

Using History as an Evaluation Tool

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Abstract

This paper proposes that historical analysis can provide evaluation tools to identify reasons for the lack of success of programs designed ostensibly to redress Australian Indigenous disadvantage.

Through re-examining the past, it is possible to identify ways of thinking about Indigenous people which have continuously underpinned policy and practice in regard to Indigenous Australians. These ways of thinking have been impediments to proper analysis of the problems faced by Indigenous Australians. The tendency has been to see Aborigines as the problem while we as Europeans have the solutions. However solutions based on these premises have not succeeded in reducing Aboriginal disadvantage.

Re-analysis of history provides tools which can show us a different picture. We have been constrained by long-standing attitudes from coming to grips with the real problems. If we want to see a lessening of Indigenous disadvantage, we can use the insights gained from history to re-evaluate policies and practices and begin to reframe the problem and thereby seek, in concert with Indigenous people, the real causes of and solutions to their disadvantage.

Introduction

As early as 1979, Altman and Nieuwenhuysen stated in relation to the Indigenous disadvantage which was clearly evident from their statistical analysis: "the current situation is, of course, the product of the past" (1979, p xv). Altman and Sanders made a similar point in relation to employment, "persistently poor mainstream employment outcomes... reflect the historical legacy of entrenched structural disadvantage in an increasingly competitive labour market" (Altman & Sanders 1991, p24). In 2000, Hunter pointed to the importance of historical factors in Indigenous disadvantage which "may be partially explained by Australia's history of appropriation of Indigenous peoples' lands and property, and the suppression of their traditional lifestyles" (Hunter 2000, p25). But still, despite recognition of the legacy of this history and notwithstanding unsuccessful efforts since the 1960s to redress Indigenous disadvantage, no thorough analysis of the impact of this historical legacy on Indigenous economic participation has been conducted (see for instance Altman, Biddle & Hunter 2004).

It will be shown in this paper that the seeds of failure of programs established to address this issue have been present within those programs from the outset, largely because of the narrow way in which the problem has been defined or understood by the policy makers or the policy implementers. By delving into early colonial history in Australia, a model has been developed which shows the elements of that underlying thinking which has influenced the way the problem is defined, the solutions identified to the problem and the ways in which success has been measured. This paper briefly outlines some early colonial history to explain development of the model. It then applies this model to a preliminary evaluation of

two aspects of government Indigenous policy, the Community Development Employment Projects scheme and Shared Responsibility Agreements. It concludes with a suggested approach to evaluation of programs which aim to address Indigenous disadvantage.

Attitudes to Blacks and Work at the Time of Colonisation

To develop the above-mentioned model, a survey of literature, including the recorded statements of colonists, explorers, colonial officials and others, was conducted to identify common themes which underpinned the way Aboriginal Australians were viewed from colonisation until 1850. This and the following section contain a brief summary of the results of that research.

Australia was colonised in 1788, at a time when attitudes to peoples of different 'races' were strongly influenced by the fact that black people were best known as slaves. Science was developing theories about hierarchies of beings, and paving the way for Darwin's theory of evolution which was soon to be developed. It was also a time when Christian beliefs supported Britain's role in the 'civilisation' of the 'primitive' or 'native' races in her far flung colonies (Morris 1973; Rowley 1970). Christianity also had an influence on beliefs about work and other aspects of life (Thomas 1999; Anthony 1977; Lessnoff 1994; Weber 1930). The fact that Australia was colonised at this particular stage of Britain's history had an impact on the way in which the peoples of this vast continent were perceived and treated.

The ideas brought by the colonists were not new but had developed over the previous centuries. In mediaeval times and at the beginning of the period of European expansion, blacks were seen as inferior and having inherited God's wrath. At the same time, those who did not work to expiate their sins were increasingly seen as not performing their duty according to the will of God (Snowden 1983; Miles 1989; Hannaford 1996; Ward and Lott 2002). These ideas developed further from the end of the sixteenth century and over the following two centuries until the conception that blacks were less than human became dominant. Evidence for this included their skin colour, their 'beastly living' and their apparent absence of law or belief in God. Religious blended into scientific thought as science tried to fill the gaps in the chain of being. 'Hottentots' and Australian Aborigines appeared conveniently to fill the gap between ape and man (Snowden 1983; Jahoda 1999; Lovejoy 1936).

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, labour also became central in religious thought. Willingness to work was seen as a sign of God's favour while idleness, unemployment and waste of time were seen as immoral. One result of idleness was dirtiness which was associated both with 'savages' and with unemployment. Thus the sinfulness and lack of God's grace of Indigenous peoples were clearly seen in their lack of industry and material advances, evidenced by their assumed inherent laziness, their nakedness and their nomadic habits (Thomas 1999; Anthony 1977; Lessnoff 1994; Weber 1930).

Scientific advances during this period 'proved' blacks' intellectual inferiority thereby justifying slavery and conquest by superior whites whose mission was to 'civilise' and bring the benefits of white advancement to others. The mechanisms for achieving civilisation were work and the desire for the benefits of white civilisation. Thus the civilising benefits of work to the individual and society were emphasised, while the means of inculcating the willingness to work were to cultivate in 'savages' a desire for the benefits of white civilisation (Snowden 1983).

But there was no necessary connection between diligent work and reward. There was in fact religious justification for low wages. Work was necessary for spiritual health, but the lower orders needed incentive to work diligently and faithfully. As hunger and poverty were such incentives, keeping wages low to ensure that hunger and poverty remained constant threats became a mechanism for ensuring the continuing willingness to work and to give faithful

service (Thomas 1999; Weber 1930). In the case of blacks, from the early nineteenth century added to this was the image of blacks as immature and unable to take responsibility for their own affairs. Rowley (1970) remarks on the irony that while geographical knowledge had expanded exponentially, administrators remained ignorant of what existed on the other side of a cultural frontier while maintaining supreme confidence in their beliefs and interpretation of reality. Thus it was the fate of 'primitive' peoples that they should develop habits of sober industry, including replacing their own beliefs with Christian ones. To do this and earn the right to the benefits of civilisation, they needed guidance from superior Europeans. Low or no wages could thus be justified if 'savages' or 'primitives' did not give up their own beliefs, did not develop a desire for material advancement or did not give up their idle ways for the habits of industry.

Views of labour as morally redemptive and the basis of civilisation when put together with views of blacks as less than fully human thus give a picture of the likely ways in which Aborigines would be treated and expected to behave in the colonial Australian economies.

Attitudes Imported to Australia

The British when they arrived in Australia saw Aborigines as representative of a 'savage' stage of human development. As such, they were seen as being able to benefit from contact with representatives of a civilisation which was at the highest stage of human development. There were also still vestiges of a belief that blacks were not quite fully human. To prove their humanity and their ability to reach a higher stage, the Aborigines would need, and were expected, to leave behind their savage ways and to willingly set foot on the ladder of progress. To help them in this they had the example and guidance of the highest civilisation's most superior product, the English, whose industrial and imperial success was all the evidence needed of this superiority. All it required from the Aborigines was that they learn the 'habits of industry' and begin to transform themselves into peasant farmers, the necessary next step in their evolution towards civilised humankind (Morris 1973; McGregor 1997; Bridges 1968). Ironically, it appears that they were not expected at the same time to pick up an understanding of appropriate reward for effort, or a desire to learn the skills needed to take up trades and professions which would assure them an equal place in the white economy.

A crucial aspect of British belief in themselves was their confidence that in colonising distant lands they were doing God's work. They were specially guided by Providence to take their knowledge of the word of God to 'savage' and barbarian peoples throughout the globe (Gascoigne 2002). Because of the belief of some that Aborigines' failure to show the most basic evidence of an ability to become civilised, the cultivation of the land, and because of assumptions, or at the time conclusions based on evidence, that Aborigines could not be 'civilised', efforts to Christianise them were initially limited (Rowley 1970). 'Civilising' efforts at first were more aimed to transform the Aborigines into small farmers and to teach their children to become 'civilised'. But never was this effort aimed at integrating Aborigines as equals into white society. Attitudes to them based on the colour of their skin were enough to make this an impossibility. Efforts to teach the children were aimed at turning them into menial labourers and domestics. In fact the educational effort appeared to consist largely of using the children in such roles while subjecting them to catechistic learning of Biblical teachings. Even though the intelligence of the children was proven in competition with white pupils, theories about arrested development and about the childishness of the adult Aborigine became popular to justify the lowly place which was the only one offered to the Aborigine. What was not possible was acceptance of Aborigines as equal or even potentially equal to whites (Cleverley 1971; Bridges 1968).

Early attempts to 'civilise' Aborigines failed. In the thinking of the time this could only be seen as confirmation of their inferiority, not as a legitimate choice of a culture and way of life which had evolved to suit the requirements of the environment over an imposed and, in Aboriginal

terms, inferior system. Once the notion of Aboriginal incorrigibility became hegemonic, as it progressively did in the first decades of colonisation, reinforced by developments in social philosophy and science in Britain, it was easier to see the Aborigines as lazy, incompetent and doomed to die out than to question the imposed order and its appropriateness to the Australian environment and its people.

Belief in the inferiority and untrustworthiness of Aborigines, together with the Aborigines' rejection of roles which required too high a price to be paid, precluded the development of Aboriginal economic independence *within* the introduced economy. Their dispossession made it increasingly difficult for them to maintain economic independence *from* the white economy. White fear and prejudice, or paternalistic concern, made their continuing existence on the fringes of white society unpalatable to the colonists. The white solution to the 'Aboriginal problem' was instead to herd Aborigines into reserves and to regulate every aspect of their lives (Butlin 1993; Pope 1988; Castle & Hagan 1998; Rowley 1970).

From the above analysis three 'invariant elements'¹ which summarise thinking about Aborigines up to 1850 can be identified. First is the belief that Australian Aborigines were inferior, morally, intellectually and in all aspects of their society. Second, they were believed to be lazy and irresponsible; therefore they were not entitled to rewards for effort on the same basis as others and they required discipline and close supervision. Thirdly, it was believed that the Aboriginal 'problem' could only be defined by the colonisers and resolved through British intervention, that is, by Aborigines becoming 'civilised' and Christianised. Failing this they needed to be 'protected' during the dying days of the race. Aboriginal views and issues were not even on the agenda. In summary, then, there are three invariant elements, each of which can be identified by a number of key words or concepts, as tabulated below.

Invariant Elements and Key Words/Concepts

Invariant Element	Key concepts/words
Inferiority	Intellectual incapacity
	Blacks as savages
	Misunderstandings or misinterpretations of Aboriginal culture or actions
	Imputation of Aboriginal viewpoint
Laziness and irresponsibility	Aborigines' laziness, lack of willingness to work
	Their unreliability in terms of quality of work and stability
	Their untrustworthiness and irresponsibility, need for supervision
	Separate processes for controlling and disciplining Aborigines.
	Separate processes for rewarding Aborigines, withholding of monetary rewards.
The need for white intervention	Civilising – 'improving' condition of natives
	Christianising
	Teaching of 'industrious habits'
	Requiring renunciation of their own beliefs and ways
	Defining 'Aboriginal problem' and its resolution without Aboriginal input

Further research by the author has shown that these invariant elements continued to underpin law and policy in respect to Aborigines until the 1960s (Norris 2005). The question

¹ This concept is adapted from Regulation School theory; it is defined as a common value system, or representations of reality, which help to ensure that individual actions and reactions are replaced by routine without the expression of individuals' free will appearing to be limited (Boyer 1990, pp44-45).

to be addressed now is, can these invariant elements be utilised as tools to evaluate policies and programs developed since the 1970s to address Indigenous disadvantage?

'Invariant Elements' as an Evaluation Tool

Much of the evaluation that has been done of Aboriginal policy since 1967² has been quantitative, based on statistics which of necessity are confined to only those aspects which can be numerically measured. Thus there has developed a dependency on statistics produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to develop a picture of Aboriginal 'progress' towards a position similar to that of other Australians in relation to those social and economic measures used by ABS³. Immediately problems arise from this. There is no capacity for an Aboriginal voice to be heard in such analysis and the matters included for measurement are those considered by the white system to be worthy of measurement. Thus, for instance, Aboriginal participation in traditional activities has only been included in measures of economic participation in a handful of studies for example those by Fisk (1985) and Altman (1985). This in itself is an illustration of the third invariant element in the embedded assumption that the only economic participation that counts is that which is recognised as of value by white society.

If, however, the three identified 'invariant elements' are used as a framework on which to evaluate Aboriginal policy, this will lead to a completely different approach. Firstly, the focus would move away from statistics to qualitative measures. Secondly, the Aboriginal voice would be privileged over the white system's demand for measures often dictated by concerns about financial accountability.

This framework can be used in two ways. If the intention is to determine whether there are notions of Aboriginal inferiority, laziness, irresponsibility or need for improvement still embedded in a particular policy about or approach to addressing indigenous disadvantage, the process used would be to directly analyse content of policy or other relevant documents to detect any of these views. This would provide an understanding of the extent to which prejudiced (albeit unconscious) or limited thinking was inadvertently influencing the definition of problems and the development of policy. Such policy could then be revised with care taken to avoid the influence of such limited thinking and to be guided by the Aboriginal perspective.

Alternatively, a set of criteria based on the reverse of the invariant element, that is in positive terms, could be developed. In relation to the first invariant element, 'inferiority', this would lead to such questions as:

- Does the policy/program assume Aboriginal people have an ability to understand it if it is presented in a culturally appropriate way?
- Does the policy/program assume traditional Aboriginal culture is equal to white culture?
- Is the policy/program based on an understanding of Aboriginal culture and how this may affect Aboriginal responses to the policy/program?
- Has the Aboriginal viewpoint been determined using appropriate and genuine culturally appropriate consultation and effectively incorporated into the policy?

² The significance of this date is that the referendum which enabled inclusion of Aborigines in the Commonwealth Census occurred in 1967, after which increasingly reliable statistics about Aboriginal disadvantage on a national level became available.

³ Some recent surveys of Indigenous social and economic status have endeavoured to capture a more comprehensive picture of Indigenous disadvantage, for example the 1994 and 2004 national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander surveys (ABS 1996, 2004). However as the survey design and data analysis were conducted from a white perspective the criticisms raised here still apply.

The second invariant element relating to laziness and irresponsibility could translate into questions such as:

- Is the policy/program based on an expectation that Aboriginal people will be fully involved in its implementation?
- Are performance standards and funding arrangements the same as would be included in a policy/program for non-Indigenous people?
- Are controls such as monitoring processes and accountability requirements the same as would be included in a policy/program for non-Indigenous people?
- Are rewards or incentives included as part of the policy/program the same as would be provided to non-Indigenous participants?
- Are penalties for failure to meet requirements of the policy/program developed and applied on the same basis as for non-Indigenous participants?

The third invariant element relates to the need for white intervention in Indigenous affairs without consultation with Indigenous people and could translate into questions such as:

- Does the policy/program address issues identified by or in consultation with Indigenous people?
- Was the policy/program developed in collaboration with Indigenous people?
- Does the policy/program take account of Aboriginal culture and practice and accommodate the maintenance of culture and the continuation of traditional/cultural practices?

This is not an exhaustive list of questions and could be expanded or contracted depending on the specific matter being evaluated. However, it could stand as a check-list for anyone involved in evaluating an Indigenous policy or program.

The two forms of invariant element evaluation tool could be used consecutively. The first could be used to identify limited thinking embedded in a policy or program, after which the policy or program would be revised. The second form could then be used to evaluate the revised policy or program to ensure the results of the first evaluation had been properly incorporated into the new policy or program.

Applying the Tool

Two cases are briefly analysed using the two forms of the invariant elements as evaluation tool. First, the Community Development Employment Projects scheme will be critiqued by directly determining if there are aspects of the three invariant elements embedded in it. The Shared Responsibility Agreements will then be subjected to analysis using the second form of the evaluation tool.

Community Development Employment Projects scheme: In 1977 the Fraser government introduced the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) scheme. By 2001 17.7 per cent of Indigenous employees were participants in the CDEP. However, although on some measures a successful job creation scheme for Indigenous Australians, the CDEP scheme is in effect largely a scheme for enabling Indigenous Australians to work in part-time positions in order to earn the equivalent of unemployment benefit. It is a *de facto* 'work-for-the-dole' scheme. As such, it does little to improve the income status, skill levels or career opportunities of Indigenous Australians, although it does *appear* to reduce their critically high unemployment rates. Analysis of 2001 Census statistics indicates that although Indigenous disadvantage is apparent in all parts of Australia, CDEP positions were concentrated in very remote areas, and most required little skill and no non-school qualifications⁴.

⁴ There were in addition 1900 non-Indigenous CDEP participants representing 9.6 per cent of all CDEP positions and 42.1 per cent of the CDEP positions available in major cities. There were more non-Indigenous CDEP participants than the number of Indigenous CDEP participants with a non-

In 1993 Taylor stated:

If the CDEP scheme, with its current emphasis on low wage work, continues to provide the bulk of new employment for indigenous people, there seems little prospect that the income gap between Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders and the rest of the population in Australia will ever narrow... Of equal importance to job creation is the nature of the work involved and the income it generates. (Taylor 1993 p39)

Twelve years later the situation is little changed. CDEP remains the main job creation scheme for Indigenous Australians despite the fact that it has had no appreciable positive impact on overall Aboriginal employment status. But it has been retained and continues to be extolled and utilised by the current federal government. For example on 27 May 1998 Prime Minister John Howard stated in a speech to mark Reconciliation Week: "We .. remain very supportive of the community development employment projects scheme". Kevin Andrews, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, the government department now responsible for administering the CDEP, reinforced this view when he stated on 14 February 2005: "At the centre of the government's programs for Indigenous employment is the CDEP, the Community Development Employment Program, which involves some 240 Indigenous organisations and provides over 37,000 participant places". A perusal of other government members' speeches to Parliament which refer to CDEP over the past two-three years indicates general enthusiastic support for this scheme even while recognising its need for improvement (<http://parlinfoweb.aph.gov.au/piweb>, accessed 3 October 2005, search term CDEP). Its failure to achieve much for Indigenous people does not seem to be of sufficient concern to the current government to cause it to move away from reliance on this as the main vehicle for improving Indigenous employment opportunities.

But as Taylor noted, not only the creation of jobs but also the nature of the work and the income associated with it are important. In both these latter respects, we see a reflection of the invariant elements as explored below.

The CDEP scheme originally came out of Aboriginal communities' concern about the increasing welfare dependency of their members and as a method for developing Aboriginal communities. Over the almost three decades of its operation it has become more and more like the 'work for the dole' program which now applies to officially unemployed Australians as part of a 'mutual responsibility' approach to welfare. Thus it has moved away from its focus as a job creation and community development scheme to one based on the Government's 'mutual responsibility' policy. This is particularly reflected in the move of CDEP administration from ATSIC to the Department of Workplace Relations. It also needs to be noted that 'work for the dole' schemes by their very nature provide experience only in the most menial of jobs; they are not designed to develop skills for employment in any but the lowest level of jobs. This is consistent with views which can be detected through historical analysis of the period to 1967 that Aborigines are only suited to unskilled positions. The move away from CDEP's original broader aims shows a lack of understanding of or ongoing commitment to the motives for CDEP's original introduction, and a lack of respect for its community development aims. These are aspects of the 'inferiority' invariant element.

From the beginning CDEP payment has been based on the rate of unemployment benefit which would otherwise be payable to its participants. There is no direct mechanism for improving income while participating in CDEP and no relationship between CDEP payment and the relevant award applying to the type of work the participant is doing. Thus employment in this scheme is based on the welfare system, not on the industrial relations system applying generally to employment in Australia. A manifestation of the 'laziness and

school qualification or in high skilled jobs. Unfortunately no further detail is available about the characteristics of these CDEP participants or the nature of the jobs they occupy.

irresponsibility' invariant element at least until the 1960s was exclusion of many Aboriginal people from the operation of the industrial relations system and payment far below that regulated for other Australians. In this respect the CDEP scheme reflects a continuation of the influence of this invariant element.

As noted above the CDEP scheme was initiated by Aboriginal communities but since it was taken up by successive governments, its intentions have been gradually watered down and its administration has moved further and further away from the Indigenous people, especially since the dissolution of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) in 2005. The problem defined by the Aboriginal people was two-fold and CDEP was aimed at addressing both aspects. However, through its appropriation by government, the scheme has been reinterpreted in white terms as a mechanism for reducing Indigenous unemployment figures. Thus the problem and its solution are now seen to be matters for white intervention, that is in terms compatible with the third invariant element.

This brief and somewhat superficial analysis indicates that the direct analysis application of the invariant elements as evaluation tool has potential to enable re-assessment of a long standing program. A full evaluation using this method could lead to a complete reassessment of the problem and thence to a revamp of Indigenous employment programs to ensure that they truly address the real issues as identified by Indigenous people and communities.

Shared Responsibility Agreements: The most recent major policy initiative of the Commonwealth government in relation to Indigenous Australians has been the introduction of Shared Responsibility Agreements with Aboriginal communities. These are defined as: “agreements that spell out what all partners—communities, governments and others—will contribute to bring about long-term changes which will achieve better outcomes for Indigenous communities”. The Government’s fact sheet on SRAs states that:

The emphasis on shared responsibility recognises that:

- governments alone cannot bring about all the changes necessary to overcome Indigenous disadvantage; and
- Indigenous people and communities must be involved in planning and building their own future. (http://www.indigenous.gov.au/sra/kit/what_are.pdf)

Currently the SRAs signed between governments and communities have been simple single issue projects. However: “Over time, SRAs will become more comprehensive, building towards a community’s long-term vision for the future” (http://www.indigenous.gov.au/sra/kit/what_are.pdf). The ideas for the projects come from the communities themselves in consultation with the Indigenous Coordination Centres established by the Commonwealth Government.

In many respects these agreements seem to warrant a positive report card when assessed using the invariant elements evaluation tool in its positive form. But a closer examination shows a less positive picture. This is tabulated below.

Invariant Element: Inferiority	
☞ Does the policy/program assume Aboriginal people have an ability to understand it if it is presented in a culturally appropriate way?	☞ Yes. It treats Aboriginal communities as a partner in the program.
☞ Does the policy/program assume traditional Aboriginal culture is equal to white culture?	☞ No. It is based on an implicit aim to make Indigenous communities more like white ones.
☞ Is the policy/program based on an understanding of Aboriginal culture and how this may affect Aboriginal responses to the policy/program?	☞ No. As above
☞ Has the Aboriginal viewpoint been determined using appropriate and genuine culturally appropriate consultation and effectively incorporated into the policy?	☞ Questionable. It’s based on a white planning process and is subject to white decision making processes about the value of projects.

Invariant Element: Laziness and irresponsibility	
☞ Is the policy/program based on an expectation that Aboriginal people will be fully involved in its implementation?	☞ Yes. This is central to it, although there is an element of coercion which could relate to notions of Aboriginal irresponsibility.
☞ Are performance standards and funding arrangements the same as would be included in a policy/program for non-Indigenous people?	☞ No. Some SRAs relate to the provision of facilities (eg swimming pools) conditional on unrelated activities of Aboriginal people. In white communities such facilities would be funded by local government from rate revenue with no such conditions.
☞ Are controls such as monitoring processes and accountability requirements the same as would be included in a policy/program for non-Indigenous people?	☞ No. White communities are not required to prove themselves in the same way to obtain basic services such as petrol pumps.
☞ Are rewards or incentives included as part of the policy/program the same as would be provided to non-Indigenous participants?	☞ No. White communities are not provided with services conditional on unrelated activities eg 'no school, no pool'.
☞ Are penalties for failure to meet requirements of the policy/program developed and applied on the same basis as for non-Indigenous participants?	☞ Questionable, would need re-examination after a longer period of operation of the policy.
Invariant Element: The need for white intervention	
☞ Does the policy/program address issues identified by or in consultation with Indigenous people?	☞ Yes, this is central to it.
☞ Was the policy/program developed in collaboration with Indigenous people?	☞ Questionable. Would need deeper investigation about the origins of the policy which is consistent with other aspects of Commonwealth Government welfare policy, viz 'mutual responsibility'.
☞ Does the policy/program take account of Aboriginal culture and practice and accommodate the maintenance of culture and the continuation of traditional/cultural practices?	☞ Yes, provisionally. Some projects do focus on transmission of culture to young Indigenous people.

The above indicates that the approach does appear to produce interesting results. It seems to indicate that the SRA policy is in some respects an advance on other programs designed to address Indigenous disadvantage in that the Indigenous definition of problems and involvement in devising and implementing solutions is central to the program. But the very notion of 'shared responsibility' in itself is reminiscent of earlier beliefs in Aboriginal laziness and irresponsibility. There is an element of coercion in the program, implying that Indigenous communities must be pushed into doing the right thing. This also relates to the third element in that the white governmental system has the role of ensuring the Indigenous communities perform as required. Once again white guidance is assumed to be necessary for success.

Conclusion

The above assessments of CDEP and SRAs are superficial and conducted simply to discover whether tools derived from historical analysis appear to have potential to be effectively applied to evaluation of programs aimed at addressing Indigenous disadvantage. The answer is tentatively affirmative. However to establish such a process as being truly of value would require a far more thorough and intensive evaluation of a specific program using 'invariant elements' specifically derived to capture the continuity of thinking about the relevant aspect of Indigenous disadvantage.

It is not claimed that these tools would substitute for the statistical analyses which have long been used as the primary means of evaluating Indigenous programs. These continue to be important to provide an on-going picture of the extent of Indigenous disadvantage. The most relevant and important use of these tools is in reviewing the problem definition stage of policy

development, and in bringing to the forefront the need for the Aboriginal contribution to this stage to be privileged over the white. Without the re-analysis of the problems and the full inclusion of the Aboriginal perspective which the approach outlined here would promote it is doubtful that any new or continuing government program to address Indigenous disadvantage will be any more successful than those of the past.

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