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Abstract

This paper examines the relationships between research on journalism and cultural diversity and the political and ideological contexts for those policies. By employing historical research methodologies, the paper offers both a chronology of research about reporting of Multiculturalism and cultural diversity in the Australian media, and a story about the themes as they unfolded in response to media trends and Government policies. We describe the Australian social and political landscape in which research has been undertaken and identify the major government policy developments over the past three decades, finding that research activity has responded to (and been enabled by) these changing emphases.

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RESEARCHING JOURNALISM AND DIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA: HISTORY AND POLICY

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(Refereed)

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Introduction

This paper examines the relationships between research on journalism and cultural diversity and the political and ideological contexts for those policies. By employing historical research methodologies, the paper offers both a chronology of research about reporting of Multiculturalism and cultural diversity in the Australian media, and a story about the themes as they unfolded in response to media trends and Government policies. We describe the Australian social and political landscape in which research has been undertaken and identify the major government policy developments over the past three decades, finding that research activity has responded to (and been enabled by) these changing emphases.

The basis of this analysis is the Reporting Diversity bibliographical database (www.reportingdiversity.org.au) which houses over 300 items of journalism and media studies research and reveals a rich tradition of inquiry into the reporting of cultural diversity in Australia. The database is a major output of the federally-funded, collaborative Reporting Diversity research project, which is exploring multiple dimensions of the Australian media's coverage of Multiculturalism and diversity and is developing a suite of resources for journalists and journalism educators. The database has been used by journalism academics and students researching the media's coverage of cultural diversity and it also has potential as a tool for journalists reporting on these issues who are seeking to enhance their practice with theoretical knowledge. Our paper uses data from the database to support an analysis of research output along several thematic lines, revealing the shifts and trends of journalism and diversity research in Australia across time.

Our analysis of the 'Reporting Diversity' database is presented chronologically – across four decades, from the 1970s to the 2000s. Diversity research has been carried out within a series of shifting and competing discourses: political, academic and journalistic. We have identified policy shifts including: the introduction of a government-sponsored program of Multiculturalism in the 1970s; the 1990s emphasis on Indigenous reconciliation and rights, which generated research into the embedded nature of racism in journalism practice, and the conservative Howard Government's (1996–2007) rejection of Multiculturalism during the 2000s. For most of the Howard era there was an associated shift away from Multiculturalism as a research theme in line with these political discourses and policies. Such political shifts have provided both a discourse and a source of funding for academic researchers, and have stimulated research activity. We nominate key academic thinkers in the Australian context and identify exemplar research projects and outputs over the time period. We recognise that research activity is frequently generated by mediated events, or 'flashpoints', that provide important foci for intellectual endeavour in the field. Two recent flashpoints have generated significant research on journalism and cultural diversity. The election of the racist independent politician, Pauline Hanson, to the Australian parliament in 1996 was a key moment generating substantial research of racist reporting, reporting on racism and systemic Australian racism. The September 11 attacks provided another flashpoint and a sharp emphasis on journalistic coverage of international terrorism and Muslim Australians.

Through this systematic examination, we draw a range of preliminary conclusions about the content and nature of research on news media reporting of diversity and Multiculturalism. We conclude that racism remains the over-arching theoretical prism through which journalistic reporting of diversity has been examined and understood, which raises significant tensions both for journalists reporting

on multiculturalism, and for Government discourses. Nevertheless, we argue that this seemingly intractable tension makes it imperative that journalism confronts its professional practice in the reporting of a multicultural society.

History of Australian Multiculturalism and Diversity Policy

Australian journalists' reporting of cultural diversity has taken place within a discursive policy environment developed over nearly four decades (Hage & Couch 1999). Following the end of the highly racially discriminatory White Australia Policy in the late 1960s, successive Australian governments began to examine the assimilationist underpinnings of immigration and ethnic affairs. The election of the Whitlam Labor Government in 1972 is commonly understood as the end of the assimilationist era. The flamboyant Italian-Australian Minister for Immigration, Al Grasby coined the term 'multi-culturalism' in 1973, in a climate of recognition of the hardships experienced by settler communities (Foster & Stockley 1988, p. 27). Support followed for the establishment of ethnically-based community organisations to represent the interests of migrant groups. The first official policies under the mantle of Multiculturalism were implemented by the Fraser Liberal government, following the release of the influential 1978 Galbally Report into services provided to migrant communities, which, importantly, identified the right to maintain cultural identity, and emphasised media as an important resource for new settler communities (Galbally 1978).

The Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs was established in 1979, and in 1986 it was replaced by the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA), strategically located in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. The institutionalisation of the OMA, which later became Bureau of Multicultural and Immigration Research (BMIR) and then Bureau of Immigration, Multiculturalism and Population Research (BIMPR), along with various State Ethnic Communities Councils in the 1980s, was to play a major role in the development of a research culture around issues of migration and race in Australia (Foster & Stockley 1988). This coincided with the flourishing of ethnic media services and the establishment of the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) in 1978 (with a TV network being added to radio transmissions in 1986) and the rapid growth of journalism and communication disciplines within Australian Universities.

But upon the election of the conservative Howard government in 1996 the OMA & BMIR were abolished and incorporated into the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIAC 2007). In addition, the Immigration and Citizenship portfolios were converged with Indigenous affairs portfolios. This move was not particularly successful, and touched a very sensitive nerve about the positioning of government programs for Indigenous Australians, and policies of immigration and Multiculturalism. While it is recognised that cultural diversity implies the inclusion of Indigenous culture, there remains particular sensitivity within Indigenous communities to the merger of programs and procedures involving the 'First Australians' with those aimed at immigrants.

It could be argued that the role of Immigration policy and management were never so controversial as they were during the nearly 11.5-year tenure of the Howard government. Along with the OMA, many key programs promoting ethnic diversity were abolished, and there was gradual shift from a policy emphasis on ethnic 'diversity' to 'harmony', and ultimately a revival of the language of 'integration' (DIAC 2007). The 1999 policy, A New Agenda for Multicultural Australia, represented the most overt government promotion away from Multiculturalism, couched in a discourse of 'inclusiveness' and 'harmony', and suggesting that previous policy had promoted 'divisiveness'. Significantly, following the attacks of September 11 2001, there was a major tightening and sharpening of immigration policy, particularly towards refugees from Islamic countries. Controversy swirled, and media coverage heightened, around the detention of 'illegal' immigrants from within this group as the so-called 'War on Terror' continued.

The election of the Rudd Labor Government in November 2007 officially put Multiculturalism back on the political agenda (Ferguson 2008). But despite a symbolic apology to Indigenous Australians,

and the re-incorporation of the word 'multicultural' into ministerial portfolios and policies, there has so far been little emphasis on reviving the strong 1980s focus on Multiculturalism.

So, it is this changing policy environment on which Australian journalists and media organizations have both reported upon, and played an important part in constructing, for news audiences. Journalism has played a central role in framing public discourse about issues of diversity and has at times, been a key driver in the development of government policy. Subsequently, journalism and media studies academics have analysed and critiqued the role that journalists have played in constructing and representing news about issues of cultural diversity. This paper analyses the body of research captured by the Reporting Diversity Database to provide baseline information about the field, its conditions and its outcomes.

The Reporting Diversity Project

Before embarking on our analyses of Australian journalism and diversity research, it is essential to acknowledge the methodological approach taken in the development of the Reporting Diversity database on which this paper is based.

The database was developed as one element of the federally-funded, cross-institutional research project originally named Journalism in Multicultural Australia which was funded in August 2005 by the Department of Immigration and Aboriginal Affairs (DIAC) to explore several dimensions of the Australian media's coverage of Multiculturalism, and to develop resources for journalism professionals and tertiary educators. Reflecting a shift in Government policy, it was re-funded in March 2007 as 'Reporting Diversity and Integration' – the word 'multicultural' was removed, in line with the government's abandonment of Multiculturalism as a policy, and replaced with the contentious word 'integration'. A third stage of the project was funded in May this year by the new Labor Rudd Government and it is now known simply as Reporting Diversity.

The aim of the project was to raise the awareness of the challenges of reporting on multicultural affairs and to provide educational materials suitable for tertiary journalism courses with a view to elevating the quality of reportage and enhancing community harmony. Through the project, in addition to researching media output, we are developing and piloting a set of curriculum and professional resources that will inform current and future journalists on the reporting of multicultural issues and events. Ironically, much of the journalistic output identified by researchers on the project as problematic was driven by Government policies and politics surrounding issues of race and migration. So, this project could be perceived as having been originally funded as a band-aid to cover the wounds allowed to fester by the project funder. Despite this somewhat paradoxical underpinning, the project has produced rich resources which, in practice, over time, we hope will help counter racist and culturally incompetent reporting.

Methodology

A major output of this project has been The Reporting Diversity database, which is freely available online, and has been a focus of expansion through each project phase. The researchers working on the database were instructed to locate scholarly research which pertained to journalism practice and education in conjunction with key words including 'Multiculturalism', 'cultural diversity', 'ethnicity', 'race' and 'racism'. A range of academic online library databases was searched for relevant material, as were University, Government, media and other institutional library catalogues. Community and media reference groups informing the Reporting Diversity project were also asked to contribute resources. The online database contains over 300 entries, focussed primarily on Australian research or research relevant to Australian journalism practice and journalism education. While the main focus of the research was on literature originating in Australia or focussing on Australian experiences, relevant material from the UK, Asia, the US, South Africa and Europe was also captured for international context. While contemporary research was the mainstay, a broad-

sweep approach was adopted, thereby allowing for historical grounding. Despite significant tensions and sensitivities with researching both Indigenous Australians and ‘ethnic minorities’, research of both multicultural and Indigenous media representation and reporting has shared underlying theoretical perspectives and applications (Curthoys 2000). As a result, the ‘Reporting Diversity’ database includes publications and resources that are relevant to both strands of reporting and research.

In this paper, we use the database as an artefact of the body of Australian research examining issues of reporting multicultural affairs. Historical research methodologies have been employed to organise, mine and analyse the database for this paper. We consider this research in the context of four separate dimensions – time, political and social context, theoretical perspective and dominant research methods. We wanted to not only provide an overview of research on news media reporting of cultural diversity issues, but to track the changes over time in the output of researchers in the field and their shifting interpretations of journalistic reporting of these issues. Initially the database was sifted to isolate academic and scholarly research about journalism and cultural diversity. But our research did not seek to examine the history of journalism in Australia (see, for instance Mayer 1964; Henningham 1986; Griffin-Foley 2006, 2007). Furthermore, while the database contains examples of contemporary best-practice journalism and journalism about some of this research, we have limited this analysis to scholarly publications dealing specifically with journalism and cultural diversity. These parameters thereby eliminated most generic journalism texts, several important journal articles about the ‘state of the field’ and the ‘future of the field’ and excluded training manuals contained within the database.

Once we had collected all relevant academic articles, we further narrowed our corpus to those publications of Australian origin or about Australian practice. These publications were then ordered chronologically with a view to establishing research patterns, theoretical and methodological priorities, decade-by-decade. We identified the following terms that have focussed research in the study of reporting of issues relating to diversity: Multiculturalism, racism, ethnicity, cultural diversity, Muslims/Islam; Indigenous (See Table 2). It is from this collection of research outputs referencing Multiculturalism that we have identified exemplar works for more detailed analysis. An analysis of the database entries on journalism and cultural diversity specifically referencing the words multicultural or Multiculturalism (database descriptors) identified 24 relevant publications (see Table 1). There were 10 publications in seven years identified in the Pre-Howard era (1989–1996) representing an output of 1.4/year. There were 14 publications produced in the period 1997–2007 (14/10 yrs) which also equates to 1.4/year. But four of the publications in the later period sprang from the projects Journalism in Multicultural Australia and Reporting Diversity during 2005–2007. If the outputs from these projects are removed from the analysis, the annual publication rate of research into journalism and Multiculturalism during the Howard years reduces to one per year.

Theoretical traditions in ‘Reporting Diversity’ research

Academic research investigating reporting of racism, Multiculturalism and cultural diversity by Australian journalists has a short history – reflecting both the late entry of journalism studies to the academy and the relatively slow development of media coverage of the issues. Despite this short history, the Reporting Diversity database demonstrates a growing body of academic investigation into the reporting of diversity in the Australian media. While systematic reviews of the literature have been conducted in United States and Great Britain (e.g. Cottle 1992, 2000; Wilson & Gutierrez 2003), there have been few systematic reviews of this literature in an Australian context (one exception is an annotated bibliography produced by BIMPR in 1995). While Australian researchers have brought diverse theoretical and methodological traditions to this area of study, our analysis of the database has identified two main strands of research: racism and representation; and journalism education and practice.

Racism and representation

The intellectual roots of diversity and journalism research can be traced back to European and North American studies of race and racism; indeed, racism remains the dominant theoretical prism through which reporting of diversity has been analysed (Ferguson 1998; Fredrickson 2002). This influence can be seen in studies on the psychological concept of racism and prejudice (Allport 1954). United States' studies of racism in the press were influential to some Australian research, but tended to come from a more quantitative psychological tradition, particularly methodological traditions of quantitative surveys and content analysis (e. g. Henningham 1994). Van Dijk's (1991; 2000) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach (which emanates from structural linguistics and seeks to identify patterns of racist discourse in texts) provided an empirical approach to studying racist texts, and this tradition is employed by some contemporary media studies researchers (Wetherell and Potter 1992; Teo 2000).

Several key Australian researchers (e.g. Bell 1992, 1997, Jakubowicz et al. 1994) have been influenced by structuralist analyses of society and post-structuralist theories of ideology and racism. We can see the theoretical traditions of the research field in the work of Galtung and Ruge's (1965) study of international news flows and news values; Said's (1978,1997) theory of Orientalism; and Stanley Cohen's (1981; Cohen & Young 1981; Ericson, Baranak & Chan 1987) sociological study of deviance. Of particular significance for future Australian studies of racism and the media were Stuart Hall and the Birmingham school's (1973; 1990) influential works regarding racism and media ideologies. A large proportion of the studies housed in the database find that journalists reflect racist ideologies and systemic racism (see, for example; Jakubowicz 1994; McKay 1993; Adams 1997; Loo 1994; Louw & Loo 1997; Manning 2004).

Another strand of research interest was situated within the field of cultural studies (Ang 1993; Muecke 1992; Cunningham and Sinclair 2000), with the influence of Whiteness studies evident in the work of some researchers of the Australian media in the late 1990s/2000s (Perera 1999; Gale 2000). A number of critical and cultural theorists have challenged the explanatory power of individual or even systemic 'racism' as a theoretical underpinning for understanding media representation of racialised communities in Australia's news media. Ghassan Hage's (1998) influential work challenged journalists, activists and media researchers to question notions of 'tolerance' versus 'racism'. The legacy of these debates can be seen in the contemporary studies examined in this paper.

Journalism education and practice

The other major research approach flows from examinations of journalism and the journalism profession (Deuze 2001). In an Australian context, early studies included work by Henningham (1986) who examined the culture and practices of journalism. These studies used methods including survey research, ethnographic approaches and textual analysis of media texts to both critique journalism practice (see for e.g. Loo 1994; Meadows 1990; 1995; Cottle 1993, 1997; Forde 2005; Green 2004; Coleman & Wilkins 2004; Richards 1993; Posetti 2008;) and to recommend better journalism practice (Dreher 2003; O'Donnell 2003; Posetti 2007). This branch of research also led to research on journalism ethics in connection with reporting cultural diversity (see for e.g. Hage, 2003) and the development of a series of guidelines for both media practitioners and journalism educators (Eggerking & Plater 1992; Sheridan-Burns 1999; HREOC 1997; APC 2001; Stockwell & Scott 2000, 2001). The 'Reporting Diversity' bibliographical database contains a unique compilation of these guidelines, which are designed to provide reporters, journalism academics and student-journalists with instructive teaching modules and quick access to easily digestible tips and tools for covering sensitive issues connected to cultural diversity.

In the aftermath of September 11th, terrorism and national security became synonymous with issues of cultural diversity, amplifying the 'politics of fear' that dominated during the Howard years, generating media coverage of Islam and Muslims that conflated ethnicity and religious practice with

crime, oppression and terrorism. Perceptions of problematic journalism on these themes sparked an outpouring of research in this field, examining media reporting of terrorism, Islam, Muslim women, immigration and refugees (e.g. Manning 2006; Briskey 2002; Poynting 2004, 2006; Gale 2004; Phillips & Tapsall 2006, 2007, 2008; Green, Richards & Bowd 2006; Posetti 2007, 2008) This research largely criticised reporting of these groups as narrow, shallow, xenophobic and, at times, racist. But it also highlighted the sociological, structural and industry realities that challenged journalistic practice (Perera & Pugliese 1997; Posetti 2007).

Through the Decades: Shifts In Research Emphases Over Time

Our examination of Australian research pertaining to journalism and cultural diversity over four decades considered this large body of research in the context of four separate dimensions – time, political and social context, theoretical perspective and dominant research methods. Within each period highlighted for analysis, we will also identify a number of significant research outputs and authors as exemplars of key Australian research on Multiculturalism/cultural diversity.

1960s–1970s

The racist White Australia policy faded and was ultimately dismantled by the Whitlam Labor and Fraser Liberal governments of the 1970's against a backdrop of strengthening Aboriginal activism centred on land rights. And, with the Vietnam War, came the arrival of so-called 'boat people' from Indochina to Australia's shores in significant numbers. These issues – Asian Immigration and Indigenous rights — featured prominently in news coverage, representing a polarised nation, and gave birth to notions of cultural pluralism. There was, however, very little journalism research in Australia, and negligible interest in reporting of the concept of ethnic diversity during these decades. A notable exception was the Galbally Report into services to migrant communities (Galbally 1978), which included a chapter on media as a valuable resource to migrant communities, but did not examine the representation of migrant communities in the media.

1980s

In this decade there was a significant increase in research on journalism and cultural diversity in Australia as a reflection of government policy on Multiculturalism and the influences of such on the news media (see for e.g. Kadar 1988). This flourishing in research in the field was also ultimately supported by Federal Government funding under the Hawke Labor Government (1983–1991) and continued by the Keating Labor Government (1991–1996). While the federal policy of Multiculturalism was developed in the early 1980s, this did not translate into media research until the end of this decade. The establishment of the BIR/BIMPR and the OMA provided an impetus for research in this field through funding which reflected the institutionalisation of multicultural policies.

The 1980s saw the first systematic studies of Australia's journalism profession. Pioneering research by the journalism academic John Henningham (1986a, 1986b; 1994) employed the quantitative methods of content analysis and survey research to examine how journalists' 'attitudes' towards ethnic minorities impacted on their professional practice (see also Allison 1986).

Several studies of Multiculturalism and its interaction with journalism and media were funded by the Federal Government during this period. Bell's (1992) critical Marxist analysis of Multiculturalism and media representation emphasised the importance of the discourse of Multiculturalism in both political and media narratives. Jakubowicz and a team of academics from the University of Technology, Sydney, won a major funding grant for their 'Racism in the media' project in the late 1980s. Putnis examined the construction of multiculturalism through media discourse, and

Exemplar Research Output

Putnis (1989) *Constructing Multiculturalism*

Peter Putnis' deconstruction of multiculturalism as a discourse (1989) was possibly the seminal publication from this decade and we've selected it as one of the exemplars for highlighting in this paper. Now Professor of Communication at the University of Canberra, Putnis' social constructionist analysis of the contested meanings available in the term 'Multiculturalism' — as an emerging political discourse represented in the *Courier Mail* newspaper between 1984 and 1988 — raised some important questions about the term and its function in Australian political debate. In particular, Putnis' study captured the emergence of John Howard as a central figure in the political conflict over multicultural policy that was to continue for the next 20 years.

He concluded that 'the term multiculturalism is a sufficiently vague and richly suggestive 'ism' to be ready fodder for ideological work', arguing that 'multiculturalism as news undercuts multiculturalism as social philosophy or political policy'. It can be shaped and reshaped to serve a variety of political positions. For its protagonists, multiculturalism promotes unity...for its opponents multiculturalism is divisive' (p. 162). The paper, while not attached to a larger research project, remains an important early interrogation of media representation of Multiculturalism as policy, particularly given the longevity of the term, and its resonance in contemporary political debate. Putnis' critical approach to deconstructing popular discourse remains salient for contemporary research into 'slippery' terms such as 'ethnic', 'diversity' and 'harmony' and even 'Australian' (inverted by Howard as 'Un-Australian'), and their availability for political manipulation.

1990s

There was an exponential growth in research on journalism and diversity in the 1990s, mostly drawing on perspectives of racist ideology and racism studies (e.g. Peres da Costa & Fung 1996). It could be said that much of this activity was driven by a growing interest in Indigenous disadvantage, discrimination, rights and reconciliation, following the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADC), land rights issues including the historic Wik and Mabo judgements, and the Stolen Generations inquiry (Goodall 1993; Forde, 1997; Meadows 2001; Ewart 1997; Hippocrates & Meadows 1996; Mickler 1997, 1998; Dunbar 1994).

There was also the entrenchment of multicultural policies under the Keating Labor Government with its emphasis on engagement with Asia (e.g. Carruthers 1995a, 1995b; Pittam & McKay 1993), which was translated into journalism and media studies research through government funding of major research projects such as the Media and Indigenous Australians Project (MIAP) (Eggerking 1996; McGregor 1993; Lawe Davies 1998b; Burns & McKee 1999). A discourse of 'tolerance' began to prevail under the Hawke/Keating governments once Multiculturalism became entrenched (e.g. Adams 1997; Cowlshaw & Morris 1997; Coupe, Jakubowicz & Randall 1992).

This government-driven discourse of Multiculturalism was twinned with the growth of journalism education in Australian universities. There were significant developments in academic study of journalism and the media during the 1990's. The expansion of tertiary journalism and communication courses continued, including the establishment of an MA in Multicultural Reporting at the University of Wollongong which flowed from Eric Loo's focus on Development Journalism research (1993, 1994a, 1994b, 1998). At the same time, the cultural studies field grew and separated from journalism education (MIA 1999). There was some research relevant to journalism and diversity produced from a Culturalist perspective during this period (e.g. Ang 1993; Perera 1999).

But policies and discourses on Multiculturalism moved dramatically upon the election of the conservative Howard Government in 1996. Howard's election saw a shift away from overt support for a multicultural society and towards an emphasis on programs of 'harmony' and 'integration'. Articulated as the 'Culture Wars' and sponsored by Prime Minister Howard and some State

Premiers, the disassembly of the multicultural project was a central part of this discourse. The change of government also brought a number of structural and institutional changes in the governance of Multiculturalism, including the abolition of the OMA and the BIMR which had flow-on effects for research output late in the decade with little available in the database for analysis outside of publications connected to the Hansonism flashpoint discussed below. There were also a number of critical analyses of racist journalism practice during this period (Cottle 2000, 1994, 1993; Meadows 1990, 1995; Bell 1992; Kaucher 1995; Lawe Davies 1998a).

Flashpoint: Hansonism 1996

The most significant media flashpoint of the 90s was the election of the racist Right-wing politician, Pauline Hanson, to the Federal Parliament in the Howard landslide of 1996. Disendorsed by Howard's Liberal Party for her public airing of racist views on Aborigines and immigrants, Hanson won her seat decisively and she had a disproportionate influence on national politics, while also attracting disproportionate media coverage (Kingston 1999). Known as 'Hansonism', the media and public hysteria gave rise to extensive reporting of 'Australia's racist underbelly' (Jakubowicz 1997; Adams 1997; Bell 1997; Blood and Lee 1997; Pugliese & Perera 1997; Lewis 1997). And, while the Howard Government effectively appropriated Hanson's racist policies, before aiding a political funding investigation which ultimately saw her gaoled, the Hanson phenomenon gave birth to a large corpus of research examining media hypocrisy in both inflaming and condemning racism (Blood and Lee 1997; Bell 1997; Putnis 1997).

Exemplar Research Outputs

1) Bell (1992) *Multicultural Australia in the Media*. A report to the Office of Multicultural Affairs

OMA commissioned Journalism and media academic Professor Philip Bell to conduct a study to quantify and measure the representation of Multiculturalism in the Australian media. Bell conducted a quantitative content analysis of a wide range of media including newspapers, television news, current affairs and fictional programs, magazines and radio talk-back programs.

From an analysis of Australian newspapers conducted in 1991 and 1992 Bell found that: almost 40% of items reflected negatively on Multiculturalism; ethnicity was mentioned by the press in relation to crime, international news, law and order and arts/culture; ethnic minorities were reported as a source of conflict, as alien and economically disruptive in news coverage. The coverage of issues ignored many potentially important topics and came almost exclusively from the perspective of the Anglo-Australian majority, despite the relative infrequency of explicit racism and ethnocentrism' (Bell 1992, p. ix). Bell also found that multiculturalism was rarely newsworthy for television news. When it featured, stories about ethnic diversity most often showed ethnic groups as a source of conflict. Finally, he found that in 1990s Australia, Indigenous interests had a greater voice than that given to ethnic minorities, and of those, only migrants from Asian countries were at all newsworthy. Bell concluded (p. xi) that: 'The meaning of Multiculturalism in the media appears to be changing towards an empty label signifying cultural diversity of a superficial kind' ..., and that 'The mass media are involved in...the ideological reproduction of racism... they reproduce and maintain the ways by which an ethnically diverse society makes sense of itself and the ways in which the dominant groups define and re-define the less numerous and less powerful'.

Bell's study used quantitative methods, but his conclusions supported his underlying theoretical perspective of the media's role in reproducing the dominant racist ideology (Hall 1978). Bell hoped that his research would provide a model for ongoing study of patterns of coverage given to Multiculturalism in Australia. He recommended the introduction of codes of practice for journalists reporting diversity issues, and the training of journalism students in issues of cultural diversity.

2) The Racism and the media project. Goodall, Jakubowicz et al. (1990); Jakubowicz et al. (1994) *Racism, Ethnicity and the Media*

The Racism and Media project is probably the largest and most significant project undertaken on Australian media and diversity. The project was initiated in 1988, and drew together a large, interdisciplinary team of researchers with funds from the University of Technology, Sydney, and continued with the support of the Human Rights Commission, the OMA and external national competitive grants funding through the Australian Research Grants Scheme (ARC). There was also a 'Youth Media and Multiculturalism' project funded by OMA during this period (See Strahan 1990; OMA 1990).

The first significant output was the report to the OMA: 'Racism, cultural pluralism and the media' (Goodall, Jakubowicz et al. 1990), but the work of the Racism and Media research group was brought together in *Racism, Ethnicity and the Media*, published in 1994, with Jakubowicz the lead author. This work examined 'newsworld' from an ideological perspective. The book starts with an assumption of media power over ideology, and examines the production, content and audience responses of a range of media genres concerning cultural minorities in Australia.

The book was written at the height of the prominence of discourses of Multiculturalism. Yet Jakubowicz et al. challenged the perception that Australia was a fundamentally tolerant society via their large-scale analysis of the media — from television and radio to women's magazines and daily newspapers. The group concluded that the Australian news media did not accurately reflect the diversity of the society on which it reports, arguing that '...the media often present a distorted and at times racist image of Australian society'. The media 'work' on reality, constructing narratives which play a vital role in how we see ourselves and others. As such, ethnic minorities were portrayed by journalists as an underlying source of 'threat' and were seen as problematic for Australian society. Most importantly, the Racism and the Media project reported that some in the Australian media denied structural racism existed in Australia.

The project recommended that the Office of Multicultural Affairs review journalism education curricula in terms of multiculturalism, racism and ethnicity, review industry codes of practice, encourage the skills of minority ethnic groups in using the media, and encourage recruitment of a multicultural (media) workforce. While the race debate in Australia has become more potent and urgent in the intervening years, the ideas presented in this book remain the most quoted, and remain relevant as core themes in current analyses.

2000s

This was the Howard decade. The dogged politician with a disdain for 'Political Correctness', which resonated with a community given license to express racist sentiments through his tacit support of Hansonism (Perera & Pugleise 1997), celebrated 10 years in office in 2006.

Flashpoint: September 11th 2001

The major flashpoint during this decade was September 11. In the aftermath of the 2001 attacks, terrorism and national security became synonymous with issues of ethnic diversity. And in this climate of insecurity — the 'politics of fear' dominated during the Howard years, generating media coverage of Islam and Muslims that conflated ethnicity and religious practice with crime, oppression and terrorism. Perceptions of problematic journalism on these themes sparked an outpouring of research in the field, examining media reporting of terrorism, immigration and refugees.

Major news stories on the conflict around border control and refugees such as those dubbed 'Children Overboard'; 'Tampa'; 'Siev X' (Slattery 2003); the detention of asylum seekers (Klocker & Dunn 2003; Bishop, 2003) and reports on internal security crackdowns on suspected terrorists, 'Terror Raids' (Phillips & Tapsall 2007), dominated media coverage of cultural diversity. Coverage of the Iraq War was also the focus of research (e.g. Redden 2003; Zaman 2004). The 'politics of fear' and the rebirth of nationalistic pride, highlighted by the discourse of 'Un-Australian' promoted in the media by Howard, also influenced the research of news coverage during this period (Smith &

Phillips 2001). 'Ethnic tension' became a feature of reporting and research, with coverage of gang rape trials connected to 'Lebanese gang' activity and the Cronulla Riots identified as major flashpoints (Poynting & Noble 2003; Poynting, Noble & Tabar 2001; Fitzell 2002).

In this context, there was also a proliferation of research examining media reporting of racialised (particularly Muslim/Islamic) communities. Immigrants and refugees from Islamic countries were almost universally negatively portrayed according to research examining the cultural impact of the 'War on Terror' and its representation in Australian media (Manning 2003; 2004a; 2004b; 2005; 2006a; 2006b; Poynting 2004, 2006; Akbarzadeh & Smith, 2005; Turner 2003; Aly 2007; Phillips and Tapsall 2006, 2008; Posetti 2007, 2008; Green, L 2002, 2003; Richards, Bowd & Green 2007, 2008; Maconald 2006; Padgett & Allen 2003).

Two major reports on ethnic diversity were produced by SBS during this period (Ang *et al.* 2002, 2006) with broad applicability to the media. And there was also a research emphasis on media audiences and ethnic and Indigenous producers and consumers of media (e.g. Hartley 1997). There are studies of racist politics and the media (e.g. Hage 2003) but we also see a reflection of the 'anti-political correctness' discourse (e.g. Sheehan 1998) in the media in line with the politically driven popular backlash against social change policies of the Labor era such as Aboriginal Reconciliation and Multiculturalism. Studies critiquing journalism's acceptance of, and dominance by, government control of information and the appropriation of political spin, also feature in the database, in the context of reportage connected to issues of diversity.

Much of the work of communication researchers was brought together in the Media International Australia special edition of 2003, 'Media and Society Post September 11'. This paper cannot do justice to the extensive breadth of research in this area, but we have identified three diverse research outputs that reflect the nature of conducting research in the post-9/11 environment.

Exemplar Outputs

1) McCausland, Anti-discrimination Board of NSW (2003) *Race for the Headlines*

Probably the most controversial and overtly politicized piece of research about the reporting of cultural diversity in Australia was the report commissioned by the NSW Anti-discrimination Board and published in 2003 – *Race for the Headlines: racism and media discourse*. In the early 1990s, Bell, Goodall and Jakubowicz all decisively concluded that news media contributed to perpetuating racist stereotypes and systemic racism. But in 2003, McCausland's similar findings for the ADB were politically explosive. The reason for this can be found partly in the theoretical perspective of the paper, but most importantly in the discursive climate in which the study was launched.

The report took a discourse analysis approach to studying media reporting of ethnic issues in the post-September 11 era. Drawing heavily on Van Dijk's discourse approach to analysing racism in news texts, the report's author argued that: 'Discourse analysis demonstrates how the social, historical, cultural or political contexts of language influence the content and structures of news reports'. Through a textual examination of 18 months of news media coverage, the author highlighted how a 'new racism' has come to permeate media narratives and how mainstream debates have become racialised.

But McCausland went much further than merely reporting on news texts, drawing causal links between public opinion, political rhetoric and media discourse and making findings about both audience reception and news production. Many of these conclusions were highly critical of the NSW Labor State Government in inflaming and perpetuating racist discourse, particularly towards Muslim immigrants, and alleged an '... unquestioning acceptance of Federal and State government agendas by many in the media'. The report argued that both media and government had drawn links for the public between an international discourse of fear of terrorism, national rhetoric of fear of illegal immigrants, and local discourse of fear of local racially-based crime. So, for example, it

became simple for tabloid newspaper and talkback radio to draw associations between ‘gang rapists’ in Western Sydney and international terrorism.

The report also outlined the regulatory framework that exists in the area of media and race, including racial vilification laws, and highlighted the lack of effective measures within the industry to examine and challenge institutional racism. It argued that it is ‘critical to challenge the everyday discursive practices of the media around the racialisation of debates and the pillorying of racial or ethnic minority communities’ in order to ‘highlight the impacts of institutional racism in the media, and the implications for the entire Australian community’. It recommended a range of responses to deal with this problem, including legislative amendments to the racial vilification act, community education, changes to government policy and effective models to support responsible and balanced reporting.

This report was so controversial, that following an ‘outrage’ within the NSW media and parliament, it was rejected and pulped by the NSW Government after publication. As Andrew Jakubowicz (2003) said: ‘Few government reports are ‘pulped’, see the head of the issuing organization resign and cause the section of the organization that produced them effectively abolished—all within six months of publication. So, there must be something special about this report’ These days this report is difficult to come by, but it remains a confronting, scathing and controversial polemic against the State and media in Australia. It challenges journalism practice and highlights the need for both political leadership and journalism educators to address the way issues of cultural diversity are reported in Australia.

3) Manning ‘Arabic and Muslim people in Sydney’s Daily Newspapers, before and After September 11’, (2003), *Dog Whistle politics* (2004) and *Us and Them* (2006)

Former journalist and media executive Peter Manning is Adjunct Professor in Journalism at the University of Technology, Sydney. Perhaps the controversial nature of Manning’s research underlines its importance. As a journalism ‘insider’, Manning is particularly well placed to provide some reflexive analysis of the newspaper reporting in the post-9/11 era.

Manning’s study of representations of Arabic and Muslim Australians in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Daily Telegraph* newspapers was based on his PhD thesis, in which he conducted a quantitative content analysis of 12,000 articles, and a textual analysis of a selection of those articles. This study covers a two-year period including the twelve months before and after September 11, 2001, incorporating red-flag events such as the Palestinian intifada, the asylum seeker debate, the gang-rape trials of Sydney youths of Lebanese descent, and the second Iraq War.

Manning found that most images of Arabic or Muslim people come from reporting of international news, rather than local. He took Said’s Orientalism as his theoretical perspective, arguing that media reporting of this news paints a portrait of deep and sustained fear of an Oriental ‘other’. He argued that the global impact of September 11 has resulted in the mis-identification and interpretation of criminal events (such as terrorist attacks and gang rapes) as essentially religious ones. This, he claimed, imbued the newspapers’ coverage of Arab and Muslim affairs with an increasingly negative and racist tone. Manning also borrowed the metaphor of the ‘dog whistle’ (a device used by sheep-farmers to issue messages audible only to their dogs), to represent the sort of subliminal, inflammatory meanings of the language used by some journalists. For example, Manning concluded that asylum seekers had been portrayed in the leading print media as ‘tricky’, ‘ungrateful’ and ‘undeserving’, and that this reporting had signalled to news audiences an association with the highly contested term ‘terrorism’.

3) Journalism in Multicultural Australia/Reporting Diversity (Phillips & Tapsall 2006, 2007; Green, Richards, Bowd 2006, 2007; Posetti 2007, 2008)

The Journalism in Multicultural Australia (JMA) (2005–2006) and Reporting Diversity (and Integration) (2007–2008) projects represent one of the largest studies of journalism and

Multiculturalism to date. The projects, which were funded by the Howard Government in an effort to counter the inflammatory affects of problematic media coverage generated by official policy, have, somewhat Ironically, generated multiple research outputs demonstrating just that.

The JMA and Reporting Diversity projects, which birthed the database being examined here, are an interesting case study in themselves. They were funded by the social cohesion program, Living in Harmony, which is situated within the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (a department renamed several times during the Howard era), in response to perceptions of inflammatory coverage of issues pertaining to cultural diversity. The projects were funded to research the reporting of multicultural Australia and develop teaching/training resources to better equip journalism lecturers and students, with a flow-on effect to industry, to respond to the problematic reporting of these increasingly sensitive issues. Of course, the media being examined was being fed and fanned by the politics of race being manipulated by the funding body – the Howard Government. Nevertheless, this first phase of the project has so far produced six scholarly publications on the issues surrounding the reporting of diversity in Australia (Posetti 2007, 2008; Green, Richards, Bowd 2006, 2007; Phillips and Tapsall 2006, 2008) which independently and robustly reported on the issues.

The second phase of the project was more problematic, with the Minister demanding a name change in line with the government's abandonment of the policy of Multiculturalism. It was thus renamed 'Reporting Diversity and Integration'. The researchers on the project, however, chose not to acknowledge the word 'integration' as the website associated with the project www.reportingdiversity.org.au demonstrates. Political interference in the project increased in the lead up to the 2007 Federal Election with departmental representatives blocking a case study of the Dr Mohamed Haneef affair (the bungled arrest of an Australian-based surgeon accused of involvement in the 2007 Edinburgh airport terrorist attack) and attempting to curtail research into a prominent broadcaster favoured by the Howard Government, Alan Jones, who'd been accused of using his radio program to incite violence in the lead up to the Cronulla Riots. Since the change of government, the Haneef case study has been approved and funded and the talkback radio research is being expanded. Meantime, several other scholarly papers on reporting diversity have so far flowed from this second phase of the project.

Conclusion

This paper has examined Australian scholarly research on journalism and Multiculturalism across four decades on the basis of an analysis of the contents of the Reporting Diversity bibliographical database. Trends in research outputs — understood in the context of their theoretical and research perspective, political and policy discourse, and media flashpoints — have been identified along with key research projects and thinkers in the field. Research has both followed shifts in reporting practice and has been influenced by the wider policy context.

This analysis has allowed us to draw some common themes and preliminary conclusions.

There is a long history of highly critical academic inquiry into the way Australian journalists report issues of cultural diversity. A range of quantitative content analyses and textual discourse analyses research methodologies have been used to explore these issues, but racism remains the dominant lens through which reporting of cultural diversity is framed.

Research output across four decades has reflected political discourses, been driven by government policy, and been affected and inspired by media flashpoints. Importantly, we find that research conducted prior to 2001 tended to conclude that journalism misrepresented ethnic minorities *despite* government support, while research conducted in the post-2001 environment overtly linked news media misrepresentation of diversity *with* government policy, ideology and practice.

Yet journalists by and large resist the accusation that their reporting perpetuates individual and systemic racism, and research findings seem to have had little impact on the nature of news

reporting. Periodic recommendations for changes to journalists' professional practice from journalism and media studies academics have been met with deep resistance from media professionals (a finding from Henningham in the 1980s to Forde in 2005).

Despite the findings of media and journalism researchers, discourses of 'diversity' and 'multiculturalism' remain normative ideals for both academics and journalists, but their reporting remains problematic and frequently in contest with journalistic practice, teaching and values. Our study accords with Cottle's (2000, p. 10) conclusion in a British context, that

...media representations of 'race' are a product of social and discursive processes mediated through established cultural forms; they are not a foregone conclusion and they most certainly are not beyond challenge or change.

So our paper opens up wide scope for further work. Journalism education practitioners and researchers have identified a number of interventions in the form of codes of practice, media guides and community and classroom interventions that have begun to redress the failings of Australian journalism in reporting on ethnic diversity. There has been some research examining the effectiveness of these interventions (Dreher 2003) with some, such as O'Donnell (2003) identifying signs of a shifting culture. Most importantly, journalism education, particularly in the tertiary sector, appears to be the appropriate focus of interventions to change professional practice. In the expansion of the project over the next year, we plan to interview the researchers involved in key projects identified within the database to enable critical analysis of journalism and diversity research beyond the final text.

The final stage of the Reporting Diversity project will bring together a comprehensive body of research in conjunction with a set of curriculum modules for journalism educators at the tertiary and professional level, with the intention providing a more critical and robust journalism in Australia.

Table 1 – Research on 'journalism and multiculturalism'

Year	Author	Theme
1989	Putnis, P	Construction of Multiculturalism
1989	Abe, A & Ryan, C	Ethnic press
1991	AGB (Australian Government Publisher)	Youth, Media and Multiculturalism
1992	Bell, P	Media and Multiculturalism
1992	Jacobowicz, A	Media and Multicultural Society in the 90's
1993	Richards, I	Journalism Education and Multiculturalism
1994	Jacobowicz, A & Goodall, H	Racism, media
1994	Loo, E	Development Journalism as a model for Multicultural Reporting
1994	Loo, E	Case Study of a political murder that challenged Multiculturalism
1995	Curruthers, A	Ways of reading cultural difference in the mainstream media
1997	Jacobowicz, A	Hansonism
1997	Bell, P	Hansonism
1997	Mickler, S	Racist Talkback Radio
1998	Lowe Davies, C	SBS Radio – news and multiculturalism
2002	Ang, I., Brand, J. E., Noble, G., & Wilding, D. (2002).	Future of Multiculturalism – SBS

Year	Author	Theme
2002	Smaill, B	SBS TV and Multiculturalism
2004	Poynting, S	Media criminalisation of Arabs and Muslims in a Multicultural society.
2005	Forde, S	Cultural and ethnic diversity in newsrooms
2005	Lawe Davies, C	Role of multicultural radio in enacting diversity
2006	Ang, Brand, Noble, Sternberg	Dealing with the paradox's of Multiculturalism
2006	Dreher, T	Role of media in fuelling racial tensions in multicultural Australia
2006	Green, Richards, Bowd	Reporting Multiculturalism
2006	Phillips, Tapsall	TV news in multicultural Australia
2007	Posetti, J	Coverage of Muslim women in a Multicultural country
2007	Richards, Bowd, Green	Reporting Diversity
2008	Posetti, J	Radio coverage of Muslim women in a multicultural setting
2008	Phillips, Tapsall	TV coverage in multicultural Australia pt 2

Table 2 Summary of Journalism and Diversity

Date	Political and social context	Flashpoints	Theoretical perspectives	Research methods
1960s	Social change	1967 referendum	News flows	Content analysis
1970s	Multiculturalism Feminism Indigenous autonomy – Tent Embassy	1972 Whitlam government 'Vietnamese boatpeople'	Structuralism Marxism Social psychology	Content analysis Survey research Newsroom ethnography
1980s	Racial discrimination laws Mass immigration	Indigenous land rights	Racism Multiculturalism	Content analysis Survey research
1990s	Keating Government Tolerance Reconciliation Howard Government	RCIADC Hanson	Racism Tolerance Journalism practice Discourse Public/community/citizen journalism	Discourse analysis Textual analysis Cultural studies Participatory/action research

Date	Political and social context	Flashpoints	Theoretical perspectives	Research methods
2000s	Howard's 'politics of fear' Terrorism War on Terror Muslim/Middle-Eastern racial tension Religion	9/11 2001 Bali Bombings Cronulla Riots	Ethnic/indigenous public spheres Representation Spectacle Mediatisation Audience reflexivity Spin	Textual analysis Audience ethnography Internet studies

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