The Construction of Muslims as "Other" in Mainstream Australia's Print Media: An Analysis of Discourse

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The Cronulla riots signalled the existence of a banal everyday form of racism operating in Australia that works to construct Muslims as 'other'. In this article, racism is explored as ideology, (re)produced through, and reflected in social practices and processes, such as language and communication. Media representations are considered, a site where dominant social narratives manifest and where racism happens. Using Foucauldian discourse analysis, several strategies employed to construct 'in- groups' and 'out-groups', following the riots, were revealed in newspaper discourse, and dominant understandings of Muslims, multiculturalism and racism became apparent. Discourses identified that problematise Muslims, included the construction of the 'inassimilable, misogynist and criminal other'. Discourses that effectively legitimate deny and justify this othering, thereby maintain Australia and Australians self image as a fair, just and tolerant society, included the construction of 'the good nation; Howard's diverse country'. Findings reflect the importance of understanding everyday forms of racism, operating in and through social narratives, which function to construct particular groups in particular ways. This research offers important lessons on the importance of examining taken for granted 'text and talk', as a site of racism.

It has been suggested that Australian Muslims are living in an environment where the significance of their ascribed religion is "being reshaped through media discourses, public policy and, at a conceptual level, the newfound salience of the apparent incompatibility of Islam and modern secular political forms of society" (Celermajer, 2007, p. 3). The Cronulla riots of December 2005 were a frightening example of the hostility held towards Muslims, Middle Easterners, and Arabs in Australia, which some have labelled "Islamophobia", an overt form of racism (Dunn, 2004; Gale, 2006; Poynting & Mason, 2006; Poynting & Mason, 2007). This hostility highlights much more than the existence of bigoted, uneducated or ignorant individuals within the Australian community, as traditional psychological accounts of racism have typically conceived. Rather, these hostilities can be viewed as an indication of banal everyday racism, constructed discursively through the social practices and processes of everyday life. If viewed in this way, everyone is implicated in racism and we therefore need to examine how racism is produced and maintained through powerful institutions such as the media, in coming to an understanding of racism.

If racism is viewed as ideology, maintained through everyday social practices, language and communication, 'talk and text', become the focus of research rather than individual 'attitudes'. Foucault (1972) wrote, "As a pre-eminent manifestation of socially constitutive ideology, language becomes the primary instrument through which ideology is transmitted, enacted and reproduced" (p. 56). Therefore, through analysis of linguistic structures and discourse strategies, with consideration of their interactional and wider social contexts, it is possible to reveal the ideologies and retrieve the social meanings expressed in and through discourse (Teo, 2000). Indeed, it is through discourse that justifications in defence of processes of racial domination, marginalisation and exclusion are formulated and transmitted (Ratele & Duncan, 2003).

Therefore mediated communication, such as print media, can be viewed as a site of

racism. Analysis of media discourses would thus be an appropriate strategy for understanding racism. Indeed critical and community psychologists have proposed that critical engagements with the media are important in order to achieve social change (Prilleltensky & Prilleltensky, 2003). Accordingly this research investigated ways in which Muslims are socially constructed as 'other' against a particular 'insider' in the Australian community. Discourses pervading mainstream Australia's print media following the Cronulla riots were examined for the presence of a subtle form of racism operating to exclude this particular community, whilst simultaneously affirming Australia's image as an egalitarian, fair and just society. Discursive approaches to psychology, which inform this study, will be explored as a means of conceptualising racism as ideology.

Discursive psychology: 'The turn to language'

The development of discursive psychology, made possible through the 'turn to language' of the 1970s and the emergence of social constructionism, has been indispensable in coming to terms with racism (Burr, 1995; Hosking & Morley, 2004; Willig, 2001a, 2001b). The development of a social constructionist epistemology entailed increasing interest in the ways in which language, or more specifically discourse, constrains, determines and influences our knowledge of the world (Burr, 1995; Willig, 2001a, 2001b). The role of language in creating and reproducing meaning in everyday social interaction became the focus of research with the assumption being that "psychological processes occur not in the heads of self contained individuals, but between or among multiple, differentially positioned speaking subjects" (Foster, 1999, p. 341).

Consequently, discursive psychology involved a major shift from the traditional view of language as a tool for description and as a medium for communication, to a view of language as social practice, as a way of doing things. People use language to justify, explain, blame, excuse, persuade, and present themselves in the best possible light (LeCouteur & Augoustinos, 2001). The major assumption of discursive psychology then, is that the phenomena of interest in social and psychological research are constituted in and through discourse (Potter & Wetherell, 2004). Consequently, racism is viewed as located within the formal and informal language practices and discourses of society, it is through these that relations of power, dominance and exploitation become reproduced and legitimated (Augoustinos, Tuffin & Every, 2005).

In many western countries, there is a mounting body of discursive research on majority group members' text and talk regarding issues concerning race and racism, multiculturalism, nationalism and immigration (Augoustinos & Reynolds, 2001; Augoustinos et al., 2005; LeCouteur & Augoustinos, 2001). Conducted across a range of sites, including the media, parliament and everyday talk, this research has shown a commonality in the discursive resources of the contemporary language of racism across western liberal democracies (Augoustinos et al., 2005; Augoustinos & Every, 2007). The research suggests there has been a discursive shift in the way inequality and oppression, are justified (Augoustinos et al., 2005; Augoustinos & Every, 2007). New racism refers to this discursive shift, which is strategically organised to deny prejudice and racism, in a society where explicit racism has become taboo (Foster, 1999; Leach, 2005). By redrawing the boundaries of what may legitimately be defined as 'racist' the category of racism can be used to position a person or group as 'not racist' by placing their own behaviour and views outside of these boundaries. The notion of new racism highlights the importance of seeing racism as discursive, as constantly being reconstructed, and renegotiated through text and talk.

The notion of new racism

The notion of new racism is based upon the argument that "racism now manifests in more muted or veiled terms, in contrast to the

old fashioned, blatant or red-necked forms which were shaped in constructs of hierarchy and claims of superiority of one 'race' over another" (Foster, 1999, p. 332). Emphasis instead shifts to cultural aspects of human behaviour such as language, beliefs, religions and customs, or 'ways of life' (Barker, 2002; Lentin, 2005). According to Hopkins, Reichter and Levine (1997), new racism is entrenched in arguments suggesting the existence of a natural affinity towards members of the same race, as well as a natural tendency towards avoidance or antagonism between members of different races. Furthermore new racism is said to involve assertions that power relations and structural inequalities are not requirements for analysis and understanding of racism (Reichter, 2001), which has the effect of "naturalising inequality and blaming the victim" (van Dijk, 2002, p. 34). Therefore, the people who practice this new racism believe in and uphold the basic values of democratic egalitarianism and would thus emphatically deny that they are 'racist', while articulating views that are exclusionary and oppressive in their effects (Augoustinos & Every, 2007).

While the notion of new racism is a valuable concept in understanding the masked language of racism in contemporary Australian society, everyday racism calls attention to the embeddedness of, and inescapability from, racism in our society. Effectively this means that the ideology of racism becomes part of who we are, and how we operate in the world at large, whether we are aware of it or not. The inclusion of everyday racism in the conceptual framework of this study reflects a commitment to tackle racism as more than just an individual level problem, but rather, as something in which we are all implicated in some way or another.

The notion of everyday racism

The concept of everyday racism opposes the view that racism is an individual problem, asserting that it is not simply a question of "to be or not to be a racist" (Essed, 1991, p. 3). Instead it is argued that racism needs to be

acknowledged as an everyday problem, thereby alluding to the normalcy of racism (Essed, 2002). Along similar lines, Harvey (1999) characterised the everyday processes of oppression in normal life as "civilized oppression". Essed (1991) argues that racism is more than structure and ideology. As a process it is routinely created and reinforced through everyday practices. Everyday racism connects structural forces with routine situations in everyday life. Thus new racism and everyday racism, serve ideologically to (re)produce a process of racialisation, and justify and defend existing racialised inequalities and exclusions, or structural relations of oppression, albeit in more subtle ways (Foster, 1999).

The media as a site of racism

These theoretical understandings of racism imply that, in contemporary Australian society, the media, as a form of social practice, should be recognised as an institution capable of obfuscating, legitimating and naturalising the ideology of racism, and hence perpetuating the oppression of minorities. Indeed news media, particularly newspapers, have played a crucial role in the emergence of the new language of 'race' and nation (Gale, 2006). The media can convey and broadcast pervasive and negative narratives, images and ideas about racial and ethnic minorities that can have a significant effect on the collective beliefs of mainstream Australia (Anti-Discrimination Board of New South Wales [ADBNSW], 2003). Thus, while drawing on traditions of objectivity of fact, news media have the power to marginalise and construct racial or ethnic minority communities as 'other' (ADBNSW, 2003; Campbell, 1995). The assumption that there is the possibility of neutral media refutes the fact that media commentators do not live in a social vacuum; the ideology of racism is deeply embedded in society, therefore members internalise aspects of the ideology and the self- perpetuating cycle continues (Campbell, 1995; Ratele & Duncan., 2003).

Events are often explained in racial terms. This labelling has the effect of

legitimating prejudice and discrimination against particular minority groups (ADBNSW, 2003; Duncan, 2007; Poynting & Morgan, 2007; Poynting, Noble, Tabar & Collins, 2004) often resulting in what Poynting et al. (2004) describe as moral panics about 'ethnic others'. The overwhelming force of racialisation of media and public discourse makes resistance to common sense explanations difficult. Racist ideologies become naturalised within society and begin to be seen as simple 'common sense' (ADBNSW, 2003; Fulton, 2005). Van Dijk (1992) identified several patterns in media discourses, which allow for the perpetuation of racism. These include negative representation of the 'other', denial, mitigation, reversal, and naturalising inequality and blaming the victim. These patterns parallel the functioning of both new racism (Hopkins et al., 1997) and everyday racism (Essed, 2002).

Vilification of Muslims in the Australian context

Since September 11 2001, Muslim minorities have experienced intensive othering in western countries, particularly those associated with the US led 'war on terror' involving the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq (Dunn, 2004; Gale, 2006; Kuhn, 2006; Noble, 2005; Poynting & Mason, 2006; Poynting & Mason, 2007). An abundance of research attests to the fact that the many diverse Muslim communities of Australia have become the focus of intense negativity regarding a supposed link to terrorism (e.g., Aly, 2007; Dunn, 2004; Gale, 2006; Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission [HREOC], 2004; Kuhn, 2006; Noble, 2005; Saniotis, 2004; Sivanandan, 2006). HREOC (2004) launched a study in March 2003, following September 11 attacks and the Bali bombings of 2002, exploring Muslim and Arab Australians perceptions of racial vilification. Responses by Muslim Australians suggested that there had been an intensification of existing, ongoing and everyday forms and patterns of vilification, which had continued since the 1990s and before (Poynting & Mason, 2006).

Responses suggested that incidence of discrimination and vilification peaked and waned, corresponding with various local regional, national and international crises including, the Bali bombings in October 2002 and the war in Iraq in 2003, but authors emphasised that it was always present (HREOC, 2004).

The main themes implicit in the vilification experienced by Muslim Australians were identified in the HREOC (2004) research. They were that Australian Arabs and Muslims are seen to share responsibility for terrorism or are potential terrorists, that there is no place in Australia for Arabs or Muslims, and finally there was an underlying expectation that new migrants to Australia should assimilate and discard their foreign dress codes, languages and cultural practices (HREOC, 2004; Poynting & Mason, 2006). Importantly, responses emphasised not only the significance of blatant acts of hostility, but also more normal everyday forms of discrimination, such as unwarranted police attention and suspicion, unfriendliness as well as biased media representation.

Noble (2005) argues that forms of social incivility, like the harsher experiences of vilification, amount to the affective regulation of social belonging and participation. Social incivility for Noble refers to everyday behaviours of others that are felt to be rude or insulting, even as their significance is dismissed. Corresponding with Essed's (1991) notion of everyday racism this might include "name calling, jokes in bad taste, bad manners, provocative and offensive gestures or even just a sense of social distance or unfriendliness or an excessive focus on someone's ethnicity" (Noble, 2005, p. 110).

The affective regulation of difference amounts to an active process of othering and exclusion, and this exclusion does not simply involve economic and political deprivation, but entails social and cultural dimensions, such as notions of agency and power (Noble, 2005). Our ability to be comfortable in public settings rests on our ability to be acknowledged as

rightfully existing there, that is, to be recognised as belonging (Noble). Significantly, he points out the opposite of recognition is not invisibility but the "active, affective regulation of the inappropriate existence of others, a constant reminder of inadequate existence" (Noble, 2005, p. 114).

While the current study does not endeavour to understand the psychological effects of these everyday instances of racism and exclusion for the minority community, it can suggest what the creation of the categories, 'us' and 'them', accomplishes in the larger scheme of things. Moral exclusion is described as "the process whereby individuals or groups are perceived to be outside the boundary in which moral values, rules, and considerations of fairness apply" (Opotow, 1990, p. 5). If particular communities are seen as outside ones moral community, or ones 'scope of justice', they are viewed as psychologically distant and as non-entities undeserving of fairness or resources (Opotow, 2001). Therefore, unfair, unjust and inhumane treatment and/or conditions continue to occur with impunity. Arguably then, the construction of Muslims as 'other', preceding and during the Cronulla riots, works to justify/excuse the racism and hostility that was blatantly evident throughout the riots. It also helps to understand how the social incivilities and vilification experiences, reported in much of the literature, can occur with impunity, in an egalitarian nation whose citizens are supposedly "relaxed and comfortable" (Noble, 2005, p. 107).

The Cronulla Riots

The Cronulla riots occurred in December 2005. The riots began as a beachfront brawl involving a handful of young men in Sydney and developed into a "violent racist mob attack of thousands of angry white Australians on anyone they suspected of being of 'Middle Eastern appearance'" (Poynting & Morgan, 2007, p. 158). These riots highlighted extreme hostility existing towards the Lebanese Muslim community within Australian society. The vilification of peoples with Lebanese ancestry,

or people of 'Middle Eastern appearance', during these riots came to be conflated with the vilification of Muslims in general, as reflected by prominent slurs such as "Go nulla, fuck Allah" during the riots, subsequent media reportage of events, and the perception and causes of events as demonstrated by letters to the editor, and in editorials. Analysis of newspaper discourse following the Cronulla riots was chosen to explore the functioning of racism in the media, because this event ignited public debate about Muslims and Islam and more generally about multiculturalism and racism within Australia.

Methodology

Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA), seeks to expose and ultimately resist social inequality by taking a "critical, progressive and political stance to the truth claims made by discourses, which help maintain oppressive power relations, and to increase the voice of marginalised discourses" (Burr, 1995, p. 119). From a critical post structuralist perspective, "discourses facilitate and limit, enable and constrain what can be said, by whom, when and where" (Parker, 2002, p. 245).

Within this framework discourse may be defined as a set of statements that construct objects and a variety of subject positions. Thus, there is a concern with what discursive resources people draw on, how these resources come to be culturally available and the effects they have in terms of the kinds of objects, subjects, and positions, which they make available (Willig, 2001a). This construction of objects and subject positions through discourse, ultimately make available certain ways of seeing and certain ways of being in the world (Willig, 2001a, 2001b).

Parker (1992) and Burr (1995) describe the goal of discourse analysis from a Foucauldian perspective as being "deconstruction". Deconstruction refers to attempts to take apart texts and see how they are constructed in such a way as to present particular images of people and their actions

(Burr, 1995). Foucauldian discourse analysts do not seek to understand the "true nature" (Willig, 2001a, p. 120) of psychological phenomena. Instead they seek to understand the social and historical conditions, which support certain discourses at particular times and therefore try to map the discursive worlds people inhabit and to trace possible ways of being afforded by them (Willig, 2001a). Given their emphasis on the constructed nature of language, discourse analysts see the researcher as an active 'author' of interpretations and thus no analysis is presented as the only 'true' reading, rather it is presented as one possible reading or version of the world (Willig, 2001a). The identification of discourses is largely an intuitive and interpretive process (Burr, 1995; Parker, 2002; Willig, 2001a).

Data sources

Media representations of the Cronulla riots and associated issues were explored as a specific site, within a societal dialogue, where understandings of Muslims, racism and immigration in Australia, are not only reflected but also (re)produced. Newspaper content was viewed as social practice, reflecting wider social narratives about Muslims, racism, and immigration in the Australian context, effectively making available certain ways of seeing, and certain ways of being in the world. This approach is considered appropriate because the stories presented by the media do not occur in a social vacuum, instead they "emerge within a larger universe of beliefs, values, and worldviews" (Hodgetts, Masters & Robertson, 2004, p. 460). Media framing and analysis of the event draws upon ready-made social narratives about Muslims, racism and immigration operating in Australia. Analysis that explores such shared symbolic resources enables us to begin to understand how Muslim's are positioned in the Australian context, how this positioning is achieved, as well as how it is justified (Hodgetts et al., 2004).

Newspapers printed following the Cronulla riots were analysed. The 'Australian', a national daily broadsheet newspaper, was chosen because of its national appeal. Newspapers were analysed from the 12th of December 2005 to the 29th of December 2005. Analysis also involved focus on letters to the editor, which serve as forums for opinion, dialogue and debate. The inclusion of prejudice and everyday racism in such letters therefore stands as an indication of the extent to which racist views have become part of what is seen as normal by the dominant group and an indication of a newspaper's differential perceptions of the ideological boundaries of legitimate and fair comment (Essed, 1991, 2002). Article and editorial content, positioning and structure, including accompanying pictures, were also included in the analysis, providing an overall reading of the discourses at work in the texts. Newspapers were read extensively until the event disappeared from headlines and letter pages, thus making further reading redundant.

Analysis of newspaper discourses

There is no standardised form of discourse analysis or FDA, due to a belief that dictating a specific sequence of steps would only lead to discourse analysis becoming plagued with the same limitations traditional psychology encompasses (Hook, 2007). Billig (1987) suggests the analyst simply look for implicit themes within the texts. Rhetorical devices identified by Tilbury (1998) in her analysis of talk about Maori/Pakeha Relations provided further guidance in this study. These included among other strategies; appeal to the 'facts', dichotomising, direct criticism of another individual, rhetorical questions, couching ones view as the majority opinion, using personal experience of proof of one's view, exemplification, overstatement, repetition and emphasis, claiming special knowledge as well as disclaimers.

Parker's (1992) steps for discourse analysis guided analysis for the current research due to his focus on power and ideology. Analysis proceeded with a close reading of newspapers, whilst attempting to take a critical

distance from language, which implies asking questions about it, and imagining how it could have been constructed differently. What has been left out? What has been emphasised? The overall aim is to reveal the construction of a racist ideology embedded within the structure of newspaper discourse and to show how dominant forces in society construct versions of reality that favour the interests of those same forces.

Items from newspapers were considered relevant for analysis if they were thought to position Muslims and Islam, Australia, race and racism, multiculturalism and immigration in a particular way, whether it was positive or negative. Headlines included in analysis, covered a range of subjects including the Cronulla riots, Muslims, religion (e.g., Why being Christian is cool), Multiculturalism, Immigration, race, violence and aggression, as well as terrorism and the threat of terror. A total of 115 headlines, and their article content were examined, 46 of which were letters to the editor or opinion pieces.

Findings

Of the overall corpus of media coverage, it was evident that the discourse of White Australia as opposed to discourse produced by Lebanese or Muslim Australia, or sympathetic to Lebanese or Muslim Australia, dominated the media coverage. Headlines of articles used in the analysis were counted and contrasted in order to get a general feel of the coverage and whom it was favouring. The first category created to describe what the headlines were doing, was related to the denial and mitigation of racism, including individualising it, blaming it on situational factors and justifying it as inevitable ($n = 21$). The second category included headlines that constructed the negative other ($n = 25$). The third constructed Australia as diverse, multicultural, tolerant and accepting, or drew on Australian symbols and icons ($n = 16$). The fourth category of headlines was used to describe those that were neutral, or gave voice to the minority ($n = 13$), and the fifth included headlines that were

thought to be provoking fear, about the threat of terrorism, or a threat to our 'way of life' ($n = 9$). Many headlines could be considered as belonging to a number of these categories, at the same time. Furthermore while headlines may have appeared neutral further reading may have proven otherwise. While an analysis of headlines is a crude measure of the analysis, it provides a general picture of the coverage, and aided in the analysis process. After reading the entire corpus of 'relevant' media coverage, researchers then met to discuss emerging issues and to establish general trends. Core themes were identified and then further developed, through in depth analysis.

An analysis of discourses in the print media preceding the Cronulla riots

Several discourses concerning Muslims, racism and immigration were identified in newspaper coverage following the Cronulla riots. Collectively these discourses work to, first construct Muslims as a negative other, and then to justify, defend or simply deny this othering or moral exclusion, by redrawing the boundaries of what is defined as 'racism' and what is defined as legitimate and fair comment. Discourses identified were; extremism as a measure of racism, the construction of a negative other (misogynist, inassimilable, and criminal), the good nation; 'Howard's diverse country', an attack on 'elites' and finally an attack on 'cushy Multiculturalism'. Due to space constraints, each of the discourses will not be explored here. Instead the last three interrelated discourses will be elaborated on, in order to demonstrate how they function to justify and defend the construction of the negative other that legitimates the conditional nature of citizenship and belonging. The last three are good examples of 'new racist' discourses, which effectively work to determine who 'belongs'.

The good nation: '*Howard's diverse country*'

This 'good nation' discourse, positions Australia and Australian's as being 'warm and friendly' 'tolerant', 'accepting' and 'fair'. This discourse was strikingly apparent in the media

coverage following the riots and is evident in the quotation from the then Prime Minister, John Howard.

Extract 1

I do not accept that there is underlying racism in this country. I have always taken a more optimistic view of the character of the Australian people. This nation of ours has been able to absorb millions of people from different parts of the world over a period of now some more than 40 years and we have done so with remarkable success and in a way that has brought enormous credit to this country. And it's very important that we keep that in mind (Howard, 2003, p. 13).

Australia and Australians are presented as tolerant and accepting, "with good values", where every other migrant group has successfully been "absorbed", and where the presence of racism is non-existent or only in a pathological few. By implication it is these Lebanese Muslims who are to blame for their inability and unwillingness to be "absorbed". As Hage (1998) argues, 'tolerance' is problematic because of the unequal power relations inherent in the term. The ability to be 'tolerant' implies an equal ability to be intolerant if one chooses to be.

The implied attack on the 'inassimilable other' continued as Howard asserts that these values "respect the equal rights and roles of men and women within our community", eliciting in reader's minds the discourse of Islam as misogynist and uncivilised, also identified at work in the newspapers analysed. It is clear whom Howard is talking about, though an actual reference to Muslims or Islam would be inappropriate, it is implied however and so mainstream Australians are led into seeing 'them' and their culture as the problem. The ideology of them as misogynist is already primed. Thus the whole statement may in fact be read as directed to the Muslim minority, so

that 'they', not belonging to the "overwhelming majority", are seen to not share these "decent values" and "decent attitudes".

Moreover, this previous statement made by John Howard blatantly ignores the tensions and inequality existing in the country based on racial lines, and any reference to asylum seekers and the "humanitarian crisis". It also leaves out the fact that Australia had an explicitly racist 'White Australia policy', up until the early 70s; effectively painting a rosy picture of Australian immigration, so that what is left out is more telling than what is actually said. Furthermore, it leaves out the struggle that migrants have faced when coming to Australia. Also of importance, is the use of the word "absorb" reflecting Howard's stance on integration, or more accurately 'assimilation'.

'Racism is repulsive but so is self- loathing: An attack on elites'

Extract 1 also alludes to another common discourse in the corpus of newspapers analysed, involving an attack on so- called 'elites', 'academics' or 'Howard Haters'. It represents this discourse in the way Howard proclaims; "I have always taken a more optimistic view of the character of the Australian people". Howard not only explicitly denies underlying racism in Australia, he does so in a way that positions himself as being loyal to this country and to the Australian people. Thus this statement implicitly suggests that those who dare to criticise Australia by suggesting or even considering the possibility that there may be a racial problem embedded in the social fabric, are doing Australia a disservice. It is portrayed as an act of betrayal of the country and of the Australian people. "And I think it would be an enormous mistake if we begin to wallow in generalised self- criticism, because the overwhelming majority of Australians have the proper instincts and decent attitudes and decent values", he continues, further positioning himself as a defender of this mighty country, mitigating and denying any hint of racism. The discourse of Australian values, is common in the "texts", and is suggestive of 'their'

incompatible values and 'their' inherent backwardness that we will not tolerate in this country, as a secular society. The rhetorical device, couching ones views as the 'overwhelming' majorities, is clearly at work here (Tilbury, 1998). What is more, is that the individual speaking for the majority here is a member of the powerful 'elite', who to some extent determines what is and what is not considered legitimate and fair comment (van Dijk, 1992). Further examples of the discourse attacking 'elites' are provided in extracts 2, 3 & 4:

Extract 2

"Let's not wallow in self pity, self flagellation and self criticism"…. "Have Christmas and celebrate the fact this is still the greatest country of the world in which to live, let nobody tell us otherwise". …. "There is a tendency among insecure Australians to be too sensitive to allegations of racism and too exaggerate the effect overseas of what happens here. There is also a tendency to declare ourselves international pariahs at the drop of a hat and indulge in self- flagellation without perspective" (Plan to saturate City with Police: PM calls for calm over holidays, 2005, p. 6).

Extract 3

Suggesting that the nation is swamped by racists that ordinary Australians need some fine moral instructions from the like of Brown is just the latest adaptation of the David Williamson school of thought that treat ordinary Australian with disdain. It's a form of elitist self-loathing that gets us nowhere in explaining why thousands of people descended on the streets of Cronulla. This is racist and it's wrong. Vigilantes' bashing young men and women is criminal. But grabbing

hold of Hansonism every time racism rears its ugly head and tarring the whole crowd with the same racist brush gets us nowhere . ….Goodhart was hounded for suggesting that throwing people of different cultures together can cause friction. Not because of any latent racism but because "we feel more comfortable with and sacrifice for those with whom we have shared histories and similar values"…. As Goodhart says "To put it bluntly – most of us prefer our own kind". Even to raise such a notion would have the less thoughtful leftists crying racism. But the sooner we recognise human nature, the sooner we can work out where to go from that starting point (Albrechtsen, 2005, p. 12).

Extract 4

Culture is about how you think and act and can be changed………a single unifying culture is the national culture is the only way to achieve harmony and peaceful co-existence in a sea of racial and ethnic diversity. And for those who seemingly delight in the denigrating the old Australian 'monoculture', evidences of its success are everywhere to be seen. …If Australian culture is so bad, why do so many migrants still seek to come here in the thousands? Stop the self-loathing and consider carefully why some think and behave in unacceptable ways? (Rodski, 2005, p. 13).

Overall this discourse has the effect of bringing ridicule on those who dare acknowledge racism as a social problem, firmly embedded in Australian society by belittling them as 'insecure' and 'too sensitive'. Therefore, through the accusations of having

ignored the catalyst for the conflict supplied by ethnic gang violence, and exploiting the riots as an opportunity to sneer at ordinary Australian this discourse acts as a repression of alternative discourses (Essed, 1991). This discourse works to discredit and make illegitimate opponents contentions that may implicate Australia and Australians in racism. It appeals to people, as it presents itself as the 'champion of the common man', defender of the 'ordinary Australian', against the whims and nonsense of an all-powerful elite, who are treating them with disdain. The conditional nature of citizenship and belonging is clearly evident in extract 4, with the assertion that 'culture' can be changed. Rhetorical questions feature extensively in extract 4, drawing on the discourse of the negative 'other'.

The description of an elitist accusation of Australia as being 'swamped by racists' is an example of 'hyperbole' (van Dijk, 1992), which presents the claims of these 'elites' as farfetched, seeing as though the general perception of the meaning of racism is something quite different to what the 'elites and academics' would generally suggest. These extracts clearly demonstrate the workings of 'new racism', in that attempts are being made to reshape the boundaries of what is defined as racism. There is an emphasis on culture as opposed to race, and the incompatibility of, and natural antagonism between, different cultures and thus the necessity to change, or adapt to the 'Australian culture' or 'monoculture'. An extremely good example of the covertness of 'new racism', or what Hall (1995) describes as inferential racism is evidenced in extract 4 with the closing rhetorical question, "consider carefully why some think and behave in unacceptable ways?" While, the construction of the negative other, is not the focus here, the problematisation of 'their' culture is inherent in this discourse.

'It's not race, it's culture stupid: An attack on cushy Multiculturalism'

While multiculturalism was portrayed as a 'warm sentiment', ultimately the discourses identified constructed it as "failed social

policies" leading to "inappropriate immigration" (Oldfield, as cited in O'Brien & Kearney, 2005, p. 11). Essentially the problem was presented as being "multiculturalism that highlights differences, promotes divisiveness and spurns the principles of unity given by a singular national identity" (Oldfield, as cited in O'Brien & Kearney, 2005, p. 11).

This neo-assimilation theme was predominant in the corpus of newspaper 'texts'. Integration or assimilation was presented as vital because, "most of us prefer our own kind" and so "the sooner we recognise human nature" the better off we will be. These discourses would suggest that, before, 'we', "the less thoughtful leftists" "cry racism" at such assertions, remember that racism, as John Howard says, is "a term flung around sometimes carelessly" (Kerin & Leys, 2005, p. 4). This has the effect of 'naturalising inequality and blaming the victim' (van Dijk, 1992), which is demonstrated in extract 5.

Extract 5

In Sydney, it has been plain to see for at least a decade, that instead of ethnic communities living happily in the diversity of social pluralism, multiculturalism has bred ethnic ghettoes characterised by high levels of unemployment, welfare dependency, welfare abuse, crime and violence (Windshuttle, 2005, p. 13).

The attack on multiculturalism, as politically correct and as a root cause of the social problems displayed during the riots, is exemplified in extracts 5 and 6:

Extract 6

While nobody with any nous is against immigration, people who come to Australia need to integrate into our way of life. Not set up enclaves of seperatism with cultures different from ours. The sooner we get rid of multiculturalism and promote multiethnicity the better we'll be (Henry, 2005, p. 13).

This discourse works to (re)define and thus deny racism, by presenting the issue as the insurmountability of 'cultural' differences, and as both extracts articulate, those who express doubts about the multicultural society, are not, as their opponents hasten to call them 'racist', as after all it's 'race, not culture, stupid' (Windshuttle, 2005). In doing so, this discourse attempts to reconstruct the boundaries of what constitutes racism and what constitutes fair, indeed necessary social comment, and positions such assertions as 'not racist'. In fact, there were many suggestions to rename it 'multiracialism' as opposed to multiculturalism.

This discourse involved presenting the "socially conservative" police and government as being too politically correct, taking the "softly, softly approach" in dealing with the antisocial behaviour going on at Cronulla and elsewhere, in fear of being labelled 'racist' (Kearney & Sexton, 2003, p. 1). This politically correct approach was constructed as an underlying problem, implying that we are perhaps not being 'racist' enough. Furthermore there was a strong focus on the discourse of 'rights versus responsibilities', the suggestion being that there has been too much focus on a 'rights' agenda' as opposed to a 'responsibility' one, so that minority groups take on a "victim mentality" and "cry racism" as an excuse for acting irresponsibly, and not following Australian laws. These discourses, although they were not all elaborated here, helped us to understand the ideology of racism and how it was operating, particularly in terms of how it structured social group identities and belonging, within Australia at the time, as well as how it constructed racism and in doing so justified, legitimated or denied its existence.

Discussion

In order to understand the power inequalities in society properly, Foucault suggests an examination of how discursive practices serve to create and uphold particular forms of social life (Burr, 1995). If some people are said to have more power than others, then an examination of the discourses and representations, which uphold these inequalities is in order. The power to act in particular ways, to claim resources, to control, or be controlled depends upon the 'knowledge' prevailing in a given society at a given moment (Burr, 1995). This 'knowledge' comes to constitute 'truth', or what we have been referring to as discourses, which construct objects and a variety of subject positions. For Foucault (1972), knowledge is a power over others, the power to define others.

This research identified a number of discourses circulating in mainstream Australia print media, following the Cronulla riots that constructed Muslims as an uncompromisingly, negative 'other', against a positive image of Australia and Australians. This othering or 'moral exclusion' was obscured behind the language of egalitarianism and tolerance, made possible by the circulation of discourses that effectively redraw the boundaries of what's defined as 'racist'. This 'new racism', suggests that understandings of racism and multiculturalism, are not static, but rather are (re)constructed and (re)negotiated in and through discourses of our everyday lives. However, as Foucault suggests, some have more power in this negotiation process, as was evident by the discourses dominating print media coverage, following the riots.

New racism and every day racism in mainstream print media

The mechanisms identified by van Dijk (1992) in the analysis of racism in the media including, negative other presentation, positive self presentation, mitigation, denial, reversal, as well as naturalising inequality and blaming the victim were recognised throughout this analysis, as were the strategies found by Tilbury (1998). It was strikingly evident that those wishing to express negative views about this particular out-group took care to construct these views as justified, warranted and rational (Rapley, 2001), denying, mitigating and excusing negative acts and views towards minorities in order to position themselves as decent, moral reasonable citizens.

The attack on 'cushy multiculturalism'

and 'elites' involved the prominence of claims commonly made by perpetrators of new racism, that it is human nature to prefer your own kind, that different cultures are naturally antagonistic towards one another and that structural inequalities and power relations are not requirements for examining and understanding racism (Hopkins et al., 1997). Indeed negative feelings of 'white' Australia towards these 'others' were presented as being 'not racist', but rather as justifiable responses to the 'fact' that this minority group transgress central values. However they still function to exclude and have racist premises and propositions inscribed in them (Ratele & Duncan, 2003). These discourses attacking the policy of 'multiculturalism' and the 'political correctness' of 'elites', was aided by the construction of extremism as a measure of racism and of racism as something specifically related to 'race', rather than culture, which was constructed as something that can and should be changed, in order to integrate or be 'absorbed' successfully. These discourses also worked in conjunction with a discourse emphasising the 'tolerance' and diversity of Australia, 'the good nation'.

Implications and future directions

The implication is that new racist discourses circulate through discourses in the print media, and arguably have everyday effects. This suggests that people are made to feel unwelcome, uncomfortable, and illegitimate and that these exclusionary actions are (re) produced at an everyday level. Indeed discussion of immigration and multiculturalism and thus 'belonging', focused on the 'absorption' of non-white Others in a country in which whiteness is the normative mode of belonging. This 'negotiation' of belonging then, threatens what Noble (2005) calls the 'ontological security', of particular 'out groups' who are constantly reminded that they don't belong, effectively limiting their capacity to exist as citizens and feel 'fully human'.

The media in ordering our perceptions of the social world, are central in reproducing dominant cultural frames connecting the

mundane to the wider world and generating a kind of 'common sense' of the world, which naturalises that reality and the relations of power which structure it (Poynting et al., 2004). With the emergence in recent years of a highly racialised framing of current events, involving binary oppositions of 'us' and 'them', 'good' and 'bad', 'victim' and 'villain', 'right' and 'wrong', around crime and terrorism, on a local, national and international level (Poynting et al., 2004), the implications for those constructed as the out-group, as was the case with Lebanese Muslims during, before and after the Cronulla riots are very concerning. Moral exclusion reduces restraints against harming or exploiting certain groups of people (Opotow, 2001). If moral exclusion was seen to influence the way the Cronulla riots were represented, and the way understandings of 'belonging' were constructed, then we need to question, what else it could be influencing our interpretations and understandings of, and the effects of this. Furthermore, even though this event occurred some time ago, the findings of this research are important as arguably similar phenomena are being reflected in relation to the Sudanese in Australia currently, who seem to be becoming a key 'out-group' (Puoch, 2007).

Because new racism is covert it does not appear to be 'racist' and is not as confronting as 'old racism', it is much more likely to become naturalised as taken for granted 'common sense'. Furthermore because new racism is so freely expressed by social actors, such as media commentators and politicians, who are powerful members of society, this ultimately conveys what Barbara Perry calls, a 'permission to hate' (cited in Poynting et al., 2004). Similarly Hage (1998) suggests "violent racists are always a minority. However their breathing space is determined by the degree of ordinary 'non-violent' racism a government and culture will allow" (p. 247). Thus the media as a pervasive site of racism needs to be challenged and counter discourses need to be produced, giving voice to those relegated to 'outsider', 'invader', or simply 'other'. This necessitates

that psychology, an institution capable of influencing the way that racism is understood, has a moral responsibility to critically engage with the media in tackling racism, and avoid the 'reductionistic', 'psychologising' and 'individualistic' accounts that have dominated the social psychology of racism (Augoustinos & Reynolds, 2001; Foster, 1999).

While discourse analysis is a useful and worthwhile means of exploring the banal way that racism operates in contemporary Australian society on a daily basis, future research should focus on the need to give voice to the oppressed within society. It should aim to empower marginalised communities to determine their own social representations, rather than have them determined for them. It should also aim to raise awareness in the dominant culture of the taken for granted ways that racism is reproduced on a day- to- day basis. Indeed it is important to move away from simply trying to 'understand' the 'other', and emphasise the importance of understanding the self in the midst of unbalanced power relationships. There is a growing interest in addressing racism through raising the socio-political awareness of powerful groups, involving the interrogation of how dominant groups benefit from and are implicated in maintaining racism (Duncan, 2007). The power dimension of racism is essential in any understanding of racism. Furthermore, any analysis of the subjective experience of marginalisation needs to encompass everyday forms of racism, that is, the seemingly insignificant ways that people are racialised.

Limitations

The current study was useful as an exploratory start to research in this area, though more needs to be done to really tackle the issue of racism in the media and to understand the psychological effects of everyday and banal forms of racism. While discourse analysis can be useful in tracing the representations/discourses dominant in a particular context, at a particular historical moment, it does not acknowledge the way these are variably taken up. They may be rejected resisted or consumed; people are not just passive recipients or victims of dominant discourses. Future research should explore the different ways they are challenged, and the spaces where this is achieved.

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