

Journalism in Multicultural Australia

Television News 2005

Gail Phillips, Murdoch University

Suellen Tapsall, AIM•UWA Business School Alliance

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1. Introduction¹

During the first half of 2001 a group of researchers at Murdoch University (including Gail Phillips, Chris Smyth, Suellen Tapsall and Andrew Tapsall), joined with Norm Taylor, former head of News and Current Affairs at the ABC, to create a methodology for analysing the shape and substance of television news. A content analysis database was devised and during a one month trial in Perth in June 2001 the prime-time evening television news bulletins of the five networks were collected and analysed in terms of story content; story duration; story placement in the bulletin; and bulletin structure. It was hoped that this trial would pave the way for a broader longitudinal national study comparing news services around the country. Inadvertently the researchers captured what now appears to be a bygone era, a pre- 9/11 benchmark before the 'War on Terror' domination of the national and international news agenda. The Living in Harmony *Journalism in Multicultural Australia* project has provided an opportunity to apply the methodology to an analysis of the amount and nature of reporting on multicultural affairs in Australia's television news services. The original study forms a useful baseline against which to assess multiculturalism in television news. Not only can we assess the types of stories and the ways they are reported; we can also pose questions such as: How much multicultural content is there in news now compared to then? Have there been changes in the sorts of multicultural stories selected and the ways in which they are told? In the post 9/11 world what, if anything, is happening to the public face of multiculturalism as reflected in our television news? .

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2. Literature Review

Television news has been the subject of much media analysis from various critical perspectives (summarized by Cottle (1995: 275-279). Seminal works on the process of news production include those in Britain by the Glasgow University Media Group (1976, 1980) and Schlesinger (1987); and those in North America by Tuchman (1978), Gans (1980), Gitlin (1980), Golding et al (1986), Ericson et al (1987), and Berkowitz (1997). The Centre for Media and Public Affairs tracks the trends in television news reporting in the US through its publication *Media Monitor*.

In this country, Bruce Grundy (1980) compared news around the country over a one-week period in 1975, while Peter Gerdes and Paul Charlier (1985) undertook a comparative content analysis of television news in Sydney in August 1978 and 1983. Both studies pointed to interesting trends in the format, content and approach to television news in this country even though the research is now quite dated.

Other Australian studies focus on specific questions, such as the coverage of politics (P. Bell et al 1982), international news content (Putnis et al, 2000), sources for news (Zawawi,1994; York, 1997; ABA 2001), the use of file-tape (Putnis, 1994), and the role of soft news (John Langer, 1998). Localism has been another area of research interest. Butler's content analysis of news in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane found evidence supporting claims of an east coast prime-time news agenda (1998:31). Collingwood (1997) looked at the trend towards networking and syndication of news and current affairs programming noting the decline in quality of local news and comment. This trend was confirmed in a study of Perth radio news in 2002 by Josephi et al (2005). Turner's (1996) study of Brisbane news and current affairs services on radio and television concluded the ABC was the only significant provider of current affairs radio in the Brisbane market.

As for the media industry's own research, the ABC has carried out content analysis both on specific issues (such as federal and State elections and the national waterfront dispute) and an occasional more general, less empirical look at what the national broadcaster is covering in its radio and television news bulletins. Commercial networks focus attention on audience research, which they keep confidential. Media monitoring organisations collate very basic content topic figures and breakdown bulletins into specific items, available for purchase by their clients.

Possibly the most definitive work in this area remains John Henningham's 1986 study *Looking at Television News*. Henningham's work attracted considerable media attention at the time of publication and, especially in the absence of any ongoing study, was considered a welcome and worthwhile contribution to understanding the industry. It has consequently been used as a touchstone in relation to television news practice by governments, regulators and the industry itself. However it has several limitations in the context of an objective to develop a comprehensive tool to examine what the nation's news services actually deliver:

- the sample period was comparatively brief;
- it was based on one capital city, Melbourne;
- it provided only a synopsis rather than full details of the coding methodology and the results;
- the analysis was limited to issues of content alone, and did not deal with bulletin structure even though issues such as placement in the bulletin and story duration may reveal much about the news management process.

The aim of the original Perth study was to address the various limitations identified in the existing knowledge base about what constitutes news (i.e. what news services actually deliver) by devising a methodology for the forensic dissection of television news bulletins which could be used for ongoing nation-

wide longitudinal testing of the health of Australia's television news services. This same database is ideally suited to the present task of identifying salient characteristics in the reporting on multicultural issues in television news.

How far can an outside observer go in analysing television news? Unless you are part of the story production process you can only surmise what the news gatherers' motives were in telling a particular story in a particular way. However it is possible to describe what is there on the screen and to suggest the interpretations 'with the highest probability of being noticed, processed, and accepted by the most people' (Entman1993:56). As Entman notes,

If the text frame emphasizes in a variety of mutually reinforcing ways that the glass is half full, the evidence of social science suggests that relatively few in the audience will conclude it is half empty. (ibid)

The following analysis applies a multicultural lens to what was on our screens during the survey period. The aim is not to criticise the genre, but to reveal if and how its salient characteristics help or hinder the development of a harmonious community.

3. Method & Design

The original model analysed content according to a number of quantitative and qualitative variables. The purpose of the present study was to capture not just news content, but specifically news content with potential multicultural impact. This would include not just stories relating to culturally and linguistically diverse communities of Australia, but also stories that might be likely to influence public perceptions of those communities, and community harmony in general. Adapted for the purposes of the harmony project, the database captured:

Quantitative data:

- Total bulletin times, and duration and percentages of stories from different categories (these would be compared with the 2001 study where possibly significant changes are noted)
- Duration and percentages of stories with a potential multicultural impact (compared with the 2001 study where possibly significant changes are noted)

Qualitative data:

- What sort of stories featured a multicultural angle, diversity of Australian peoples and/or were likely to impact on community harmony? (e.g. emergencies & disasters; crime; courts & justice; politics; health & medicine, etc.)
- What types of issues were these stories associated with? (e.g 'blood & guts', power & policy, money & work, social issue, etc.)
- How were people of culturally diverse backgrounds portrayed?
- What types of talent were used?
- What tone was adopted in the presentation?
- How did pictures and graphics impact on the overall impact of the story?

The Survey Period

The period surveyed was two weeks (14 sequential days) from November 7-20 2005. The selection of the time period was arbitrary, but in fact coincided with the introduction of the new counter-terrorism laws by the Howard government and the counter-terrorism raids in Sydney and Melbourne. While this could potentially have skewed the results in terms of amount of stories which might impact on community harmony, it also provided the perfect context in which to test reporting of stories reflecting Australia's diverse cultural mix. Subsequent events have shown that the news skew during this fortnight has in fact become an ongoing feature of the nightly television news. Technical problems led to some gaps in recording – for example it was not possible to retrieve the bulletins for Sydney for 7 and 8 November. In the discussion below comparisons between stations are drawn from days when recordings exist for all.

The Networks

The survey looked at the flagship prime-time nightly news bulletins of the three commercial networks (Seven, Nine and Ten) and the two public broadcasting services (the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and the Special Broadcasting Service).

The Locations

In order to provide the opportunity to test whether trends might be nation-wide, or limited to area-specific concerns, the project aimed to analyse a sample that covered large metropolitan, small metropolitan and regional Australia. Sydney was selected as an Eastern States metropolitan centre; Perth was selected because it was a small metropolitan centre and also because the data from the 2001 Perth survey would provide a useful baseline. The Victorian regional town of Shepparton was selected as the third sample to provide an insight into regional television news and also to test whether a diverse population impacted in any way on story selection and treatment. (According to the 2001 census, 10.8% of its population was born overseas, and in 2005 it welcomed 10 African refugee families as the inaugural site for the Federal Government's Regional Humanitarian Settlement Pilot project).

4. Content Analysis

The news environment

The two-week news survey covered the period 7 to 20 November 2005. On the international front, one of Indonesia's most wanted terrorists Azahari blew himself up as he was about to be arrested in Indonesia. Indonesian police also captured three suspects wanted for the October 2005 Bali bomb attacks. Three hotels in Jordan were ripped apart by suicide bombers. Shiite mosques were the target of further suicide bombings in Iraq. Paris was experiencing violent riots as disaffected youth, mostly from African and Arabic backgrounds, protested at their neglect by the Chirac government. The world was attempting to marshal aid in the aftermath of the earthquake which devastated Pakistani Kashmir. World leaders went to Seoul for the APEC summit meeting, which also brought PM John Howard face to face with Singaporean PM Lee as local concerns over the fate of Australian convicted drug-trafficker Van Nguyen were growing in advance of his scheduled execution in a Singapore gaol.

On the domestic front, the first week was dominated by the counter-terrorism raids in Sydney and Melbourne and the arrest of 17 men suspected of plotting a terrorist attack in Australia. The raids coincided with a particularly challenging time for the Howard government which was in the middle of a parliamentary wrangle over its attempt to introduce more stringent anti-terrorism legislation and tougher anti-union laws. Melbourne man Van Nguyen was awaiting the death penalty in Singapore amidst growing public concern. Vivien Solon was being repatriated from the Philippines following revelations of her illegal deportation from Australia. Michelle Leslie, another Australian accused of possessing drugs, this time in Bali, was awaiting the court's verdict. The Baxter detention centre was set alight by inmates. US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld visited Adelaide. The country was experiencing World Cup fever as the Socceroos faced Uruguay. And the world's biggest airliner, the A3-80, paid a visit to Australia.

Bulletin overview

Australia's prime-time evening news services vary in length and time of broadcast. Channels Seven and Nine have a half hour bulletin at 1800, though in Shepparton, Nine has an hour-long bulletin Monday to Friday starting at 1800 with the Melbourne Channel Nine news tacked on to a half hour WIN News regional bulletin. Channel Ten has a one hour bulletin from 1700 to 1800. The ABC half hour evening bulletin is at 1900. SBS evening news is at 1830.

The SBS bulletin is networked without alteration around the nation. As would be expected from its brief ('to provide multilingual and multicultural radio and television services that inform, educate and entertain all Australians, and, in doing so, reflect Australia's multicultural society' (SBS 2002), it has the most international focus and otherwise concentrates on stories of national relevance. The other services take their local branding seriously and on regular newsdays feature a high proportion of locally-generated stories (Table 1).

Table 1: Local content as proportion of total news for each city

Network	Percentage of Stories
Perth ABC	33.68%
Perth Nine	44.67%
Perth Seven	49.49%
Perth Ten	35.33%
Shepparton ABC	25.93%
Shepparton Nine	62.54%
Shepparton Seven	52.15%
Shepparton Ten	37.20%
Sydney ABC	38.65%
Sydney Nine	49.98%
Sydney Seven	56.51%
Sydney Ten	43.93%

It is worth noting that Nine and Seven exceed Ten and the ABC in the amount of local content in their half-hour bulletins – an important part of their branding as services that 'belong' to their host city. The higher proportion of local news in Perth's Seven compared to Nine may be one reason for its consistently stronger performance in that city. Another point of interest is the strong showing of Shepparton's Nine service. This is because it includes the half hour of regional

news which by definition focuses on local stories (this is a marked improvement on the poor state of local content noted by Helen Wilson in 2002 and follows action by the then Australian Broadcasting Authority in 2003 to increase local content in regional centres. See ABA 2004). This will be particularly relevant later on in relation to content with a multicultural focus.

Apart from local content, the rest of the bulletins are composites compiled from each service's network pool of national and international material. This material is either featured without alteration or else edited in order to tailor it to suit the time constraints of the individual bulletin. The proportion of national content is shown in the following table:

Table 2: National content as proportion of total news for each city plus SBS

Network	Percentage of Stories
Perth ABC	43.05%
Perth Nine	34.72%
Perth Seven	31.05%
Perth Ten	38.32%
Shepparton ABC	47.77%
Shepparton Nine	22.31%
Shepparton Seven	29.44%
Shepparton Ten	37.61%
Sydney ABC	36.07%
Sydney Nine	20.57%
Sydney Seven	21.70%
Sydney Ten	32.95%
SBS	30.96%

The ABC is the clear leader in relation to the proportion of national news – a reflection of its traditional concentration on news from Canberra as part of its interpretation of its role as the national broadcaster of record (see for example Petersen1999:60).

The city/service breakdown for international content is shown in Table 3. It is clear that a full two-thirds of the SBS bulletin is devoted to international news, the last third to national content. Ten has a high proportion of international content, essential to fill its hour-long format. The Seven and Nine services in Sydney carry more international news than their sister stations in Shepparton and Perth.

Table 3: International content as proportion of total news for each city plus SBS

Network	Percentage of Stories
Perth ABC	23.27%
Perth Nine	20.61%
Perth Seven	19.46%
Perth Ten	26.34%
Shepparton ABC	26.30%
Shepparton Nine	15.15%
Shepparton Seven	18.41%
Shepparton Ten	25.18%
Sydney ABC	25.28%
Sydney Nine	29.45%
Sydney Seven	21.78%
Sydney Ten	24.75%
SBS	69.04%

It is worth noting that the amount and type of international news featured in Australian bulletins has changed since the original news content study of 2001. Tables 4 and 5 show the Top Ten countries for both 2001 and 2005. In the 2001 survey period the US and the UK were the main sources for international news, including the quirky stories so often used as fillers and mood-lighteners at the end of bulletins. The 2001 UK news was dominated by the General Election and the impending release of the teenage killers of toddler James Bulger. US news in 2001 was focused on the execution of the Oklahoma bomber and the visit to Europe by US President George W. Bush. The main news out of the Middle East in 2001 concerned a suicide bombing in Israel and the failing peace process. Nepal is in the 2001 list because of the massacre of the Nepalese royal family.

Table 4: Top Ten Countries 2001

2001	
Location	Percentage of International News
US	25.12%
UK	13.74%
Israel/Palestine	8.17%
Nepal	6.24%
Indonesia	5.14%
Macedonia	3.15%
Philippines	2.86%
Sweden	2.41%
Japan	2.31%
France	1.91%

In 2005, not only is international news more prominent in the bulletin, but also the 'top 10' of the most featured countries has been transformed because of the impact of the 'War on Terror'. The focus on Indonesia's battle against its own home-grown terrorists culminating in the suicide death of its most wanted suspect Azahari pushes it to the top of the list. Pictures of suicide bombings in Jordan and Iraq and violence on the streets of Paris by disaffected African and Arab youths dominate the screens while the world leaders gather in Seoul for the APEC summit. Australian viewers saw one-third less news from the US, which, though now in second position, nevertheless remains a major source for international news as the major player in the 'War on Terror'. Coverage of news from the UK has almost halved. Traditional findings of the Anglo-centric skew of Australian news have been replaced by a television screen on which terror and non-Anglo nation-states dominate. (Uruguay features prominently because of the Uruguay/Australia World Cup Soccer match.)

Table 5: Top Ten Countries 2005

2005	
Location	Percentage of International News
Indonesia	18.72%
US	16.46%
South Korea	9.58%
Jordan	8.97%
UK	7.79%
Iraq	7.25%
Singapore	6.32%
France	4.02%
Uruguay	2.68%
Israel	2.07%

One final point to note in relation to general content: as the most outlying state, Perth tends to diverge frequently from the agendas followed by the Eastern States' services. As a result, the Eastern States' stations will focus more on Eastern States' news where Perth stations will favour a local story. This means the bulletins in Sydney and Shepparton tend to be more closely aligned with each other than each may be with Perth. Each centre also shows evidence of a wider regional brief. New South Wales may feature a story from Queensland

ignored by the others. Similarly Shepparton may include stories from Adelaide or Tasmania.

Story topic, type and tone

The 2001 study analysed news content according to content and type– in other words the topic and the storytelling convention used. It utilised a system of 20 content categories:

Table 6: Content categories

Arts/Culture	Business/Finance
Consumer Affairs	Crime
Courts/Justice	Education/Schools
Emergencies/Disasters	Environment
Health/Medicine	Leisure/Tourism
Media/Communications	Military/Diplomatic
Personalities/Entertainment	Politics
Religion/Faith	Social Issues
Sports News	Technology/Science
Transport Issues	Work/Industry

These 20 categories were subsequently grouped together into broad story clusters that gave a better sense of the flavour of the news content. These were:

Blood & Guts: Emergencies/Disasters, Courts & Justice and Crime.

Clever Country: Education & Schools and Technology & Science.

Fun & Games: Arts & Culture, Leisure & Tourism, Personalities & Entertainment and Sports News.

Money & Work: Business & Finance and Work & Industry

Power & Policy: Politics, Military & Diplomatic, Media & Communications and Transport Issues

Social Matters: Social Issues, Environment, Health & Medicine, Consumer Affairs and Religion & Faith.

Table 7 shows the 2001 category list in descending order according to numbers of items and percentage of news (because weekend bulletins have a high proportion of sports news which could skew the result, this table is based on weekdays only).

Table 7: 2001 News content by content category (Perth)

2001	
Content Category	Percentage of All News
Courts & Justice	17.50%
Emergencies & Disasters	12.80%
Politics	10.30%
Health & Medicine	9.10%
Military & Diplomatic	8.70%
Crime	8.20%
Business & Finance	7.90%
Social Issues	4.70%
Arts & Culture	3.10%
Consumer Affairs	2.80%
The Environment	2.80%
Work & Industry	2.70%
Personalities & Entertain.	2.60%
Leisure & Tourism	2.30%
Technology & Science	1.40%
Transport Issues	1.00%
Religion & Faith	0.80%
Education & Schools	0.80%
Sports in News	0.60%
Media & Communications	0.60%

The 2001 results confirmed the domination in television news of the visceral over the cerebral. Stories on ‘Courts & Justice’ were the most highly represented in the total ‘all networks news’ coverage. Combined with ‘Crime’ they accounted for over a quarter of all bulletin news content. The second highest content category across all networks was ‘Emergencies & Disasters’. Table 8 shows the same dataset for the 2005 three-city survey. (This table is based on the weekday bulletins from the second week when there was a full set of data for all services),

Table 8: 2005 News content by content category (three cities)

Category	Percentage of All News
Crime	19.45%
Courts and Justice	15.49%
Politics	9.87%
Emergencies and Disasters	8.12%
Work and Industry	6.71%
Military and Diplomatic	5.93%
Health and Medicine	5.26%
Personalities and Entertainment	5.21%
Sports News	5.01%
Business and Finance	4.78%
Leisure & Tourism	2.86%
Social Issues	2.84%
The Environment	2.35%
Transport Issues	2.02%
Arts and Culture	1.03%
Technology and Science	0.86%
Education and Schools	0.78%
Consumer Affairs	0.66%
Religion & Faith	0.54%
Media and Communication	0.24%

Crime is now top of the list, just nudging Courts and Justice into second place, and when combined these categories now account for 34.94% of the total content. Obviously in a week still dominated by the unique event of the counter-terror raids in Sydney and Melbourne of the week before, this may be a deviation from the daily norm. However, even without this content, the 'War on Terror' has resulted in much more of a focus on violence and the threat of violence, both domestically and around the world, than in previous years. Comparing just the 'Top Ten', the news in 2005 is more serious than in 2001.

Table 9 compares the Top Five categories across all stations in the 2001 Perth survey (weekdays only), while Table 10 shows how the Top Five looked in Perth four years later.

Table 9: 2001 Top Five content categories by station (Perth)

2001					
	Perth ABC	Perth Nine	Perth Seven	Perth Ten	SBS
1	Courts and Justice	Courts and Justice	Crime	Courts and Justice	Military and Diplomatic
2	Politics	Emergencies and Disasters	Courts and Justice	Health and Medicine	Courts and Justice
3	Business and Finance	Crime	Emergencies and Disasters	Emergencies and Disasters	Emergencies and Disasters
4	Emergencies and Disasters	Health and Medicine	Health and Medicine	Crime	Politics
5	Crime	Politics	Business and Finance	Politics	Business and Finance

Table 10: 2005 Top Five content categories by station (Perth only)

	Perth ABC	Perth Nine	Perth Seven	Perth Ten	SBS
1	Politics	Crime	Courts and Justice	Crime	Military and Diplomatic
2	Courts and Justice	Courts and Justice	Crime	Courts and Justice	Crime
3	Crime	Work and Industry	Health and Medicine	Personalities and Entertainment	Politics
4	Work and Industry	Social Issues	Work and Industry	Emergencies and Disasters	Courts and Justice
5	Business and Finance	Sports News	Emergencies and Disasters	Work and Industry	Health and Medicine

In 2001, while Courts and Justice featured prominently on all services, the public broadcasters had the strongest focus on Politics while the commercial stations focused more on Crime and Health and Medicine. In 2005, Crime is more prominent in all the news agendas, including those of the public broadcasters. The public broadcasters retain their focus on Politics while the commercial stations focus more on Emergencies and Disasters. The commercial stations also leaven their bulletins with more light content of one sort or another (Sports News, Health and Medicine, Personalities and Entertainment).

The way stories are reported – in other words the storytelling convention that is adopted – adds another dimension to television news. Table 11 shows the total stories by story type for 2001.

Table 11: 2001 Stories by story type (Perth)

2001	
Story Type	Percentage of All News
Blood & Guts	38.50%
Power & Policy	20.60%
Social Matters	19.50%
Money & Work	10.50%
Fun & Games	8.70%
Clever Country	2.10%

The 'Blood & Guts' story type dominated the news content making up 38% of all news that went to air. Table 12 compares the distribution of story types across the stations in 2001.

Table 12: 2001 Breakdown of story type by station (Perth)

2001						
Network	Blood and Guts	Clever Country	Fun and Games	Money and Work	Power and Policy	Social Issues
ABC	34.37%	1.02%	5.39%	18.75%	23.76%	16.70%
Nine	44.11%	1.15%	12.62%	8.28%	12.95%	20.89%
Seven	45.63%	0.67%	9.11%	10.58%	11.60%	22.41%
Ten	37.22%	2.46%	13.28%	8.27%	12.97%	25.80%
SBS	35.29%	1.13%	4.26%	7.83%	35.37%	16.12%

The commercial channels used more 'Blood & Guts' stories, with Seven (45%) the highest, in comparison with the public broadcasters which averaged around 35%. However the public broadcasters dominate the 'Power & Policy' grouping with the ABC (with its concentration on politics) recording double the proportion of the commercial channels for this category, and SBS three times the proportion because of its concentration on 'Military & Diplomatic' items. The 'Clever Country' type grouping attracted the fewest stories - a little over 2% of all news.

In the 2005 survey (Table 13 – based on the weekday bulletins from the second week when there was a full set of data for all services), 'Blood and Guts' still dominates, but now the percentage has risen, constituting 43.06% of total content. Maybe to compensate, the other main difference is the increase in 'Fun and Games' stories from 8.70% to 14.12% of total content. However the data is

skewed by the high figure for Shepparton, where its half hour of local WIN News preceding the Melbourne Nine bulletin tends to focus on lighter local stories.

Table 13: 2005 Stories by story type (three cities)

Story Type	Percentage of All News
Blood and Guts	43.06%
Power and Policy	18.05%
Fun and Games	14.12%
Social Issues	12.43%
Money and Work	11.49%
Clever Country	0.86%

Table 14 shows the 2005 breakdown by stations (based on the weekday bulletins from the second week when there was a full set of data for all services).

Table 14: 2005 Breakdown of story type by station (three cities)

Network	Blood and Guts	Clever Country	Fun and Games	Money and Work	Power and Policy	Social Issues
Perth ABC	35.83%	2.56%	0.51%	18.06%	30.77%	12.26%
Perth Nine	42.62%	0.38%	17.04%	14.51%	9.93%	15.53%
Perth Seven	50.69%		6.28%	13.48%	11.61%	17.94%
Perth Ten	53.22%		14.98%	9.35%	12.77%	9.68%
Shepparton ABC	37.53%	1.72%	9.41%	18.62%	22.44%	10.30%
Shepparton Nine	30.33%	1.75%	26.36%	8.08%	10.91%	22.56%
Shepparton Seven	41.86%	0.43%	25.14%	7.76%	13.39%	11.42%
Shepparton Ten	49.56%	0.24%	20.35%	6.78%	12.45%	10.63%
Sydney ABC	35.52%	2.71%	5.06%	20.64%	24.34%	11.72%
Sydney Nine	46.80%	0.42%	19.43%	10.68%	10.41%	12.25%
Sydney Seven	51.72%		15.38%	12.58%	9.60%	10.71%
Sydney Ten	55.76%		14.15%	7.71%	12.54%	9.84%
SBS	33.87%	0.39%	6.34%	5.74%	46.69%	6.98%

The ABC bulletins have more in common with each other across the cities than the commercial bulletins, in particular the Shepparton commercial services which tend to have more of a focus on 'Fun and Games' and 'Clever Country' and less on 'Blood and Guts' content than the other cities.

The commercial skew towards 'Blood and Guts' persists, as does the public broadcasters' skew towards 'Power and Policy', and the commercial stations have more stories in the 'Fun and Games' category.

SBS has noticeably fewer stories in the 'Blood and Guts' and 'Money and Work' categories, but leads the way with 'Power and Policy' stories.

Comparing the Perth all-station figures across both surveys reveals that the ABC has lifted its 'Blood and Guts' content from 34.37% to 35.83% while 'Power and Policy' is up from 23.76% to 30.77%. Channel Nine now has more 'Fun and Games' stories compared to the first survey (up from 12.62% to 17.04%) while 'Social Issues' is down from 20.89% to 15.53%. Channel Seven has bumped up its 'Blood and Guts' content from 45.63% to 50.69%. 'Money and Work' is also up from 10.58% to 13.48% while 'Social Issues' is down from 22.41% to 17.94%. Channel Ten shows some striking realignments in content, with 'Blood and Guts' up from 37.22% to 53.22% and 'Social Issues' down from 25.80% to 9.68%.

Multicultural implications

In the 2001 study there was no attempt to focus on multicultural stories, which were subsumed within the broader social issues category. National Steering Committee members on the Living in Harmony *Journalism in Multicultural Australia* project suggested this accorded well with perceptions of multiculturalism as an issue in pre- 9/11 2001. Following on from the positivism associated with reporting multiculturalism in the late 1980s/early 1990s (when most major newsrooms had a 'multicultural' roundsperson) and the politically-correct-confronting impact of the One Nation phenomenon in the later 1990s, Australia's cultural diversity was an accepted (while still sometimes uncomfortable) factual non-event (in 2001 news terms). In the 2005 study these stories were tagged so it was possible to extract data relating specifically to the multicultural component. Table 15 compares the amount of multicultural content across all services.

Table 15: Multicultural content – 2005

Network	Percentage of Total Multicultural News Across All Services	Multicultural News as Percentage of Each Station's News
SBS	12.04%	43.51%
Sydney ABC	9.52%	35.98%
Sydney Ten	8.91%	30.05%
Sydney Nine	8.85%	42.72%
Sydney Seven	8.45%	41.94%
Shepparton Ten	7.83%	24.65%
Shepparton ABC	7.75%	29.53%
Perth ABC	7.61%	30.55%
Shepparton Nine	6.15%	18.38%
Perth Ten	6.15%	20.96%
Shepparton Seven	6.02%	28.68%
Perth Nine	5.63%	26.39%
Perth Seven	5.10%	26.98%

The data shows SBS the clear network leader when it comes to the total amount of multicultural news in its bulletins. However, when multicultural news is viewed as a proportion of bulletin length, Sydney Nine and Sydney Seven are close behind. Given that the Ten Network stations and Shepparton Nine have hour-long bulletins, it would be expected that they would have a higher percentage of Multicultural news, but it is clear that the extra 30 minutes does not result in a proportional increase in Multicultural news content.

Tables 16 and 17 compare the breakdown of content categories for multicultural and non-multicultural stories.

Table 16: 2005 Top 5 content categories for multicultural stories

Category	Percentage of All News	Percentage of Multicultural News
Crime	9.43%	31.27%
Courts and Justice	9.24%	30.63%
Military and Diplomatic	3.58%	11.86%
Emergencies and Disasters	2.81%	9.32%
Politics	2.23%	7.40%

Table 17: 2005 Top 5 content categories for non-multicultural stores

Category	Percentage of All News	Percentage of Non-Multicultural News
Crime	7.27%	10.41%
Sports News	7.16%	10.25%
Courts and Justice	6.84%	9.79%
Politics	6.55%	9.38%
Work and Industry	5.85%	8.37%

The multicultural stories are more concentrated in the categories that could be described as ‘serious’ as opposed to ‘lifestyle’ or ‘entertainment’. Crime is the dominant category for multicultural stories and, importantly, represents 31.27% of all multicultural news. Compare this with non-multicultural stories where crime stories constitute 7.27% of all news, and 10.41% of the non-multicultural total. This is an illuminating illustration of the extent to which news is delivering negative messages about culturally diverse individuals and communities.

When we examine story type this trend is even more in evidence. Tables 18 and 19 show the percentages of story types for multicultural and non-multicultural stories.

Table 18: 2005 multicultural stories by story type

Story Type	Percentage of All News	Percentage of Multicultural News
Blood and Guts	21.48%	71.22%
Power and Policy	5.88%	19.50%
Fun and Games	1.31%	4.34%
Social Issues	1.05%	3.49%
Money and Work	0.44%	1.45%

Table 19: 2005 non- multicultural stories by story type

Story Type	Percentage of All News	Percentage of Non-Multicultural News
Blood and Guts	19.00%	27.20%
Fun and Games	15.41%	22.06%
Power and Policy	13.47%	19.28%
Social Issues	11.34%	16.24%
Money and Work	9.98%	14.29%
Clever Country	0.65%	0.93%

The 'Blood and Guts' group dominates in both tables, though it is significant, again, that this story type is featured in 71.22% of the multicultural stories, compared to 27.20% of non-multicultural stories. In other-words, more than two-thirds of all news identifiable as relating to culturally and linguistically diverse communities is negative in aspect. Further, given that many of the stories in the 'Power and Policy' category relate to political aspects of the 'War on Terror', portrayals of CALD communities and individuals of NESB are almost invariably negative. Lighter stories feature less in the multicultural table and the 'clever country' category not at all. Thus the story genre reinforces the negative associations already established in the content categories.

As Akbarzadeh & Smith note in their report on the representation of Islam and Muslims in the Media, 'reporting a negative story does not always mean that it is negative' – it is the language and construction that in the end determines whether it will be perceived as negative'. (2005:14) In this study stories were assessed for tone against a positive/negative scale. The breakdown in Table 20 shows that the multicultural news is concentrated at the most negative end of the scale, with 55.52% of the stories falling on the negative side of neutral compared to 37.51% falling on the positive side.

Table 20: 2005 Multicultural stories by tone

Tone	Percentage of All News	Percentage of Multicultural News
9 Highly Positive	0.19%	0.63%
8 Very Positive	1.36%	4.50%
7 Positive	3.28%	10.87%
6 Balanced to Positive	6.49%	21.51%
5 Neutral	2.10%	6.97%
4 Somewhat Negative	5.08%	16.84%
3 Negative	6.38%	21.14%
2 Very Negative	4.47%	14.83%
1 Extremely Negative	0.82%	2.71%

Table 21 shows story impact in relation to likely effect on community harmony and perceptions of specific cultural groups. This table is much simpler than Table 20, in that stories are scaled according to whether they were likely to have an

impact on community harmony (and our perceptions of Australia as a multicultural 'us') that was negative, positive, neutral or reinforced stereotypes. The results show that the Muslim category attracts the most negative portrayals, with 239 stories falling into this category, against 18 which show the community in a positive light. Even given the events of the first week of the survey focusing on the Australian counter-terrorism raids, the 'War on Terror' has resulted in a worldwide obsession with Islam which is now a dominant feature of both international and domestic news. It is interesting that near-neighbours such as Singapore and Indonesia also attract predominantly negative coverage, as does the non-specified 'migrant community' category. The high proportion of positive stories relating to the Vietnamese community reflects the sympathetic coverage of the grief-stricken family and friends of the Melbourne Vietnamese-Australian Van Nguyen in the days leading up to his execution in Singapore for a drug trafficking crime.

Table 21: 2005 Story tone related to specific cultural groups

Community	Harmony Impact	Number of Stories
Afghani	Positive	1
Afghani	Negative	2
Afghani	Reinforces Stereotype	1
African	Negative	7
African	Positive	2
American	Negative	1
Arab	Positive	1
Arab	Negative	5
Asian	Positive	2
Asian	Negative	4
Asian	Reinforces Stereotype	1
Chinese	Negative	2
Ethiopian	Positive	1
Indonesian	Neutral	2
Indonesian	Reinforces Stereotype	12
Indonesian	Negative	22
Iraqi	Reinforces Stereotype	11
Iraqi	Negative	14
Iraqi	Positive	1
Italian	Positive	1
Japanese	Neutral	1
Japanese	Negative	1

Community	Harmony Impact	Number of Stories
Jewish	Positive	3
Lebanese	Negative	5
Lebanese	Reinforces Stereotype	5
Migrant Community	Positive	4
Migrant Community	Negative	30
Migrant Community	Reinforces Stereotype	5
Muslim	Negative	239
Muslim	Reinforces Stereotype	74
Muslim	Neutral	35
Muslim	Positive	18
Nepalese	Reinforces Stereotype	1
Pakistani	Reinforces Stereotype	5
Philippine	Reinforces Stereotype	2
Singaporean	Negative	13
Singaporean	Positive	8
Swedish	Positive	2
Uruguay	Positive	2
Uruguay	Neutral	3
Uruguayan	Positive	1
Vietnamese	Negative	1
Vietnamese	Positive	32

In Tables 22, 23 and 24 the ‘tone types’ of Table 20 are aggregated into three broader categories (‘balanced’, ‘negative’ and ‘positive’) to compare the proportions across all services. This shows an interesting parallel between Sydney ABC and SBS who are at the top of the table in relation to balanced stories, at the bottom of the table in relation to negative stories, and also, perhaps surprisingly, near the bottom of the table in relation to positive stories. In fact Sydney ABC ranks lowest of all services in the positive category with 4.57% compared to Sydney Seven with 30.73% positive content. Shepparton’s Ten service leads the pack in negative coverage, and is at the low end of the scale in relation to balanced and positive stories. By way of contrast, Shepparton’s Nine service, while middle of the range in the balanced and negative categories, is near the top of the table for positive stories. This is discussed further below.

Table 22: 2005 Balanced story tone - station comparison

Network	Percentage of Networks Multicultural News
Sydney ABC	62.88%
SBS	57.28%
Perth ABC	49.90%
Perth Seven	47.95%
Perth Ten	47.86%
Shepparton Seven	44.48%
Sydney Nine	44.06%
Shepparton ABC	43.35%
Perth Nine	39.40%
Shepparton Ten	38.59%
Sydney Seven	35.36%
Sydney Ten	35.35%
Shepparton Nine	31.56%

Table 23: 2005 Negative story tone - station comparison

Network	Percentage of Networks Multicultural News
Shepparton Ten	49.22%
Shepparton Seven	44.88%
Shepparton ABC	44.45%
Perth Seven	43.29%
Perth Nine	43.05%
Sydney Ten	41.80%
Shepparton Nine	41.75%
Perth ABC	41.51%
Perth Ten	38.34%
Sydney Seven	33.92%
SBS	33.37%
Sydney ABC	32.55%
Sydney Nine	25.52%

Table 24: 2005 Positive story tone - station comparison

Network	Percentage of Networks Multicultural News
Sydney Seven	30.73%
Sydney Nine	30.42%
Shepparton Nine	26.69%
Sydney Ten	22.85%
Perth Nine	17.55%
Perth Ten	13.80%
Shepparton ABC	12.20%
Shepparton Ten	12.18%
Shepparton Seven	10.64%
SBS	9.35%
Perth Seven	8.77%
Perth ABC	8.60%
Sydney ABC	4.57%

Table 25 draws out the data relating specifically to the Muslim community.

Table 25: 2005 Muslim community impact by network

Network	Harmony Impact	Number of Stories
SBS	Negative	20
SBS	Neutral	5
SBS	Reinforces Stereotype	3
SBS	Positive	2
Perth ABC	Negative	12
Perth ABC	Reinforces Stereotype	5
Perth ABC	Neutral	4
Perth ABC	Positive	1
Perth Nine	Negative	15
Perth Nine	Reinforces Stereotype	4
Perth Nine	Positive	1
Perth Seven	Negative	15
Perth Seven	Reinforces Stereotype	3
Perth Seven	Neutral	2
Perth Ten	Negative	13
Perth Ten	Neutral	3
Perth Ten	Reinforces Stereotype	3
Perth Ten	Positive	1
Shepparton ABC	Negative	18
Shepparton ABC	Reinforces Stereotype	5
Shepparton ABC	Neutral	3
Shepparton ABC	Positive	1
Shepparton Nine	Negative	16
Shepparton Nine	Reinforces Stereotype	8
Shepparton Nine	Neutral	4
Shepparton Nine	Positive	3
Shepparton Seven	Negative	14
Shepparton Seven	Reinforces Stereotype	7
Shepparton Seven	Neutral	1
Shepparton Seven	Positive	1
Shepparton Ten	Negative	23

Network	Harmony Impact	Number of Stories
Shepparton Ten	Reinforces Stereotype	7
Shepparton Ten	Positive	2
Shepparton Ten	Neutral	1
Sydney ABC	Negative	19
Sydney ABC	Reinforces Stereotype	4
Sydney ABC	Neutral	4
Sydney ABC	Positive	2
Sydney Nine	Negative	20
Sydney Nine	Reinforces Stereotype	7
Sydney Nine	Neutral	2
Sydney Nine	Positive	1
Sydney Seven	Negative	26
Sydney Seven	Reinforces Stereotype	10
Sydney Seven	Neutral	2
Sydney Seven	Positive	1
Sydney Ten	Negative	26
Sydney Ten	Reinforces Stereotype	8
Sydney Ten	Neutral	4
Sydney Ten	Positive	1

The above table clearly demonstrates the predominance of negative stories on all services. The higher figures for Sydney and Shepparton (with its Melbourne composite bulletin) probably reflect the fact that the anti-terror raids were local stories in those centres. Given the nationally-networked SBS bulletin comes out of Sydney, this may also explain why the proportion of negative stories is more in line with the Eastern states centres than with Perth.

The table also confirms what has already been noted above, that the highest number of positive stories was found on the Shepparton Nine service. In fact, during the survey period the local WIN regional news was the main repository for stories which actively promoted multicultural harmony. The bulletin of 7 November features the visit of the Iraqi ambassador to Shepparton to talk to new Iraqi migrants about the issues they face as recent migrants such as replacing documents lost when they fled Iraq. The Iraqi men who make up the audience

are pictured sitting on the floor relaxed and chatting. On 17 November, WIN News features a story about a pilot Settlement Project set up to ease the transition for new migrants from the Congo. The first intake, described as former schoolteachers and their families, are introduced with local community groups, churches and TAFE featured as welcoming them into their midst. On November 8, the same day that the major news services were focused on the dramatic counter-terrorism raids in Melbourne and Sydney, Shepparton contained no references at all to these events, and in fact carried a very positive story about the launch of a local Migrant Experience Centre at Bonegilla. Interviewees talk about it as a celebration of the local cultural heritage. The contrast with the tone and content of the stories on the night raids of the homes of Muslim people could not be more stark. The regional news agenda takes us back to a pre-9/11 world similar to that in the 2001 news survey where people from diverse cultural backgrounds were not to be feared and where traditional values about diversity and making migrants welcome predominate. Having said this, it is still the case that diversity remains quarantined in a separate zone. In the general reporting of regional news the multicultural faces are invisible – the community at large is represented by Anglo faces both as spokespeople and as faces in the crowd. By way of illustration, the news stories featured in the Shepparton WIN bulletin of 15 November present us with Anglo public health experts, educationalists, water experts, politicians, unionists and workers with no noticeable representation of non-Anglo communities in any of the stories.

In summary the analysis of story content, type and tone shows that multicultural news is a minority feature in our news services, it associates non-Anglo individuals and groups disproportionately with crime and violence, and it is overwhelmingly negative in tone. The group which suffers most from this treatment during the period of this survey is the Muslim community.

Having analysed the quantitative data we move on now to the qualitative data to show the impact of story treatment on the representation of multicultural communities.

Story treatment

In analysing television news it is important to appreciate what it is, and what it is not and can never be. The basic characteristic of news is that it 'newsifies' – as Ericson et al note

'In order to make news, journalists must interpret reality and tell stories, as opposed to simply reflecting reality or gathering facts' (1987:9).

And even as they tell their stories they are subject to the constraints of the medium in which they are working so that 'The result is not the whole truth but truth reduced to the genre capacities of the newspaper article or broadcast news item.' (ibid).

Television news tells stories with sound and pictures and aims to be both attention-grabbing and entertaining, hitting the heart as well as the head. Like any form of storytelling, news storytelling inevitably conforms to 'archetypal narratives' (Jacobs 1996:383) and narrative patterns (see Bell 1991:147-155).. As former NBC executive Reuven Frank told his staff in a 1963 memo

Every news story should, without any sacrifice of probity or responsibility, display the attributes of fiction, of drama. It should have structure and conflict, problem and denouement, rising action and falling action, a beginning, a middle and an end. These are not only the essentials of drama; they are the essentials of narrative. (cited in Dunn 2005:144-5)

Binary oppositions lie at the heart of good storytelling so the focus inevitably is on contrast – good versus bad, black versus white – with little time for nuances or shades of grey (see Fulton 2005:229). News values determine the selection of stories (see Galtung and Ruge 1965; Golding and Elliott 1979:114-23) and the top six are generally agreed to be: consequence, proximity, conflict, human interest,

novelty, and prominence (Masterton and Patching 1997:15). And the high pressure news routines determine who is most likely to be heard: the easy-to-get-to and usually articulate 'authorized knowers' (Ericson et al 1987:32). This immediately puts minority groups at a disadvantage (van Dijk 2000: 37).

The 'genre capacities' of television news therefore lead to a product that we can expect to be:

- Dramatic
- Eye-catching
- Simple
- Reductionist
- Emotive rather than reflective
- Preferencing human interest over dry analysis
- Favouring the voices of authority rather than the person-in-the-street.

In the following analysis we see how the combined impact of television reporting conventions and routines exacerbates the negativity already introduced through the story selection process.

What types of talent are used?

The time constraints implicit in newsgathering restrict the capacity to research widely for talent, while the medium demands 'good' speakers who are both knowledgeable and articulate. This has two results:

1. the news features predominantly talent who have been groomed for their role. They are articulate, present well, and look authoritative. They are generally the people who have been delegated with the task of acting as spokespeople for their particular group. They understand the conventions, are comfortable in front of the camera and have mastered the '30 second bite'.
2. people who don't present in this way are at a disadvantage. If their

command of English is poor, if they are ungroomed, if they are not in control of their emotions, they represent a distortion of accepted convention which impacts on how the audience may judge them. In a medium where the image is tightly controlled, any hint of anarchy can make audiences feel uneasy.

Multicultural implications

The multicultural communities play by these rules and several of their designated spokespeople appear in the stories in this survey. They are besuited, well groomed, and comfortable mixing with politicians. They are in safe environments such as offices that attest to their status. They are not fazed by cameras and express their views cogently. However others present differently. They are grabbed in the street or in their homes, they may be in casual dress or in robes or veils. Their English may be poor, or heavily accented, or they may not communicate directly with us at all but require subtitles for us to understand what they are saying. All of this relates to occasions when representatives of the communities feature as talent at all. Sometimes they are ignored altogether, reduced to the status of the 'elephant in the room' whom everyone talks about but whose own voice is absent.

The stations show interesting differences in relation to selection of talent. Often where stories are locally sourced the stations will not only devote more time to the story but also draw in a more diverse array of talent. Unfortunately this very localism will often mean the rest of the country won't benefit from such insights, since it is the local enhancements that are most likely to be dropped as individual news editors tailor stories to fit within their own bulletins. For example, the Victorian-based stations provided the most coverage of the Van Nguyen story as he was a local resident. Melbourne audiences therefore got more of an insight into his environment, his family and his friends than audiences in Perth who tended to see the same images of Van Nguyen's face, his grieving mother and the concerned lawyers without the broader context (see for example Seven Shepparton 12 November, not run in the other states). As another example, on

20 November Sydney ABC ran a story about the impact on the local Muslim community of the focus on terror, with community leaders saying they felt they were being intimidated by ASIO. However the story location was a local Muslim community festival marking the end of Ramadan, full of positive images of happy community members smiling and joking, engaging in activities ranging from running foodstalls to praying with none of the ominous suggestions of ‘otherness’ that permeates the ‘terror’ stories. As a local Sydney story it did not get a run elsewhere.

How are people portrayed?

In television news the picture is the story and embeds the main features of good storytelling. This means it will seek to bring out graphically the drama, conflict and emotion inherent in any story – even if this means over-dramatising, over-stressing the conflict and/or exaggerating the emotion. More often than not stories are told in terms of binary oppositions – good versus bad, happy versus sad, ‘us’ versus ‘them’. The people featured in the stories are actors in a mini-drama – each is assigned a role within the plot template that applies.

Multicultural implications

In this survey people from multicultural backgrounds sit predominantly in the bad, sad, mad and ‘them’ categories. They are often linked with illegal or criminal behaviour (the alleged Muslim Australian terrorists; the Indian-Australian wife-murderer in Perth; the Vietnamese Australian convicted drug-trafficker Van Nguyen). They are the victims of tragedy (the Philippine Australian and illegal deportee Vivian Solon; the bereaved parents of the missing toddler in Sydney). However most striking of all are the ways in which people from culturally diverse backgrounds are identified as ‘them’ rather than ‘us’. This is done in a variety of ways.

1. They dress differently, often appearing in non-Western dress. This is in contrast to the authority figures they are usually in conflict with who appear splendidly uniformed or besuited. Politicians, the military and the

police often have the Australian flag flying alongside them which reinforces the schism between mainstream Australia and the 'other'. The powerful messages sent by clothing can be appreciated by the converse situation represented by Michelle Leslie who adopted Muslim dress in an attempt to gain the court's sympathy during her trial for drug possession in Indonesia.

2. They talk differently. They speak in accented English or else in foreign languages which require subtitles for the mainstream audience to understand. The impact this has can be appreciated by our reaction to Abdul Nacer Benbrika who in the 14 November stories on the counter-terrorism arrests communicates with us only through a chilling transcription of a bugged conversation in which he makes threats about causing 'maximum damage' (all stations). The lack of any definitive information, background or commentary to set him into context makes his words all the more frightening.
3. Sometimes they don't have a voice at all but communicate with us only through intermediaries. The accused terrorists, who appear as a succession of blurred faces or sullen court sketches, speak through their lawyers; Vivian Solon is a silent image whose feelings and thoughts are relayed via designated representatives; Van Nguyen, locked in a Singapore gaol, couldn't be expected to speak for himself, but even his mother is silent, relying on lawyers, clergymen and friends of her son to convey her distress.
4. They behave differently. In contrast to the calm controlled environment of the press conference or staged media event, the people with non-Anglo heritage who we see on the streets are angry, violent or upset, their emotions on full display. They are often inarticulate or not able to speak English at all. They are filmed amidst the normal disarray of their homes where the differences in dress, habits and décor are on display for all to see. We see them in mosques which are quite different from the more familiar environment of Christian worship centres. They engage in religious rituals which, deprived of context and any clear explanation, can

simply appear as strange and alien to the mainstream audience.

While many of these features may be unavoidable when dealing with people from different backgrounds, the news treatment can often make an unfortunate situation worse.

The series of stories on the counter-terror raids on 8 November show the forces of authority pitted against not just the suspects but their families and members of their communities. The cameras dwell on the violent scenes outside the Melbourne courtroom where friends of the accused attack a cameraman. The footage is sometimes allowed to run for several seconds, longer than the usual quick grab, reinforcing the identification of the Muslim community with threatening behaviour.

While many of the news services do not go beyond this image, Channel Nine does encourage a different sort of identification with the community by showing us the raid on one family home. In its coverage of 8 November we hear from the hijabbed sister of one of the suspects and are told of the impact the strain has had on other family members: one pregnant woman has started having contractions while another elderly woman is taken to hospital with chest pains. This introduces a human interest dimension to the story, personalising it in a way which encourages identification with, rather than alienation from, the featured talent.

The power of language

The language used by both talent and reporters adds another dimension to television news. The pictures enable us to watch and listen to the talent, and so form our own opinions about them and what they say. We are as alert to nuance and code as we are in any face-to-face encounter. Meanwhile the newsreaders and reporters use language to explain the stories to us and to ensure we get their point – and the assumed vantage point, because as Dunn notes the newsreader's

mode of address, plus the relations of co-presence, encourage the audience's complicity. As a result the newsreader can be seen as speaking to us and for us, with the implication that 'we' are part of a consensus (and equally, not 'they', so there are inferred others). (2005:148)

Jacobs refers to this as the 'performance' of news whereby 'The anchors serve to "overcode" the text, much in the same way as the music in a horror film signals the impending disaster' (1996:384). Thus nuance and code are equally at work here, so much so that while there is little that can be classified as full blown racism in the nightly bulletins, the language used by both selected talent and news personnel often carries hidden meaning to those in the know – a phenomenon dubbed 'dog whistle journalism' (Poynting & Noble, 2003).

Multicultural implications

The politicians are masters of this kind of 'dog whistle' language. There is an implied sense of 'other' when on 8 November John Howard describes the anti-terror raids as

A splendid example of agencies at a commonwealth and state level working together for a common purpose and that is the protection of the people of Australia. When it comes to the safety of the Australian people and the security of this country there is no room for political manipulation.'(Nine Perth, Shepparton)

The pictures of uniformed police rounding up Muslim suspects reinforce the message that the community sits apart from the mainstream. The next day John Howard affirms: 'Australians of Islamic faith, you are part of our community' (Ten, 9 November), however that same day his backbenchers raise the question of citizenship. Senator Bronwyn Bishop declares:

I think the question of citizenship and the sort of terrorist acts we are now dealing with is one we are going to have to grapple with. (SBS 9 November).

On that same day the Prime Minister's office states that 'citizenship deprivation for those who don't embrace Australian values' is still under active consideration' (ABC Perth). With government backbenchers like Bronwyn Bishop calling for the banning of headscarves at schools as 'part of building a cohesive society' (ABC Perth, Ten Sydney, 9 November), the message appears to be that acceptance in Australian society is fragile and conditional. This is confirmed when Treasurer Peter Costello states on 10 November

If you are somebody who wants to live in an Islamic state governed by Sharia law, you're not going to be happy in Australia... Find somewhere else. There are Islamic states around the world, you know. (Ten, 10 November).

The clear delineation between 'us' and 'them' is evident in the following quote from Prime Minister John Howard, used in the Channel Nine bulletin on 12 November:

There is no singling out, there is no scapegoating. What [the police services] are doing is simply dealing with alleged breaches of Australian law... [Australians of all faiths have a responsibility] to reach out to our fellow Australians who are law-abiding Muslims and say to them you are our friends... [It is the obligation of moderate Muslims] to ensure as best they can with our cooperation that those within their midst who might seek to pervert the minds particularly of the young to a distorted obscene form of Islam are identified and dealt with. [author's emphasis]

The breach is made explicit when Attorney General Phillip Ruddock says on the same day:

People in the Islamic community may think it more important to protect those who are part of their community than to offer assistance in relation to the assistance of the safety and security of the community generally. (ABC)

Another example of the hidden powers of language is the Sydney Channel Seven story on 9 November where a reporter goes onto the streets of Lakemba to get reactions from the local Muslim community to the terror raids and arrests. While the interviewees are of Middle Eastern background, they mostly speak in unaccented English and, with the exception of one woman in a hijab, are dressed in Western garb. However the background pictures of the Lakemba streets feature women in burkhas and men in robes, foregrounding images of otherness. The normality of the speakers is belied by the reporter's comment that 'while the streets out here seem subdued privately there is plenty of aggression'. The reporter says the news crew was threatened by the locals, though we see no evidence of this on the screen. We are then taken to 'streets elsewhere in Sydney' where 'people feel a little differently'. An Anglo-Australian woman expresses her support for John Howard's anti-terror laws, and a selection of predominantly Anglo-Australian commuters attest to their fears for their own safety. The reporter's piece to camera injects a totally different dimension to the story that the pictures tell. We are encouraged to read into them a sense of threat and menace that we don't witness for ourselves. Once we leave Lakemba for presumably the 'normal' Sydney streets the reporter's language pits the broader public against the Lakemba residents.

A Perth story of a man accused of beating his wife to death shows how subtle differences in treatment can convey different messages. The story was run on the ABC, Seven and Ten on 15 November. All three stories feature pictures of the man chatting to court personnel outside the court and it is clear from his appearance that he is from the Indian subcontinent. The ABC report describes the man, James Joseph, as a 'Willetton man', 'father of two', and a 'dedicated

Christian,' not mentioning where he comes from and downplaying the brutality of his crime. Ten refers to him as a 'Perth father' and an 'Indian immigrant'. Seven also makes his provenance explicit, revealing that he 'migrated from India with his wife five years ago'. He is described as an 'obsessively religious Willetton father' and the reporter offers the most detail from the court transcript about what was described as his 'pseudo-Christian beliefs'. The reporter states that Joseph had shown no remorse and still believed 'that beatings were an appropriate way of dealing with his wife'. The Seven version not only identifies Joseph as an immigrant (implying he is not really 'one of us') but attempts to distance him from proper 'Christians' by showing how his actions grew out of misguided and distorted beliefs. None of this is overt – we register it through the undercurrents in the language that is used.

Studio Packaging

Television news is a visual feast. The stories that are relayed are not just graphic representations in themselves, but are presented within a visual format that is intended to be just as eye-catching and arresting. The shorthand telegraphic nature of the news message is even more apparent in the labeling and badging applied to it in the studio presentation. All the surveyed news services feature one or two newsreaders seated at a desk against a background that often serves as an icon for their location (live pictures of Sydney behind the Sydney Seven newsreader; still photos of city buildings behind the Perth Nine newsreader). All services use graphics as a backdrop behind the newsreader, either projected via chroma key or on a plasma screen. These provide a visual introduction to the upcoming story, capturing its essence in an image which can be either a graphic or a still taken from the story, or a graphic incorporating images from the story. The story title acts as a verbal headline, and often additional banners are used to further underscore the storyline. Graphics may not be used for every story - sometimes a banner will be used on its own. These iconic images constitute a library of visual images which are often used repeatedly and serve as a graphic shorthand, clueing the reader in to the type and nature of both the events they describe and the upcoming story.

The most obvious example is the national flag, which is used to remind us of the offshore location of a story (eg 7 November: Seven, Nine and the ABC feature a French flag amongst the flames of a street fire to depict a story on the Paris riots; 10 November: SBS and Nine use the Jordanian flag for a story on the Jordan hotel bombings). Symbols are also popular. Some examples:

- The radioactive symbol is used by Channel Nine for the story about Lucas Heights as a possible terrorist target, 14 November.
- Target rings are used in relation to possible terror attacks (8 November: Nine Perth on Howard's anti-terror laws; 9 November: SBS on Howard calling for calm after terror arrests; 9 November: Seven Sydney on counter-terror court appearances)
- Scales of justice are used for court activity (10 November: SBS on delay of trial of Jack Thomas; 18 November: Seven Perth on Michelle Leslie's release from a Bali gaol).

In addition to the pictures and banner headlines, the colour scheme of the graphics is also of interest. The commercial services tend to favour reds and oranges, while the public broadcasters tend to opt for blues and greens. The vibrant colours tend to underscore the drama, while the cooler colours encourage a more muted response.

Multicultural implications

Because of the role these graphic enhancements play they tend to sum up stories in the most visually arresting way which also provides an emotional reinforcement to the story. They entrench associations which in the case of multicultural stories are almost invariably negative. The dramatic counter-terrorism raids on 8 November provide a good illustration of the graphic at work. Here is what was featured on the Perth news services.

Seven Perth 'Target Australia'

Seven's graphic features an armed military figure in full battlegear, including a face mask, pointing a rifle outwards at the audience. The backdrop features the Australian flag and a gunsight. In the foreground is the headline 'Target Australia' in large letters. The predominant colours are blue and red. The reader is left in no doubt that they – Australia – is under attack, firmly in the sights of the intimidating terrorist figure.

Seven then splits up its two newsreader team to allow one to cross to the other to summarise the events of the day, a departure from the normal routine which underscores the importance of the story. The newsreader stands in front of a bright red background featuring the armed figure with gun and the gunsight from the lead image. The key events of the day are listed under the heading 'The Facts':

- 17 men arrested
- Accused of plotting a holy war
- Stockpiling chemicals
- Alleged one man wanted to be a suicide bomber
- Alleged leader Abdul Nacer Benbrika

The first story carries a banner once again using the 'Target Australia' title and graphic – giving us the reporter's name and an additional story subtitle: 'Terror attack averted'.

Nine Perth 'Attack foiled'.

Channel Nine's graphic features a photo montage from the scene of the Sydney night raid. The top photo features members of the police search squad in white overalls assembled in the street. The bottom photo shows several police in black overalls entering one of the houses. The orange headline borders the top of the graphic, while there is a red streak down one side and an orange flame-like effect at the bottom of the frame.

The graphic introduces a series of stories about the raids. The newsreader's voiceover enumerates the main events of the day, which are visually listed on the screen via another graphic which features the banner 'Terror Raids' and the photograph of a military sharpshooter aiming a weapon out into the audience against a backdrop of a gunsight and over the image of the Australian flag. The figure and the pose is very similar to the one used by Channel Seven. While the blue Channel Nine news globe is the background, the list is a series of red banners cutting across the screen.

17 arrested
Suspect shot
16 month investigation
'Catastrophic attack' averted

Ten Perth 'Terror Raids'

Ten's graphic has in the foreground the handcuffed bare wrists of a man. In the background is a huddle of blue uniformed police. The predominant colours are blue and the flesh-coloured hands. The story begins with a simple blue banner with the Ten News logo and the reporter's name.

ABC Perth 'Police Raids'

The ABC graphic has the chequered police emblem in the foreground and features a police car with uniformed police standing by, based on pictures from the scene of the arrests. The predominant colours are blue and green though there is a smudge of red at the centre of the image. The first story on the Sydney raids is introduced with no further fanfare.

SBS 'Terror raids'

Finally, SBS's graphic features a still image of a group of uniformed police against a backdrop of the Australian flag, the entire image against a muted red background which features a spotlight-type effect. Though the blue of the police uniforms and the flag is the dominant colour, the reddish background and the spotlight add emotive emphasis. The newsreader gives us further details without the aid of further graphics and the first story is introduced with no further fanfare.

On this most dramatic of days the services display approaches that follow the news conventions, but with some telling differences. ABC, SBS and Channel Ten adopt a comparatively low-key approach. There is nothing different about their news format, their headlines are relatively factual, and they use the story banner to let us know the location and/or the reporter's name. Channel Nine employs a minor format change to summarise the story so far, and while it uses colour for dramatic purposes, it keeps its summary neutral apart from the reference to a "catastrophic" attack – the quotation marks indicating these are words taken from the story. Channel Seven goes further than them all in exploiting the dramatic potential of the story. It uses a drastic format change to indicate the importance and unusual nature of the events, and uses red for dramatic effect. Its summary of events contains potentially scary references to 'holy war' and 'suicide bomber' and it uses following story banners to reinforce the message.

5. Conclusion

Societies appear to be subject, every now and then, to periods of moral panic. A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions; ways of coping are evolved or...resorted to; the condition then disappears, submerges or deteriorates and becomes more visible. ...Sometimes the panic passes over and is forgotten, except in folklore and collective memory; at other times it has more serious and long-lasting repercussions and might produce such changes as those in legal and social policy or even in the way the society conceives itself. (Cohen 1987: 9)

Australia is not alone in demonstrating an increased focus on terrorism in its television news. The impact of the 'War on Terror' has skewed news agendas around the globe (as an example the Centre for Media and Public Affairs' *Media Monitor* shows how the trend has been manifested in the US). However the way the stories are told means we are seeing multicultural communities through a particular lens – a textbook example of what van Dijk calls the 'new racism' (2000:39) communicated through the subtle use of language and signs. As Iyengar et al note, 'Television news may be objective, but it is far from neutral. The production of news takes place within boundaries established by official sources and dominant values' (1987:133) and, as this survey demonstrates, the dominant values are resulting in an increased alienation of those perceived to be either un-Australian or less Australian than the rest of us.

While this survey has shown that non-Anglo Australians are almost inevitably represented as 'bad', 'sad', 'mad' or 'other', in the current political climate the focus of the fear has overwhelmingly been Muslim terrorism which has in turn led to a suspicion of all things Muslim. The very nature of television news has helped to entrench the idea of alienation from the purported 'mainstream' with its cameras continually juxtaposing images of authority and rectitude against images representing 'otherness' in terms of dress, environment and behaviour. As Akbarzadeh & Smith note in their analysis of Melbourne's print media, journalists cannot be blamed for negative news (2005:14), and much of the negative taint is caused by the nature of the stories themselves in this particularly violent age. However the framing of television news stories in ways that foreground anger and conflict, drama and threat (what Green has termed the 'emotion bite' rather than the 'sound bite' 2002:8) has served to heighten the negative associations and increase the fearfulness of the viewing public. This domestic climate of fear and distrust is further reinforced by the international acts of violence and terror that appear on our screens each night (Akbarzadeh & Smith:12). While for the Christian-Anglo communities in Australia the fear is directed at the 'enemy within', for the non-Anglo communities in general and the Muslim communities in particular the fear is focused on the broader community itself with the ever-present threat of a backlash that will make them targets in turn.

It is fair to argue that Stanley Cohen's description of a 'moral panic' quoted above exactly fits the state of the world and the nation in the post 9/11 years (see also Killingbeck 2001 on how the television news media can contribute to the creation of a moral panic). The spectre of terrorism looms over our lives and Australia's active participation in the 'War on Terror' has made us particularly fearful of the prospect of a terror attack on our soil. But it is fair to ask as Suzanne Davies does

When political leaders of Western nations call upon "us" to join in the "war against terrorism", whom do they speak for and to? When they implore us to not merely consent to but embrace ever more

intrusive and aggressive policies and tactics within their own constituencies and beyond, do they reflect a common will or their own selective imaginings of who "we" are?' p. 44

The fight against an unseen and unpredictable enemy has brought to the surface the innate distrust that has characterized Australian's view of foreigners since the days of the White Australia policy (see Smith and Phillips 2001) and this distrust permeates our television news.

The data shows some variation in the way different services treat their news. Channel Seven tends towards the most dramatic representation in presentation, tone and language. The public broadcasters SBS and ABC are the most restrained, tending to play down the drama and adopting a more emotionally neutral style. However it is the Shepparton regional news service via WIN News which most focuses on the human interest personalised stories that allow us to see the Muslim community as normal participants in the community's daily life. Given Galtung and Ruge's dictum that 'the less personal the news, the more negative it will be' (1965:83), perhaps the Shepparton example shows us the way ahead. If the television news services can use their storytelling powers to tell more of the whole story they will be doing their bit to ensure the portrait of the nation that we see on our screens each night is a more accurate representation of the real Australia. As Cottle (2000:2) notes, the media's 'crucial role in the public representation of unequal social relations' has a positive as well as a negative side. While the media can on the one hand divide us into "'us" and "them", "insider" and "outsider", "colonizer" and "colonized", "citizen" and "foreigner", "normal" and "deviant", "friend" and "foe", "the west" and "the rest"', they can, on the other, 'serve to affirm social and cultural diversity and, moreover, provide crucial spaces in and through which imposed identities or the interests of others can be resisted, challenged and changed'.

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