

# Collective reflexivity in social marketing through ethnographic film-making: The Yolngu story of tobacco in Yirrkala, Australia

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## Abstract

This article aims to extend the concept of collective reflexivity into marketing theory. We also identify the potential of ethnographic film-making as an approach for fostering collective reflexivity in social marketing. We focus on the making of an ethnographic film called *Ngarali: The Tobacco Story of Arnhem Land*, arguing that collective reflexivity is an important theoretical concept and practical objective in social marketing that can help address issues around creating social ties and social identity and of sharing metaphoric meaning. Conceptually, we argue that collective reflexivity encourages us to rethink reflexivity in social marketing and consumer research through a relational perspective. Furthermore, we extend current conceptualisations of collective reflexivity by identifying how sharing metaphoric meaning can act as a vehicle for its occurrence. We argue that facilitating collective reflexivity through ethnographic film-making can offer a more culturally respectful approach to social marketing.

## Keywords

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, consumer culture theory, critical social marketing, ethnographic film-making, reflexivity, relational sociology, tobacco

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## Introduction

Indigenous Australians on average experience a 17-year shorter life expectancy than other Australians (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013). Furthermore, rates of hospitalisation as a result of tobacco smoking among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are three times higher than the general population (Chamberlain et al., 2017). Yet, despite these significant health gaps, social marketing initiatives often have limited impact on Indigenous communities, fail to acknowledge their collectivist nature and ignore cultural sensitivities (Madill et al., 2014; Robertson et al., 2013). Scholars working within the critical social marketing paradigm are now acknowledging that in complex, multi-stakeholder and culturally diverse contexts it is important to account for collective relationships and reflexive processes to understand social subjectivities and possibilities for social change (Hastings, 2003; Gordon, 2018; Gordon and Gurrieri, 2014). For example, in Australian Aboriginal culture, there is a pre-eminence attached to the discourse of elders and members of powerful alliances, which can marginalise other voices (Rowse, 2012).

To date, work on collective notions of reflexivity in marketing and social marketing has been limited. We draw upon ideas from relational sociology (Archer, 2013; Donati, 2016) to introduce and extend the concept of ‘collective reflexivity’ – reflexive praxis at the interpersonal and intergroup level – into social marketing theory. We argue that collective reflexivity can help understand reflexive processes occurring in relational settings that are common in social marketing. We posit that collective reflexivity holds potential for addressing issues around creating social ties and social identity and of sharing metaphoric meaning in consumer contexts. We identify that ethnographic film-making can offer a way of facilitating collective reflexivity in social marketing as it can stimulate collaborative storytelling and reflexive action (Hietanen et al., 2014).

We consider these issues in the context of the Yolngu, an Indigenous community in Yirrkala, Arnhem Land, Australia. We focus on how the making of an ethnographic film called *Ngarali: The Tobacco Story of Arnhem Land* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o840vRzvAuw>), a form of anti-tobacco social marketing, helped facilitate collective reflexivity. This leads us to the research question guiding our study: how can collective reflexivity in social marketing be facilitated through ethnographic film-making?

The remainder of the article is structured as follows. First, we consider social marketing in Indigenous contexts, chart relevant discourse on reflexivity and introduce collective reflexivity. Next, we identify the promise of ethnographic film-making for facilitating reflexivity. We then introduce our study context, outline our method, then present our findings by focusing on three key themes: (1) the creation of relational ties, (2) the construction of a relational subject and (3) ethnographic film observations of Yolngu collective reflexivity. We conclude with a discussion on the importance of collective reflexivity and ethnographic film-making for social marketing and offer suggestions for future research.

## Literature review and theoretical framework

### *On reflexivity*

Researchers have identified how collective understandings emerge through contestation regarding discourse and framing (Daellenbach and Parkinson, 2017), a sense of imagined community (Cayla and Eckhardt, 2008) or social movements (Gurrieri et al., 2018; Varman and Belk, 2009). Although this article sits within these broader discussions of social relationality, our specific focus is on

reflexivity in Indigenous and relational settings. This context reflects the complex and multi-stakeholder social marketing arrangements in which collective relationships and reflexive processes can have a discernible impact on how social issues and social change are understood (Hastings, 2003; Johansson et al., 2018).

Initial work on reflexivity in consumer research focused on individual notions of reflexivity (Thompson, 2002; Thompson et al., 1998). Researcher reflexivity involves a researcher reflecting on their subjective influences on the construction of meaning during research, and how this may influence and inform research outcomes (Jayasinghe, 2015). More recently, the concept of participant reflexivity has emerged (Yang, 2015), through which research participants are recognised as reflexive actors and encouraged to reflect and contribute towards interpretations and representations.

Consumer culture scholars have also drawn attention to reflexive processes in the sociocultural realm. Askegaard et al. (2009) present the concept of cultural reflexivity, a practice of conscious reflection upon one's culture. Cultural reflexivity is a process through which consumers revisit and renegotiate their identity and status, consumption practices and acculturation to marketplaces (Askegaard and Eckhardt, 2012). Thompson et al. (2018) explain forms of consumer reflexivity as being critical, existential or reactive to uncover different relationships between consumer agency, social structures and identity goals and practices. Yet these conceptualisations still largely ground reflexivity as a personal endeavour, albeit one shaped by interactions between structure and agency (Beckett and Nayak, 2008).

Acknowledging the complex social and relational settings in which they operate (Hastings, 2003; Hastings and Saren, 2003), scholars are now focusing on reflexive processes that occur in collective contexts, within, between and across actors, and how these shape the framing and responses to social change issues (Casey et al., 2017; Gordon and Gurrieri, 2014). However, the conceptual underpinnings of collective notions of reflexivity are still not well understood in consumer research.

### *Collective reflexivity*

Sociologists offer some conceptual tools that may help advance understanding. Archer (2013) asks whether we can conceive of 'collective reflexivity', a process of reflexive action at the interpersonal and intergroup relational level. This follows the line of Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) that multiple social actors related in a given field may engage in reflexivity. Donati (2011: 355) explains the concept of collective reflexivity as 'the mental ability, shared by all (normal) people, to consider the influence of their relation(s) with others on to themselves and vice versa'. As such, an individual's own behaviour is relational due to their immersion in a social world, and reflexive consciousness of the self is not something that occurs in and of itself and lacks any relations but is shaped by relations with other humans.

It follows that social relationality can and does structure the individual's personal and social identity as well as agency – and this includes reflexive processes. This encourages us to acknowledge the personal *I* meeting the social realm in the form of *Me*, *We* and *You* during reflexive action (Archer, 2003). Therefore, considerations during a process of collective reflexivity may include questions of 'Who am I?', 'Who are you?' and 'How should I act?' at the individual level and 'Who are we?' and 'How should we act?' at the collective level. Donati (2016) argues that collective reflexivity can occur when there are *relational ties* between humans who are oriented towards collective objectives, such as a common purpose or achievement.

Therefore, for collective reflexivity to occur, the symbol of We needs to be held in common to create a *relational subject*.

Donati and Archer (2015) explain how such social identity and meaning are developed through collective reflexivity. They argue that reflections become social – that is, relational – when each person in a collective reflects not only upon the I-relation but also upon the We-relation, creating collective reflexivity. This does not necessarily mean there needs to be an identical interpretation of We among members, but that there is a common purpose and collective dynamic within the network (Donati and Archer, 2015).

Through a process of collective reflexivity, it is argued that a person's inner dialogue can acknowledge feedback emerging from the reflexivity of a network of social relations in which that person is involved. This collective reflexivity then creates expressions of *solidarity* – a mutually beneficial strengthening of the social ties between community members – and *subsidiarity* – heightened member goodwill through acts of devotion or service to the community. Fostering solidarity and subsidiarity are important in social marketing (Dann and Dann, 2016), particularly in Indigenous contexts (Johansson et al., 2018).

Examples of collective reflexivity may be found on the micro level (e.g. when considering the relationship of a couple), the meso level (civic associations and organisations) and the macro level (e.g. citizen–government relationships) (Donati, 2016). Donati (2008) points out that the most positive expression of solidarity and subsidiarity would be the orientation of the members of a social network to the common good – a key concern in social marketing (Gordon et al., 2016). Scholars from other social change disciplines have identified the potential for collective reflexivity in understanding reflexive processes in group settings (Lawrence, 2017; Nellhaus, 2017). In our research context, the common good may involve a shared and representative understanding of tobacco and a commitment to tackling tobacco-related health and social harms.

However, one criticism of collective reflexivity is that it limits an understating of relationality and the process of intercession between structure and agency to reflexive deliberations (Caetano, 2015). However, we agree with Caetano (2015) and Vogler (2016) that this is not a matter of discarding Archer's (2013) idea that collective reflexivity concerns relationality of people, but rather it requires an acknowledgement that understanding reflexivity *and* social relations may require the integration of Archer's (2013) concepts with other concepts such as process-relational theory (Cobb, 2007; Cooper, 2005) that are concerned with relationality. Our focus in this study is not to address the critiques of Archer's ideas or to study relationality per se. Rather, we aim to focus on collective reflexive processes and the generation of relational goods and evils relevant to social marketing in Indigenous contexts in which joint action on social change is an imperative (Archer, 2013; Johansson et al., 2018). This leads us to consider how collective reflexivity may be facilitated. We argue here that ethnographic film-making can offer a useful pathway.

### *Ethnographic film-making in social marketing*

The predominance of the individual at the epistemological heart of social marketing has produced only partial examinations of the wider environment surrounding social and health problems. This narrow focus results in a preoccupation with how consumers engage with social change efforts and downplay their interpersonal interactions or the broader environment (Gurrieri et al., 2014). To date, social marketing has largely ignored the social and embodied contexts that organise marketing encounters. We consider it axiomatic that the reduction of these contexts in much social marketing research examining Indigenous Australian tobacco consumption to matters of individual

responsibility is partially responsible for the continued poor health outcomes for many Indigenous Australians. Other social change disciplines have expanded their scope to consider consumers' social and cultural practices as significant for empirical study (Lawrence, 2017). Importantly, this shift has helped introduce critical debate and reflexivity into the emerging critical social marketing paradigm (Gordon, 2018; Gordon and Gurrieri, 2014; Spotswood et al., 2012), with a concomitant engagement with socially and culturally immersive approaches, including documentary film (Belk and Kozinets, 2017; Kariippanon et al., 2015).

In a shift that parallels the critical realist approach to social marketing (Spotswood and Tapp, 2013), reflexive theory in consumer research has expounded the role that ethnographic documentary film-making plays in creating meanings of connectedness in consumers' lives. Markedly different to the realist approach, however, reflexive theory foregrounds the socially evocative meanings of documentary film. In this corpus of work, the theory of collective approaches to reflexivity is linked to the praxis potential of ethnographic film-making. Wood and Brown (2011), for instance, developed a simple typology of the ways that a film's visual style spatially connects the interactions between people. Cayla and Arnould (2013) examined how various organisations that use ethnographic film-making construct shared narratives and stories within their commercial market research activity. Hietanen et al. (2014: 2022) enrich this perspective by arguing that, through the performative act of storytelling, film-makers ask viewers to reflect on the experiential, expressive and impressionistic ways that collective and cultural interpretations of ethnographic film contest an 'objective account of history'.

Despite the broad corpus of marketing and consumer research exploring reflexivity, no study has yet approached it through our lens. We report the results of how ethnographic film-making in a social marketing context builds collective reflexivity. Our approach to ethnographic film adopts an experiential and expressive perspective (Hietanen et al., 2014) as an empirical contrast to the prevailing social constructivist position in marketing (Schembri and Boyle, 2013). We aim to broaden the empirical lens to more deeply consider the social participant in social marketing endeavours and uncover and theorise a new phenomenon in marketing theory: collective reflexivity in ethnographic film-making. We do so by examining the story of tobacco in the Yolngu community of North East Arnhem Land, Australia.

## **Research context: Tobacco smoking among the Yolngu of North East Arnhem Land, Australia**

Since the introduction of tobacco over 200 years ago by Macassan seafarers, smoking 'Ngarali' (i.e. tobacco) in Yolngu communities has become traditional cultural practice. Before colonisation, clan custom regulated use. Within Yirratja clans, for instance, it was a commodity to be owned and traded. However, within Dhuwa clans, it was managed exclusively by clan elders for ceremonial functions and socially legitimised to enable kinship and family relations (Cole, 1979). Later, in the 20th century, government-funded missionaries used tobacco as payment for labour, resulting in large numbers of Indigenous people becoming addicted (Cole, 1979). The historical evolution of tobacco smoking among Indigenous populations away from its exclusive use by clan elders to its more widespread use over the past seven decades can be linked to these government-subsidised mission programmes (Carson et al., 2014).

Tobacco attracts attention due to the significant 'health gap' experienced by Indigenous Australians, including significantly shorter life expectancy at birth (Australian Bureau of Statistics,

2013) and high incidence rates of hospitalisation for smoking-related issues (Chamberlain et al., 2017), compared to other Australians.

We argue that an enduring focus on the individual Indigenous smoker has resulted in a very important practical reflexivity problem in this context. Australian public health policy frames tobacco smoking as hazardous to health and sits in complex tension with not just traditional, relational Yolngu consumption practices of tobacco but also traditional colonial practices, such as the tobacco payment practices described above. Therefore, within these contexts, there is an institutionalised lack of group reflection on the broader social and cultural forces that organise smoking in Indigenous communities, resulting in individual-level solutions being developed to solve what we see as collective- and relational-level problems.

Our participants identified that traditional government-funded health promotional activities within the remote Yolngu community have had little success, reflecting the decades of colonisation and missionisation that have eroded traditional collective values and lifestyles. Over the past 20 years, however, a powerful discourse has emerged with a renewed commitment to traditional law and customs. Through tracing its cultural history to late 1960s' Indigenous self-determination rhetoric, it now accepts self-control from within a national Australian framework. Such discourse and rhetoric were also evident among some of our ethnographic film participants. Reflexivity during the making of the ethnographic film is, therefore, cycled into broader relational and collective activity, such as civic association, as well as kinship connection, shared concern and traditional law. In addition, reflexive ideas of independent, fiscally responsible, Indigenous-controlled community development (Langton, 2008; Pearson, 2009) and concerns about increases in clinical health issues present themselves within contemporary community life (Clough et al., 2011; Moore et al., 2015). Having introduced our study context, we next outline our method.

## Method

The present study focuses on the analysis of an ethnographic social marketing film, *Ngarali: The Tobacco Story of Arnhem Land*. The first author was involved as producer/director in a social marketing project sponsored by a Yolngu health organisation, working in collaboration with Yolngu tobacco control social marketers, and a film-making production house. As a non-Indigenous Australian, the first author was immersed as a scholar, under the supervision of the fourth author – a Yolngu community member – in Yirrkala for 18 months prior to filming to deeply understand the significance of the communal kinship system, based on reciprocal ties (Archer, 2013). The objective of the project was to understand the meanings of Ngarali and the practices of smoking within the collectivist Yolngu community as well as to showcase the work of Yolngu tobacco control social marketers and various support services on offer.

Film-making was necessary for two reasons. First, it captures the audio and visual elements that convey to viewers a relational connection to the practices and meanings of tobacco smoking (Cayla and Arnould, 2013; Hietanen et al., 2014; Wood and Brown, 2011). Second, it enabled Yolngu participants to share their rich verbal and non-verbal insights into both the English and the Yolngu Matha (i.e. language). The film-making process enabled relational ties, subjectivity and collective reflexivity to be developed, shared and experienced by film-makers and participants alike (Donati, 2016).

Twenty community stakeholders, across ages, gender and community roles, were invited to be interviewed on camera in a setting of their choice. The interviews were guided by a narrative process initiated by the film-makers; however, participants often took ownership and contributed

according to their own interpretations (Kariippanon and Senior, 2017). This process of co-creation enabled both a sense of solidarity through the mutually beneficial strengthening of community ties and a sense of subsidiarity through deep respect or goodwill towards the non-Indigenous film-making team (Dann and Dann, 2016; Johansson et al., 2018). The participants and community members were invited to provide comments and feedback on drafts of the film (Heisley and Levy, 1991). This allowed the participants and project team to co-design the film and the final product, reflexively placing their personal *I*'s within the social realm of the entire project (Archer, 2003; Wood, 2016).

Our analysis is underpinned by the assumption that the film-making process and the completed ethnographic film and associated materials are implicitly developed and produced through the principles of collective reflexivity. We use an 'interpretive multitasking' process of understanding our data, following the approach outlined by Giesler and Thompson (2016: 506). Our corpus of data includes the 45-minute 33-second ethnographic film, 400 minutes of film outtakes and 5000 words of notes and interview transcripts produced during the film-making process. The first three authors individually and collectively analysed the audio-visual and interview transcript materials, carefully examining and coding for practices of reflexivity performed by the participants. A list of film participants and their role within the Yolngu community appears in Table 1.

Our initial consideration of issues within the data set, especially participant reflections on kinship and the development of relational ties and subjectivities, propelled us towards ideas of collective reflexivity. We were especially interested in investigating how collective reflexivity within social marketing contexts can be facilitated through ethnographic film-making. Each ethnographic vignette in the film was viewed, and each interview transcript was read repeatedly by the authors, discussing the narratives and creating notes that summarised participant stories (Thompson, 1997). The authors then collectively generated culturally based themes and sub-themes to code the data (Saldaña, 2016). Repeatedly toggling between theory and film and transcript data (Giesler and Thompson, 2016), our analyses particularly drew on issues of relational ties, relational subjectivity, solidarity and subsidiarity (Archer, 2013; Donati, 2016). In the interests of practicing collective reflexivity, the authors collectively discussed the data and thematic interpretations throughout the process from initial analysis of the entire data set, to selecting cases, to developing analytical categories and to writing and editing a sound theorisation. We relied on the insights of the fourth author, a Yolngu elder, to provide a more rounded and internally valid theorisation of the role that collective reflexivity plays in Ngarali smoking within the Yolngu community. Next, we present our interpretive findings.

## Findings

Our findings detail the production of collective reflexivity uncovered during the ethnographic film and film-making process. We select the most salient instances to consider how ethnographic film-making can facilitate collective reflexivity by focusing on three key ideas: (1) the creation of relational ties, (2) the construction of a relational subject and (3) ethnographic film observations of Yolngu collective reflexivity.

### *Relational ties: The creation of social concern*

Social relationships in the kinship system are essential not only for identity formation and belonging among Yolngu clans and individuals but also for interpreting Yolngu relations with tobacco. A key feature of this relational process is the building of material and symbolic ties between community

**Table 1.** List of film participants.

No.	Participant name	Role within community
1	Ms. P.	Senior elder and Tobacco Action Worker
2	Mr. B.	Senior elder
3	Mr. L.	Elder
4	David	Senior elder and Tobacco Action Worker
5	Michelle	Cultural advisor and Interpreter
6	Simone	Non-Indigenous public health/social marketer
7	Murphy	Traditional owner
8	Marie	Traditional owner
9	John	Traditional owner
10	George	Senior elder
11	Martin	Senior elder and Tobacco Action Worker
12	Paul	Youth
13	Isaac	Yolngu film-maker
14	Charlie	Corporate leader
15	Anthony	Youth
16	Manny	Teacher
17	Brian	Young adult
18	Roy	Young adult
19	Jamie	Elder
20	Dave	Health practitioner

members (Donati, 2016). Our data demonstrate that the development of relational ties can be interpreted through three powerful microprocesses occurring during the Ngarali film's production: first as creating internal or necessary social relations; then generating relational good or value and, finally, as having the power to influence or change behaviours in the external social context. We examine how each of these play out within the construction of the Ngarali film.

First, we understand how Yolngu relationships with cigarettes have been anthropomorphised in the film and constructed as internal to and necessary for social functioning. Within our first excerpt, the social marketing Tobacco Action Workers (TAWs) Ms. P. and Mr. B. reflect upon the intertwined relationship between Yolngu people and the tobacco introduced by foreign cultures. When probed for an explanation of the high rates of tobacco smoking in the community, they mention the kinship ties between tobacco and two clans, the Yirritja and Dhuwa, which spotlights more collective consumption ties than the typically individualised consumer outlined in much social marketing theory:

Mr. B. (Dhuwa): They [Yolngu] think of cigarettes as family? In what way?

Ms. P. (Yirritja): Like for me it's family. I'm the owner, and for my mother's people, cigarettes are their husband and also their child.

Mr. B.: And they cry for them: 'Ehh, Ngarali, my dearest one', 'my husband', 'my beloved child', they say like that.

Mr. B.: And it's always referred to as being as a close family member or grandmother; 'you [Ngarali] my grandmother', 'this is my precious possession', 'eh cigarette, my dear child' people always say like that. (Mr. B. and Ms. P., ethnographic film excerpt, timestamp 7:04–7:45)

The idea for filming this excerpt arose during a discussion between the film-makers and Mr B. and Ms. P. They felt that the incorporation of Ngarali into Yolngu culture was best captured through the strategic and symbolic filming of the two TAWs as they walked along the picturesque tree-lined beach. From the reflection and field notes, we understand that the construction of these relationships is strategically melded by the film-making team to bring together Yolngu people, the landscape, flora and tobacco knowledge. The effect is a film excerpt that attempts to build a strong internally experienced social connection among stakeholders, including Yolngu viewers. This reworks the concept of individual reflexivity to one experienced through common notions of family purpose and belonging within the community (Brown, 2015; Donati, 2011: 355). We also understand that the very notion of these connections coalesce through the researchers' motivations to examine how collective reflexivity develops through meanings of kinship values, roles and responsibilities and the importance of the culture and law of tobacco within the Yolngu cosmology.

Importantly, the development of this internally experienced social connection can lead to a powerful second microprocess constructing relational ties: the development of relational goods (Archer, 2013). A relational good in this context can be understood as the acknowledgement by Yolngu smokers and community members of their positive and intersubjective relationship with tobacco. In the above film excerpt, we note how this encounter is developed by both speakers through a reverential and emotive tone. The tone signifies the social affirmation and good that cigarettes can create – a strengthening of the Yolngu kinship system. To achieve the dramatising of this common good, the film is edited to demonstrate how Yolngu display a reverence for tobacco as Ngarali and show respect to family members by sharing tobacco. Moreover, the performative narrative developed within this edited clip suggests an interdependent relationship between Yolngu smokers and their cigarettes – a 'shared concern' (Archer, 2013: 155) – through the anthropomorphised tobacco cigarette that strengthens family ties using metaphors such as 'beloved one' and 'my husband' (Hietanen et al., 2014).

The third microprocess that develops relational ties is made visible through the film spotlighting the creation of new behaviours within the external social context. To elaborate, we turn to the ethnographic film's interview with Mr. L., who is a husband and compassionate father. Mr. L. was a regular smoker for many decades and, as Yolngu laws of reciprocity and sharing dictate, his tobacco was shared with his clansmen. These practices of sharing and reciprocity through tobacco build a 'common knowledge' (Archer, 2013: 155) that is valuable and meaningful to community members as a relationally defined good and strengthen values of generosity and relationship-building within his smoking network.

Recently, Mr. L. chose to quit smoking and substituted cigarettes with nicotine gum. The film was edited specifically to dramatise this event. He explains:

The day before my daughter's second birthday, I understood that life doesn't go forever and every moment with my daughter is precious and I realised that I have to make that time as long as I can. (Mr. L., ethnographic film excerpt, timestamp 29:30–29:48)

This interview was recorded 'as an active form of storytelling' (Hietanen et al., 2014: 2022) within the walls of a community centre that served as a second home to many Yolngu children and youth. In the centre, Yolngu often watch films of their forefathers and reflect on the archival footage of traditional ceremony. This in turn motivated the interaction between Mr. L. and the film-maker to discuss a legitimated aspiration among Yolngu elders towards living a long life in

the company of family, using his personal journey from sharing cigarettes to quitting smoking as an organising point of reflection.

On the one hand, the film portrays, through a realist lens, Mr. L.'s decision to quit as a 'revelatory incident' (Cayla and Arnould, 2013: 8), one that provides drama and seeming authenticity to his recollection. It is an incident that, it is hoped, will resonate with Yolngu smoker audiences, who understand that quitting could earn them more time with their families in a state of relatively good health. On the other hand, we note how the film expresses, through close-up shots and a lack of background music, the intensity of Mr. L.'s words. He highlights his social role and responsibility as a clan member embedded within the Yolngu community to maintain the value of reciprocity by sharing resources on demand with senior clan members, including tobacco cigarettes. The tension between maintaining culture or good health leads him to change his behaviour, to quit smoking and to replace tobacco with less harmful nicotine gum. The film's dramatisation suggests that he experiences quitting to be more conducive to the sustenance of personal relationships, leading to the development of a healthier '*We-relation*' (Donati and Archer, 2015) with his daughter and family.

We begin to see how a social marketing film builds relational ties as a necessary component of collective reflexivity. The interview excerpt of Mr. B. and Ms. P. highlights how aspects of the film-making process produce both evidence of an internal and necessary relation between Yolngu and tobacco and of a shared concern for Ngarali as a member of the kinship system. Through Mr. L.'s reflections, we observe how reflecting on relational ties may motivate shifts in smoking behaviour. Here, we also provide insight into the role of the film-making team and research approach in building such narratives of collective reflexivity.

### *The relational subject: The degree of mediation*

Apart from developing relational ties, for collective reflexivity to occur, a relational subject must be created (Donati, 2016). This section seeks to understand how a social marketing film might portray an individual's constitution of subjectivity through a reflexivity that is not individual but relational and collective. Importantly, the degree to which actors interact relationally across micro, meso and macro layers in a community impacts the extent to which a relational subjectivity develops (Donati, 2016). We examine below the impact of each of these analytic units.

In some instances, reflexivity during Ngarali smoking can be organised through the micro-level, informal relations that exist between community members. For example, the reflections and subjectivity of David, a senior elder, are formed through a loosely bound imagined unit involving the Yolngu kinship dyad of youth and elders. A member check interview stimulates his informal, off-the-cuff reflections about the role of elders and traditional Yolngu law and customs as well as some frustrations:

Nowadays, this generation... it was valuable before [referring to Ngarali as precious for kinship relations], nowadays young people are smoking... Because they didn't follow the law. Because nowadays they don't end up listening to old people.

But we want them to come through us. But now themselves, they are passing through [ignoring the traditional laws and not acknowledging the authority of the elders and culture]. (David, member check interview, 15 November 2017)

Here, we note that David is concerned that traditional structures of Yolngu law and socialisation into a collective orientation are being eroded by practices of individualisation, including smoking,

by the young. However, we also note the organisation of the scholarly interests of the researchers concerning the constitution of relational subjectivity. In this regard, the interview specifically probed David's informal reflections and attitudes, as an elder, towards Yolngu youth smoking practices. We selected this excerpt because, through his invocation that 'we want them to come through us', David very obviously grapples with the 'how should *I* act?' versus 'how should *we* act?' questions that arise through the collective reflexivity process (Archer, 2003).

In contrast to David, the Ngarali film arranges some other members' reflections of cigarette smoking built through relatively formal, meso-level civic entities. The film foregrounds Michelle's professional role as Yolngu cultural advisor and community leader:

How will we respect the law and learn it? We need to find inner understanding and respect for the traditional Ngarali law. We want to lift the law and knowledge up again, revive it, strengthen it, and implement it effectively. (Michelle, ethnographic film excerpt, timestamp 30:33–30:58)

Embedded within Michelle's comments is a plea to elevate the standing of traditional 'Ngarali law' within the community to revive, strengthen and implement the way tobacco was formerly regulated by clan executives. Moreover, in the film, her comments are overlaid upon impressionistic and expressive images of landscapes, connoting timelessness and natural spirituality, such as that of a beach sunset crowned by an ochre sky and a stilled billabong, though juxtaposed alongside a long shot of Michelle walking towards a dilapidated community housing settlement. The film excerpt spotlights how social marketing film-makers may become 'moral ethnographers' (Denzin, 2003: 157) through their creative and performative use of vision and audio. The film-makers' blending of natural landscape images with those of rundown housing creates a sense of dislocated subjectivity for audiences, one sitting uneasily, relationally, between the pushes and pulls of discourse concerning traditional Yolngu law and modern Australian public health institutions.

Elsewhere in the ethnographic film, we observe opportunities where audiences, living through film participants, may develop socially circumscribed relational subject identity through a macro-level framework, such as participant engagement with public institutions. A series of film excerpts featuring an interview with the non-Indigenous regional tobacco coordinator, Simone, employed by the East Arnhem Land public health organisation Cammeray Healthcare, enables us to see how the film works towards stronger community well-being through a reflexivity mediated through the notion of the public institution:

The tobacco workers . . . come from within the communities where they are working. So, instead of just having outreach – here or there – where we hold an event or a stall, they're actually working day in . . . day out . . . within their communities.

. . . they do a lot of outreach to people's homes; they meet people in the park; wherever there's an opportunity to strike up a discussion about smoking they will do so.

As a result, more and more Yolngu are really taking on board the advice and the support that tobacco workers are giving. . . . (Simone, interview transcript, 22 April 2014; ethnographic film excerpt, timestamp 32:04–32:22)

Significantly, this interview was reflexively filmed and then excerpts inserted into the film with the specific intention of constructing a performative act of narration and storytelling connecting audiences to Cammeray Healthcare, the public health organisation sponsoring the film. In collaboration with the film-making crew, Simone requested to be filmed and interviewed on top of

Mount Nhulun, a local site of great spiritual and cultural significance for the Yolngu people and a place that in 1963 gave birth to the modern Indigenous land rights movement. Through their choice of film location and the selection of interview segments, the film-making team aimed to ‘intertwine pasts and presents’ (Hietanen et al., 2014: 2022) to disrupt totalising accounts of Australian history and evoke the spirit and symbolic energy of the events enacted there 40 years earlier.

Secondly, in this film excerpt, sound and visual tracks are spliced to motivate an upbeat and engaging sentiment that draws the audience into the excerpt’s centralising narrative. Instead of the traditional Indigenous Australian rhythms that feature elsewhere in the film, this particular interview with Simone is overlaid with a somewhat energised electro-percussive musical motif that serves to affirmatively position the work of Cammeray, its employees like Simone and that of Cammeray’s many outreach workers, in an audience member’s mind. The intention of the film-making team is that a viewer will experience the upbeat and contemporary music track as a metonym for the brand and organisational values of Cammeray Healthcare. In this way, the social marketing film stops short of shifting into a fully realist mode of representation; it reflexively acknowledges the musical construction of the film excerpt while connoting some information about Cammeray’s organisational values (Wood and Brown, 2011: 523). We note the development of a set of conditions through which a relational subject emerges through the work of employees and the discourse of a public institution, and how the film-maker’s audio-music editing strategy allows audiences to reflexively identify through an expanded notion of relational subjectivity with the organisation that employs Simone, Cammeray Healthcare.

The suite of relational behaviours outlined by David, Michelle and Simone helps us construct a portrait of Yolngu community members involved in the film as socially reflexive at the levels of informal networks of family, civic associations such as TAWs and macro-level public institutions, while understanding how the production of the social marketing ethnographic film actively develops a relational subjectivity linked to collective reflexivity.

### *Ethnographic film observations of Yolngu collective reflexivity*

The ethnographic film highlights community members’ reflexive accounts of tobacco engagement as understood through the emic term ‘Ngarali’. We note from a film excerpt, a deeply cultural account of Ngarali-inflected reflexive behaviour contextualised by a dance ritual in a Yolngu funeral ceremony. Here, seven adult Yolngu men and women, and one Yolngu child, perform a ceremonial funeral dance on a beach, while two adult men seated on the beach create the backdrop music for the dance using a didgeridoo and a set of clap sticks. The participant Michelle mentions in a voiceover that the adult mourners’ wails connect to tobacco smoking (Ethnographic film, timestamp 7:53–8:14).

We observe how reflexivity in the film excerpt is connected by the dancing mourners to the practice of tobacco smoking. However, we also emphasise the scholarly practices of the researchers who emerge to actively connect the above account to prior research examining the development of Indigenous consumer culture (Belk et al., 1995), the possession of socially reflexive behaviours (Archer, 2013; Donati, 2016) and the creation of a relational subject and necessary social ties (McAlexander et al., 2014; Powell and Dépelteau, 2013). In the above example, collective reflexivity is built through the social lens of the mourners’ Yolngu identity construction. It concurrently involves establishing relational ties through many interconnecting dimensions: the songlines connect the group of mourners to an individual mourner, personalised

reflection connects a cigarette smoker to the deceased and cigarette smoke connects embodied dance performance to clan and kinship stability, as explained by David:

It's related to his heaven, because he was a smoker, we smoke on his behalf on the place where he passed away. When Yirritja pass away we sit around and say goodbye and smoke and it makes peace on his land. As a young kid you have to learn the way of manikay [songlines], that's all. It's about learning manikay not about smoking. (David, member check interview, 15 November 2017)

David further explains that smoking is traditionally attached to Yolngu customs, such as the funeral ceremony, and is not for general consumption:

We talk about what happens in the ceremony. We only use that when we say goodbye to the old people. But some people don't understand and they think of smoking outside of ceremony. Sometimes we talk about that during ceremony [that smoking under Yolngu practice is only culturally acceptable during ceremony]. That before there was little chemical [in the old tobacco] but now there is too much. (David, member check interview, 15 November 2017)

David's dense reflection allows us to understand how Yolngu develop stronger relational ties and social experiences of subjectivity as well as a sense of solidarity seen through the concerns and 'reciprocal protection' (Archer, 2013: 159) between elders and youth. Importantly, participant reflections are patterned according to their socially shared values and emotions, guiding their behaviours and opinions, as observed in an extension to the funeral ceremony that we examined above:

A down-tempo version of the well-known radio hit, 'Djapana' (1992) by Indigenous dance outfit Yothu Yindi is overlaid with footage depicting mourners dancing by the ceremonial fire. (Observation note, 23 May 2014)

The narrator comments: 'The smoke from the Ngarali rises to the sky. And at sunset the sun would become red. The Yolngu called this Djapana . . . This meaningful Yolngu metaphor reflects on the life of a person, symbolising the nearing end of an earthly life and the beginning of a life in a land called Dharding, our paradise. In the old days, the elders smoked their Ngarali while thinking about their Dharding'. (Ethnographic film excerpt, timestamp 8:39–9:25)

The process of sharing the metaphoric meaning (Jayasinghe, 2015; Ritson and Elliott, 1999) of values legitimated by the Yolngu is a key component of Ngarali-inflected collective reflexivity. Among the Yolngu mourners, the shared metaphor of Djapana is embedded in a smoker's personalised reflections about the deceased person and transferred across from an individual smoker to the other mourners. That is, their reflections through shared resources build expressions of subsidiarity (Donati, 2016) by foregrounding the obligation or duty of mourners, to the deceased, to each other and to the community (Bauwens, 2008).

By metaphorically reworking the meaning of the red sky produced by the smokers' exhalations, the film depicts how Yolngu smokers perform the ceremonial dance and skilfully engage with and smoke products from cigarette manufacturers to meditate upon meaningful expressions of goodwill and love towards the deceased. This also further strengthens the social bonds between mourning clan members. In the ceremonial funeral dance, deep inhalation and exhalation, communal dancing and elaborate singing and wailing of the songlines are common cultural practices

through which public health notions of cigarette harm are reduced or ignored; instead they are emically reworked as clan-strengthening behaviours.

Reflecting on community responses to the ethnographic film, David comments on the reflexive processes and event changes in smoking practices that it seemed to stimulate:

There was a big screening. Fifteen-to-twenty people quit from smoking from using willpower and education and seeing the [film] that we showed them . . . Some people they end up listening and looking at the picture [film], but they still want to smoke. But Yolngu people watched the film and realised that they smoke a lot . . . One young person came to me, and he was scared from the pictures and the posters about the 7000 chemicals in the cigarettes, and he took three months to quit . . . (David, member check interview, 15 November 2017)

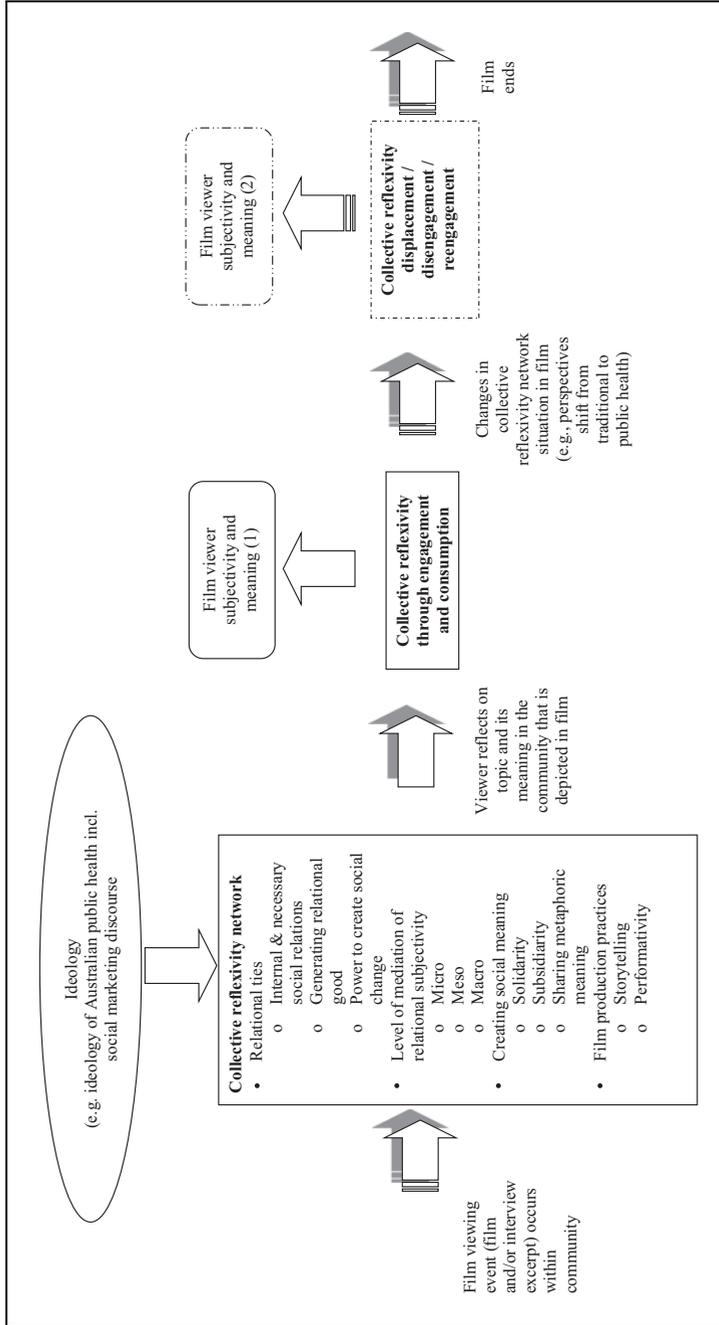
David's reflections identify how the placing of traditional Yolngu law and custom as a key artefact in the ethnographic film acted as a stimulus for community members' reflection on smoking at an individual and collective level. The alignment with customs appears to drive changes in smoking as much as health information. We note here the 'polyphonic narrative flux' (Cayla and Arnould, 2013: 7) evident in David's reflections, ranging from those who saw the film and continued to smoke to those who were scared by confronting images and narratives and quit. In this sense, the ethnographic stories circulated between the spheres of public health and everyday Yolngu social life.

Our findings enable both social marketing researchers and public health practitioners to understand that individual Ngarali-inspired reflections involving tobacco smoking are organised in community settings through Yolngu identity practices. These include reflecting on the strength of a relational good (such as shared concerns) and ties between community members, the degree to which a relational subject is created through Ngarali reflections, and through sharing the meaning of cultural metaphors connected to the Yolngu community of North East Arnhem Land.

## Discussion

In this article, we analysed the sociocultural settings and situations that organise the lived experience of collective reflexivity during the making of the Ngarali film and the types of reflexivity practices developed through these interpersonal processes. Highlighted in Figure 1 are the key elements occurring when the development of three key cultural microprocesses – relational ties, relational subjectivity and the transfer of metaphoric meaning – come together during any one reflexive encounter during the film-making process and the implications for viewer subjectivity and meaning-creation.

The figure highlights what occurs in the collective reflexivity process when a social marketing film is constructed within community settings. Typically, the social process of reflexivity we describe during film-making is personalised through collective-level discourse and is developed through a cultural process featuring a few components: the relational ties and subjectivities constructed through film production, the practices of film production that shape meaning construction and the viewers' interpretive practices that create subjectivity and meaning. Collective reflexivity arises in the film when Yolngu community members reflect on their tobacco-based practices and meanings linked to clan tradition, kinship ties and everyday social interaction; that is, tobacco consumption plays a part in creating meaning, social identity and everyday practice in Yolngu settings.



**Figure 1.** Collective reflexivity in social marketing ethnographic film.

However, simultaneously, elevated Yolngu hospitalisation rates for smoking-related illness and significantly shortened life expectancy for Indigenous community members are major public health concerns and situations through which emerge new collective reflexivities during the film.

As we observe with the comments and reflections from all our participants, this creates a tension because, despite the adverse health effects, modern tobacco consumption affirms contemporary practice in Yolngu communities. This is despite contemporary practice having earlier displaced or reduced the legitimacy of more culturally and health-appropriate traditions regarding tobacco consumption, such as through traditional law and custom. We demonstrate how market-based processes involving consumption help organise the microprocesses shaping collective understandings of reflexivity and how they shift and change from one type to another depending on consumption context and situation. Our findings highlight that a reflexivity that is also organised through colonisation is (literally) unhealthy, may lead to poor health outcomes for consumers and may, paradoxically, be socially and culturally affirming. Our research also examines how specific elements of the reflexivity process, connected to wider kinship ties and identity positions, shape culture-affirming collective reflexivity. We foreground how the quality and intensity of collective reflexivity linked to public health discourse is increased or decreased during the actual production of a social marketing film in a naturalistic tobacco-consumption setting.

Conceptually, we develop ideas on reflexivity in critical social marketing theory (Gordon and Gurrieri, 2014) by introducing collective reflexivity. Collective reflexivity offers a lens for understanding the sociocultural processes of sharing metaphoric meaning that motivate relational identity and form We-relations among stakeholders (Donati, 2016), such as among the Yolngu. Donati (2016) identifies that actors in a collective may interpret different thoughts and meanings, but he does not expand on how this may function in collective reflexivity in a consumption context. Our identification of the role of sharing consumers' metaphoric meaning as a vector for collective reflexivity helps extend the ideas of Archer (2013) and Donati (2016) – therefore illustrating the explanatory potential for collective reflexivity for understanding stakeholder interaction in social change contexts involving consumption.

Shared metaphoric meaning, according to Ritson and Elliott (1999: 273), is a vital 'socio-semantic resource'. In earlier social marketing work, Waitt et al. (2016) explain how the Foucauldian concept of governmentality is linked to social marketing policies concerning energy efficiency, through an examination of the shared metaphoric meaning of thriftiness among older people in Australia. Shared metaphoric meanings around thrift, in their view, reside in consumer practices performed through socio-historically distinct dominant discourses. In our Yolngu context, our findings uncover that consumers' shared metaphoric meaning is constructed through the intersection of both dominant and minority community consumption discourse and through the storytelling practices that help build collective reflexivity through film-making practice (Cayla and Arnould, 2013; Hietanen et al., 2014).

Lastly, we contribute to the literature on how collective reflexivity permits more nuanced understandings of how collectives relate to, and reflect on, important social marketing issues such as how tobacco is understood in a community. As Donati and Archer (2015) identify, collective reflexivity can foster solidarity and subsidiarity, both of which are important for building consensus around how to tackle market-based health and social problems like tobacco use. Thus, collective reflexivity challenges social marketers to think more about solidarity and subsidiarity. We contribute to this discourse by connecting Wood and Brown's (2011) notion that a film's visual style can build interactions between people to Dann and Dann's (2016) championing of the notion of solidarity and subsidiarity in social marketing. We demonstrate how ethnographic film-making

in social marketing is able to convey a vivid sense of both community goodwill and mutually beneficial strengthening between community members – most potently brought to life in our analyses of smoking practices and traditions performed at the Yolngu funeral ceremony dance.

Practically, we identify how ethnographic film-making can act as a vehicle for stimulating processes of collective reflexivity that offer an alternative pathway to mainstream approaches working with Indigenous communities. Social marketers have argued that culturally appropriate work is important to effectively combat public health issues within minority communities (Carson et al., 2014; Gould et al., 2016; Spotswood and Tapp, 2013). Our article more deeply examines the sociocultural bridging and bonding capacity of ethnographic initiatives in the present social marketing context, especially given the criticisms of traditional public health approaches to Indigenous welfare that only focus on the individual consumer of health services (Humphery, 2001; Pholi et al., 2009). We find that community members' socially reflexive behaviours and practices during the production of the social marketing ethnographic film link to Yolngu-affirmative subject positions and socially engage with the process of producing marketing communication like the ethnographic film.

We conclude with some study limitations and suggestions for future research. Collective reflexivity offers one route to understand reflexive processes among groups such as the Yolngu, but its tendency towards human agency (Burkitt, 2016; Caetano, 2015) means it does not offer a framework for understanding all aspects of relationality in social marketing. Therefore, work that combines ideas on collective reflexivity with concepts such as *Habitus*, which considers structure-agency in social marketing (Spotswood and Tapp, 2013), will be important. Research that further examines how ethnographic film-making can encourage reflexive processes and offer a useful alternative to traditional imperialistic public health and social marketing efforts working with Indigenous cultures would also be helpful. Social marketers are also encouraged to help develop the critical social marketing paradigm by conducting research that more generally considers applications of collective reflexivity and ethnographic film-making in their work.

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