGM 3, Western College).

Against parents who do not take responsibility for their children's upbringing:

- "Yeah, that's, like, parents be responsible for their kids. All the actions are, like, parents don't take accountability for their kids. Until they do something bad. Like, parents, don't care about their kids until you do something horrible. Like, especially in our community, moms who go to parties, or whatever, until your son ends up behind bars, you're, like, Oh,

my God, you know? [...]. What happened? They blame the friends, instead of blaming themselves. Instead of going, it's my fault that I was at a party. I came back at 3 a.m. in the morning, and do not go to my son's room, make sure he's in his bed. Because that's the issue: They care so much; about the friends and the outside, not what's inside their house [...]. And fathers do it, too. They don't care! They're, like, 'Oh, I'm gonna go to my friend's house, I'm gonna go here, I'm gonna go there'" (AD, FGM 4, Western College).

- "They're just, they're just let everything be until, like, something big. Like, if school gets involved, police gets involved, that's when they just, like, that's when they go, 'Oh, you shouldn't be doing this.' They start acting like they care. They were supposed to be like that at the start. But it's just, like, it's all fake. It's all fake. Until it's all public" (Saint, FGM 4, Western College).
- "Because, you know, even when I give birth to my own kids, I'm gonna give it to them. Like, yeah, this is for you, I look after you. I'm gonna look after myself. Because my kids they're my responsibility. I'm not gonna give to another child [...] And that's, that's a part that parents need to understand, you don't, you don't force your kids to raise your other kids because you're too lazy" (AD, FGM 4, Western College).
- "But then, as you came along, they said, you know, I'm tired, like, I want to go party and leave my three-year-old son at home, like, with my 17-year-old daughter. And it's kind of, like, why are you leaving me in that position; it's your job and your job only. It shouldn't be my job to look after your kids!" (AD, FGM 4, Western College).

Against stereotypical portraits and assumptions of South Sudanese Australian young people:

- "I had that teacher one time. I was just doing my work, and he comes up to me and goes, 'Oh, where are you from?' And I said, 'I'm from South Sudan.' And he goes, 'Oh, so you're one of the good ones?' Like literally! What do you mean, the good ones?" (Saint, FGM 1, Western College).
- "When you're in a group, and there's, like, two white and two black people. If the white one stole, they would follow the black ones because they assume they stole" (Abraham, FGM 4, Riverwalk College).
- "I'm conscious of how I dress, not black. Always carry ID to verify who I am" (AD, FGM 2, Western College).
- "When we are outside because, they stereotype us because they might be gangs and stuff. So I go shop, it happens a lot. When I go shops, there'll be managers following me and stuff like I'm going to steal. I don't steal. I just go buy stuff, and they think I'm going to steal" (Aduk, FGM 4, Riverwalk College).
- "Yes, its' kinda like you don't wanna go out anymore, cause, like, you only go out if you know you're going get treated the way you get treated, because when you go out people are going to ask you for receipt, ask you to open your bag, giving you looks because of your skin. What's the point in it, cause you gonna by your skin but by who you are? I can be black, and I can be the nicest person! Like, it's not, it always depend on white people, it's always around your skin, it's not about what you bring to the table. Like, they don't care. There's some AFL players here that are black, there's a lot of footie, soccer players that are black. But people always have something negative to say about them, no matter how you're doing in life; your skin will always have something against you!" (AD, FGM 1, Western College).
- "You're trying to prove something that you're not that person thinks you are. You're trying to prove to everyone in the world that you are a good person, but it's draining. Cause, like, they're gonna keep saying the same things" (AD, FGM 1, Western College).
- "Even if I act like I am a nice person, if I communicate properly and do all of that then people are still going to assume something, nonetheless. No matter who you are, no matter what you do, because they assume" (Moya, FGM 1, Western College).
- "I'm not gonna change myself when someone has an opinion about me. Like, I just look

from a distance and genuinely don't care what they say. Like, if you think that I steal, then OK, that's what you think. I'm not going out of my way, and change and prove to you that I don't. 'Cause what am I gonna gain from that at the end of the day? Like, there is nothing" (Saint, FGM 1, Western College).

- "You think you know me because someone from my tribe, someone from my country, has done something bad. Or a black kid came an hour ago and stole this or this, and you're just going to assume that, you know, another black kid came in, and they're gonna steal as well. So, why should I be the one changing? Why can't you change yourself, your mind. Maybe you just have to think, you know what, maybe not all black kids are bad. Like, look at this one, he's playing soccer. That one is going to school everyday and gets good grades. Why can't you change, why do I have to change for you to make you think, 'Oh, I was wrong, not all black kids are bad'" (AD, FGM 1, Western College).

Spiritual capital	- Islamic faith, Qur'an verses, and prayers that bring peace and understanding when stressed or anxious.

Exemplar quotes

- "My family has the Qur'an, like, in five places" (Moya, FGM 3, Western College).
- "They have like, around the house they have, like, like, pictures, not pictures, but, like, it's, like, verses, this recital all around the house" (Saint, FGM 3, Western College).
- "Spiritually, through religion [...]. My emotions are dependent on whether I pray or not. So, I go to the mosque and do my prayers and stuff" (Moya, FGM 1, Western College).
- Including the words 'mosque' and 'church' on the geo map (see Appendix N).

Appendix N: Overview of the Responses from the Geomaps

	Abuk	AD	Saint	Moya	Aluat	Abraham	MJ	Amiot	Chanel	Aker	Abul	Aduk
Places at home												
My room	X	X	X 2nd	X 1st	X 2nd	X 2nd	X 1st		X 1st	X equal	X 1st Shares with sister	
Home		X	X 3rd	X	X 2nd	X 1st Refers to family	X 1st	X	X 2nd		X 1st	X 1st
Living room									X 1st			
Places in Australia												
Perth			X 5th Born here. Relatives live there. She wants to live here.									
Australia			X 3rd			X 1st						
Melbourne			X 6th			X 2nd						
NSW		X										
Waterfall Cliff		X										
Flower file		X										
Victoria						X 2nd		X For my education				
School environment												
School			X 4th	X		X 1st Taking school very seriously	X	X		X equal She's more confident here	X 4th Because of friends	X 2nd
Other homes												

	Abuk	AD	Saint	Moya	Aluat	Abraham	MJ	Amiot	Chanel	Aker	Abul	Aduk
Father's house			X 5th									
Friends' house			X 6th				X					
Family's houses			X 7th									X
Granddad's house Grandma's house			X 4th Granddad in Sudan				X Melbourne					
Brother's house				X 1st								
Places of worship and prayers												
Mosque			X Goes every Friday, important!									
Church											X 2nd	
Places in Africa												
South Sudan		X		X	X Born here	X 1st		X Born here	X 2nd Has not been there	X	X 2nd Born here	
Sudan/Khartoum			X (Long line)	X								
Libya				X Born here (long line)								
Egypt				X 1st		X 3rd						
Sudan												
Makuto Kenya								X Where I schooled				
Juba								X Where mum is (probably)				
Kakuma											X 3rd	

	Abuk	AD	Saint	Moya	Aluat	Abraham	MJ	Amiot	Chanel	Aker	Abul	Aduk
Places in the world												
New York					X 1st							
Paris					X							
Golden State Warriors basketball gym					X Favourite team							
Canada					X							
Dubai			X Relatives (long line)									
Europe						X 3rd						
Asia						X 3rd						
USA						X 3rd						
Anywhere safe						X						
Bali												X Likes to go there for holiday
Remaining places of interest												
Basketball court							X 1st					
Fast-food restaurants							X					
Culture King												X
Rock Pool												X
BBQ				X								
Work						X 2nd	X 1st		X Long line			
Dominos					X Loves pizza							

	Abuk	AD	Saint	Moya	Aluat	Abraham	MJ	Amiot	Chanel	Aker	Abul	Aduk
Brother's first professional soccer match					X							
Werribee Plaza	x											
Melbourne Central	x											
Shops			X 5th									