UNDERMINING COSMOPOLITANISM:
CYBER-RACISM NARRATIVES IN AUSTRALIA

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ABSTRACT

Cyber-racism is a relatively new and yet increasingly pervasive form of racism that adds another dimension to the proliferation of race hate. Multi-cultural countries such as Australia share a concern for the effective development of online strategies to alleviate this problem. Understanding the connections and disjunctions between cyber-racism, multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism as an ideal and as an everyday practice provides insight into the underlying issues that contribute to the persistence of cyber-racism. Using a narrative approach, this research investigates an Australian Facebook page that has been reported to the Online Hate Prevention Institute (OHPI) as racist. Specifically explored is how the narrative on this Facebook page impacts on cosmopolitanism as a worldview that encourages and sustains productive engagement with cultural difference. While Facebook offers the potential for cosmopolitan engagement, the findings of this research show that the worldview perpetuated on this page is one of cultural exclusion, undermining the prospect of cosmopolitanism in Australia.

Keywords: Cosmopolitanism, cyber-racism, racism, social media, Facebook, narrative

BACKGROUND

Cyber-racism is becoming an increasing concern in multi-cultural countries such as Australia. In 2012–13 about 41% of all complaints received by the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) under the racial discrimination laws were about racism on the Internet (Paradies *et al.* 2014). However, very little research has been conducted in this area in Australia. Research into racism in Australia has focused on many different aspects of offline racism and anti-racism including the construction, prevalence and distribution of racist

attitudes (e.g. Dunn *et al*. 2009; Forrest and Dunn 2006; Forrest and Dunn 2010), the health impacts of racism in Australia (e.g. Paradies and Cunningham 2012; Paradies 2006a), racism aimed at Indigenous Australians (e.g. Ferdinand *et al*. 2012a; Paradies and Cunningham 2009) and other ethnic groups (e.g. Ferdinand *et al*. 2012b; Salleh-Hoddin and Pedersen 2012), but did not extend to cyber-racism. The Cyber-Racism and Community Resilience (CRaCR)[2] project was created to fill this gap. The aim of the project is to develop an understanding about the impact of cyber-racism, how racism is proliferated through social media and which strategies are effective for responding to and limiting the negative impact of cyber-racism in Australia. The CRaCR project research adds to a growing body of international research into cyber-racism studies (e.g. Daniels 2009, 2012, 2015; Tynes and Markoe 2010; Tynes *et al*. 2013).

This paper, which approaches the problem of cyber-racism from an anthropological perspective, uses a narrative approach to report on preliminary doctoral research as part of the CRaCR project. Studies that approach the topic of racism from an anthropological perspective are emerging only in more recent years, according to Gullstead (2004) and Mullings (2005), because anthropologists wanted to distance themselves from biological determinism. Biological determinism focuses on physical characteristics of race as determining racial categories. However, contemporary understandings about race, view race as a socially constructed way of describing differences between people that can include phenotype, genotype, culture and religion (Paradies, 2006b). The rejection, oppression or exploitation of races by the dominant culture of a society or nation is where race changes from a descriptive category to racism, with cyber-racism just one of the many forms of racism that can be experienced at institutional, interpersonal and individual levels (Walton, Priest and Paradies 2013). An anthropological perspective focuses on cultural differences and/or the cultural meaning embedded in the categories of phenotype, genotype culture and religion, and frames this within majority-minority power structures (Mullings 2005). Australian studies of racism that take an anthropological perspective have explored Indigenous racism and anti-racism, multiculturalism, white paranoia, and colour blindness in the offline world (e.g. Cowlishaw 2000, 2004; Hage 2000, 2014; Kowal *et al*. 2013; Kowal 2015; Walton *et al*. 2014) but have not extended to the online world.

This research explores how social media contributes to narratives of cultural difference. As an emerging social media research method, a narrative approach provides an alternative to ethnography when the data being explored is primarily textual. This approach investigates not just the content, but the meaning imbedded in the text in particular contexts. A narrative approach has recently

been used to explore social media narratives associated with online identity and motivation for using social media (e.g. Uimonen 2013, Yang and Brown 2013, Rosa and Santos 2014). However, there seems to be little social media research to date that explores narratives associated with cultural difference. Research in the offline world that explores narratives of cultural difference has explored the difficulties of being understood through narratives across cultures (Mattingly 2008). Mattingly follows the work of Bruner (1991) who has suggested that the value in exploring narratives about cultural difference in the offline world is in understanding how narratives influence the way we view others. The narratives include judgments about who is included or excluded as part of the dominant culture and are contextual and evolving, reflecting culturally and historically constructed themes from everyday life (Bell 2003). While social media reproduces existing everyday narratives it also potentially allows for a wider spread of certain worldviews.

This paper explores how the narrative associated with cultural difference on an Australian Facebook page impacts on cosmopolitanism as an ideal and everyday practice that underpins multiculturalism as a worldview. Cosmopolitanism is an overarching philosophical or ideological concept that encompasses social relations in a complex and culturally diverse world (Jakubowicz 2011). Beck (2002) argues that interaction with cultural difference in multicultural societies is inevitable and that embracing cultural difference is the ideological aim of cosmopolitanism. However, Beck's view has been criticized for failing to recognize the lived experience for many people in the world today (Skrbis 2004; Werbner 2008). People's lived experiences happen at a local level and many argue that cosmopolitanism must be recognised within the context of the local, within existing nation states (Onyx *et al*. 2011; Skrbis 2004; Werbner 2008). Werbner (2008) points out that nation states are autonomous in the way they operate and may have different ways of interacting with cultural difference based on the context in which it is encountered.

A contextually grounded cosmopolitanism acknowledges the way that different cultures are interpreted and engaged with by the dominant culture within nation states. The lived experience of people in multicultural societies demonstrates that 'individuals of different cultures [are] routinely negotiating across difference in order to coexist within a shared social space' in their everyday life (Onyx *et al*. 2011:50). Cosmopolitanism from this perspective can therefore be understood as the 'willingness to accommodate other cultural groups in the larger population' (Calcutt *et al*. 2009:73). This understanding allows for the consideration of different levels of engagement with cultural difference (Onyx *et al*., 2011). The focus of the ideology of cosmopolitanism then shifts from em-

bracing cultural difference to productive engagement with cultural difference within a given context. Exploring how and why productive engagement with cultural difference is encouraged or undermined, gives insight into the reality of social relations in multicultural societies.

On the surface it appears multiculturalism is supported in Australia. Research conducted over the years looking at attitudes to multiculturalism shows a consistently high level of support, with recent surveys showing over 85% of people agreeing that 'multiculturalism has been good for Australia' (Markus 2015: 41). However, there are differing levels of support for engagement with cultural difference. Some believe in an approach that more closely resembles cosmopolitanism as a two way process involving both Australians and migrants productively engaging with cultural differences, while others believe it is solely up to migrants to adapt to Australian culture. At the other end of the spectrum are the 15% who do not support multiculturalism at all.

This variability of attitudes can be understood in the context of Australia's heritage as a white colonial nation that has (to varying degrees) maintained a worldview that privileges people from a white (British) background. Whiteness theorists have different explanations about the mechanisms that lead to such a worldview and others also question the validity of such analyses (see e.g. Niemonen 2010; Hughey and Byrd 2013). However, it is generally accepted in Australia that a white background brings with it highly revered cultural values, such as democracy and freedom and leads to privileges that have become enshrined in the structure (institutions etc.) and psyche of the nation (Hage 2002; Perera 2005). A British (Irish or Scottish) background allows automatic inclusion in the category of white Australian, while migrants and Indigenous Australians with other cultures and practices are generally judged as less civilised and are regarded and treated as inferior. Over time migrants can also be included in the category of white if they are judged as fitting in to the dominant Australian culture (Perera 2005). The degree to which different migrant groups and Indigenous Australians are productively engaged with and accepted is dependent on the political climate and the perceived level of threat to the dominant white Australian culture (Hage 2002; Pedersen *et al.* 2012).

Examining the extent of engagement with cultural difference on an Australian Facebook page gives insight into narratives that promote a specific worldview. With almost 1.5 billion users worldwide and a mission to 'give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected', Facebook has the potential to facilitate the diffusion of a worldview that encourages productive engagement with cultural difference (Facebook 2015a; Statista 2015). Shar-

ing experiences and creating connections on social media platforms such as Facebook could potentially contribute to positive community identity and cultural inclusion. However, Facebook is also a powerful tool for the spread of narratives based on the rejection of some minority cultures from the dominant culture (cyber-racism). The narrative of cultural inclusion and exclusion on the Facebook page examined in this research represents a form of cyber-racism expressed by a small but growing community. It will be argued that this narrative undermines productive engagement with cultural difference by perpetuating a worldview promoting cultural exclusion.

METHODS

This research focuses on an Australian Facebook Community Page, that was reported to the Online Hate Prevention Institute's (OHPI) Fight Against Hate site as having racist content. To satisfy ethics requirements[3] all data has been de-identified and the specific Facebook page examined is referred to here only as 'Facebook Page1'. OHPI is an independent organization whose main aim is to monitor online hate, including racist hate. OHPI encourages people to report content that they believe is racially offensive to the platform (e.g. Facebook) in the first instance (OHPI 2016). If it is not removed, they then encourage people to report it to their reporting tool FightAgainstHate.com, so that they can bring these examples into the public domain (Fight Against Hate 2016). OHPI have provided examples of racist sites for this research that have been reported by the public and not removed. Facebook Page1 is the first page examined in this research.

With over 58,500 likes at the time of this research (which is equivalent to 4.2% of the approximately 13,800,000 current Australian Facebook users (Social Media News 2015)) Facebook Page1 represents a significant group of people. It should be noted that it is not known if all of the people who interact on this page are Australian, but initial investigation shows they most likely make up the majority. It is also difficult to determine the ethnic background, class and age of this group. It seems possible they come from the previously mentioned 15% of people who do not support multiculturalism in Australia but this cannot be verified. People who have liked this page are regarded as followers and may choose to receive all of the posts on this page in their news feed. Posts on this page are made regularly and have a potentially even wider reach with some being shared by over 120,000 people. The aim of community pages such as Facebook Page1 is to build a community of people who 'share similar interests and experiences' (Facebook 2015b) through the posts on the page. The administrators of the page are the authors of the posts, which are usually in the form

of a photo or picture with a short comment either superimposed or above the photo or picture. These posts facilitate a narrative that other people then engage with through, likes, shares and comments. The narrative is shaped and gains momentum through this engagement, thereby building this community.

The analysis featured in this article focuses on the shared narrative of the authors of this page in relation to their worldview about cultural difference and how this worldview is perpetuated. Identifying the shared narrative involves constructing it from posts made on the page, and putting it into context. For the analysis of Facebook Page1 the beginning of the narrative is the start of the research period, May 1st 2015, and the end of the narrative is the end of the research period, October 31st 2015 (inclusive). The posts in between will be used to construct a narrative about Facebook Page1's engagement with cultural difference. Themes are identified based on the question of who is included or excluded on the basis of cultural difference. These themes will also be examined in terms of the context of the worldview of the authors of Facebook Page1 and worldviews present in Australian society.

RESULTS

The Australian Way of Life

According to one of the administrators of Facebook Page1, the overall narrative of this page is about preserving the 'Australian way of life'. The 'About' section claims the page was started on 26th January 1788, which is the date Australia was colonized. This suggests that the authors perceive the Australian way of life as stemming from a white, colonial background, suggesting their worldview is grounded in a history that places precedence on the white hegemonic colonial history of Australia. Critical Race theorists (e.g. Delgado and Stefancic 2012) argue that such worldviews are motived by an interest in enshrining the privileges of the dominant group, in this case white Australians. It can be assumed, therefore, that the authors of the page claim authority on the basis that they represent those white Australians who believe they have the right to protect their existing privileged position.

The authors of the page aim to build a Facebook community that shares a narrative promoting the preservation of a particular privileged white version of the Australian way of life. The analysis of this narrative is based on the identification of posts that fit into two distinct categories. 'Symbolic boundaries', i.e. divisions based on culturally desirable values which are evidenced by specific modes of behaviour as described in the posts, form the basis of

these categories (Voyer 2013). People who accept and adopt the version of the Australian way of life that is promoted in the posts hold culturally desirable values and fit into one category. This includes people who positively comment on, like and share these posts. Conversely, those who are portrayed by the authors as not accepting and adopting their version of the Australian way of life are portrayed as having culturally undesirable values and fit into the other category. This category also includes people who disagree with the narrative put forward on this page.

Inclusion based on desirable cultural values

The first post from Facebook Page1 that I will discuss is an image featuring a person standing with their back to the viewer and set against the backdrop of the sky and clouds. The person's unclothed back is covered with a painting of the Australian flag. Bold, capitalized letters read: 'I SUPPORT OUR TROOPS, I SUPPORT OUR VETERANS. I AM A PATRIOT, I AM AN AUSTRALIAN!!!' This post represents the most prominent desirable cultural value promoted on this page. Patriotism is defined by the authors of Facebook Page1 as vigorously support-ing your country and being prepared to defend it against its enemies, foreign and domestic. Other posts on the page show strong support for veterans and promote the idea that it is patriotic to fight for your country.

This fits in with a narrative that has developed in Australia, especially after Gallipolli (World War I), linking national pride with values associated with war (Jakubowicz and Icduygu 2015). The Australian soldier is revered for hav-ing 'courage, resourcefulness, endurance and intelligent initiative' (Jakubowicz and Icduygu 2015: 69). For the authors of Facebook Page1 these qualities or behaviours demonstrate culturally desirable values that should be encouraged. Anyone who displays or supports these values and supports 'our troops' and 'our veterans' are included in the narrative about the Australian way of life.

This page is updated regularly with posts related to patriotism and supporting Australian troops and veterans. These posts include phrases that promote the relentless pursuit of those who threaten 'their people' and highlight sacrifices made by Australian soldiers so others may live. The Australian Flag is also drawn on in many posts as a symbol of patriotism. These posts are engaged with through comments, likes and shares with many receiving more than a thousand likes and several hundred comments. This engagement works to build the narrative about patriotism and give it impetus.

Other culturally desirable values that are promoted, although less prominent-

ly, include mateship, a love of sport, beer drinking, following Australian law and embracing Australia's diverse landscape. The following post based on the iconic Australian poem 'My Country' by Dorethea McKellar (1908) draws on well-known images and modes of behaviour to add to the narrative about Australian culture:

> *I love a sun smart country*
> *A land where cricket reigns*
> *A land where green and gold singlets*
> *Are adorned with red sauce stains*
> *I love her sense of mateship*
> *I love her diversity*
> *Her beaches and her bulldust*
> *They all spell home for me*

People who embrace these desirable cultural values are also included as part of the narrative about the Australian way of life. Images portraying these values are repeated through posts on the page and comments on the posts that show enthusiasm for the posts further promote this narrative.

Exclusion based on undesirable cultural values

Other posts on this page highlight a narrative that represents an intolerant approach towards anyone who is not prepared to adopt all aspects of their version of the Australian way of life or who pose a threat to that narrative. Posts on the page vilify or ridicule people from backgrounds they believe do not conform to the authors' view of desirable cultural values, particularly those values associated with patriotism. Migrants, especially refugees and those from a Muslim background are the primary targets but Indigenous, Chinese Australians and those who supposedly do not agree with the Facebook Page1's view are also in the firing line.

For example, one post exemplifies the portrayal of Middle Eastern men (refugees and Muslims) as cowardly. The imagery in this post is split in half. The top half shows armed troops (presumably Australian troops deployed overseas) walking through a barren landscape with text that states: 'Go to war, leave women and children in a safe country'. The bottom half of the image portrays a line of men intended to exemplify Middle Eastern, Muslim refugees. They are dressed in casual clothing with several of them smiling and one waving. The text here reads: 'Go to a safe country, leave women and children in a war zone'. The implication in this post is that the men in the bottom half of the image

do not display behaviour associated with patriotism and therefore should not be included in the narrative about the Australian Way of life. Other posts and comments that refer to the men as 'gutless pigs' and that 'every single one of them need bullets' contribute to the suggestion that this purportedly cowardly behaviour is not tolerated in Australia. Other posts draw on patriotic values by attempting to create a dichotomy between homeless servicemen and refuges. The suggestion is that accepting refugees somehow detracts from efforts to address homelessness among servicemen.

Many other posts on this page vilify and ridicule Muslims or anyone who looks like they may be Muslim, based on two main themes. The first is that Muslim cultural practices and values are undesirable and the second is that Muslims pose a terrorist threat to Australia. An example of the first theme is shown in another image posted on Facebook Page1. This image is again split, with the top half featuring a group of angry looking men, shouting and raising their fists. Bold text reads, 'Before bacon'. The bottom half of the image shows a larger group of what looks like party-goers, laughing and having a good time. The text here says, 'After bacon'. The image is ridiculing the Muslim cultural practice of not eating pork. Comments associated with this post suggest that eating bacon should be a prerequisite for living in Australia. This reflects ethno religious preferences based on pork consumption as described by Nelson (1998). Other comments refer to recent pork industry advertising to 'get some pork on your fork' and suggest that Muslims that do this will be more inclined to peace rather than war.

Several posts also generate the threat of terrorism by highlighting terrorist incidents that have involved Muslims in Australia and elsewhere. For example, one post simply features an image of the front page of the Herald Sun (dated January 2015). The cover image is of Man Haron Monis, an Iranian-born Australian citizen who took hostages in a siege at the Lindt Chocolate Café in Sydney on 15 December 2014. Monis is shown in mid-shout, arm raised, with a bold headline reading: 'NO LONE WOLF'. This headline implies that there were other people involved in this siege and that the terrorist threat continues. The fear generated through these posts adds weight to the claim that Muslims should not be included in the narrative about the Australian way of life because of the terrorist threat posed by some Muslims.

In addition, this narrative is strengthened by the implication that all Muslims are terrorists. Another post features only a simple text box that reads: 'If you are old enough to plot a terror attack then you are old enough to face an adult court and be publicly identified.' In at least some of the over 600 comments

related to this post, which is calling for the naming and shaming of an underage Muslim accused of a plotting a terrorist attack in Australia, there is a link made between those who perpetrate the terrorist plot and *all* Muslims. Many refer not just to the young person who committed the act but include others by using terms such as 'they' and 'them' and suggesting 'these people' should be put on a plane and sent back to their country of origin. One of the comments from this post sums up the predominant theme on this page of excluding Muslims on the basis that they pose a terrorist threat. The comment promotes the idea that people from 'that part of the world' should not be given visas because they are born and bred war mongers (terrorists). It suggests their culture should be kept 'where it belongs, in the hell where they live'. The author concludes by saying that they are proud to associate themselves with this racist way of thinking because they want to keep Australia safe. This post was not only shared by the Facebook Page1 community but was liked by over 120,000 people, suggesting that the Facebook Page1 narrative is extending beyond the page itself to the general population of Facebook users.

The themes that justify Muslims being excluded from the dominant Australian culture are similar to views about Muslims already circulating in Australia more generally. Despite Muslims having a long history in Australia that predates European settlement, since the nineteenth century they have been portrayed as undesirable immigrants who pose a threat to Australia and Western cultural values (Salleh-Hoddin & Pedersen 2012). More recent events such as the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the Bali bombings and other local acts of terrorism have exacerbated this portrayal and contributed to Muslims being marginalized by the media and national policies. This has led to a narrative that excludes Muslims from the dominant Australian culture.

The repetition of posts on Facebook Page1 that vilify and ridicule people who have undesirable cultural values and practices builds a narrative that justifies their exclusion from their version of the Australian way of life. Engagement through comments, likes and shares adds momentum to this. Juxtaposed against this are those narratives of inclusion of people who have culturally desirable cultural values and practices. The intolerant and exclusionary worldview that is promoted as the end result of these entwined narratives is justified on the basis that the authors have the authority to decide who is included and excluded as part of the Australian way of life. This worldview is shared by people who regard themselves as part of the Facebook Page1 community and (as previously noted) also extends to the general public through likes and shares, potentially extending this community.

DISCUSSION

Despite some early Internet research making claims of a post-racial digital world, Daniels (2012) points out that whiteness permeates cyber-space. Daniels (2012) argues that race and racism exist in all parts of the Internet, from the technological structures, to the spaces of interaction such as websites, online games and social media, to the laws governing the Internet. Daniels (2012) and Tynes *et al.* (2013) also acknowledge the way that offline racism is reproduced on the Internet. In a review of research into cyber-racism as part of the CRaCR project, Bliuc *et al.* (2016) explain that racism on the Internet acts as both an avenue for strengthening and expanding existing offline racist groups and as an extension of everyday offline racism (Bliuc *et al.* 2016). Cyber-racism shares some characteristics including affirming a unique racial identity which excludes some races, expression of racial superiority and/or negative ideas about the concept of 'otherness' (Bliuc *et al.* 2016, Jakubowicz 2012).

While it is difficult to tell if Facebook Page1 is part of an existing existing racist group, the narrative of vilification, ridicule and exclusion of people based on perceived different cultural values and practices is an extension of everyday offline racism in Australia and therefore an example of cyber-racism. The findings of this research show that the narrative on this page also affirms an identity based on a specific version of the 'Australian way of life'. People with desirable cultural values are included in this identity while those with undesirable cultural values are excluded. Racial superiority is demonstrated through the belief that the authors of the page have the right to decide who is included or excluded in the narrative about the Australian way of life. Some white Australians are included in the narrative but Indigenous Australians, new migrants (primarily refuges and Muslims) and other people who do not agree with their view of Australian values are excluded.

Research in the USA by Bell (2003) shows that such racist narratives or stories are based on already existing historically and culturally constructed themes. Bell's research examined transcripts of interviews with college educated adults who work in the education and human service fields and developed a typology of themes related to racism and counter-racism based on the stories they told. 'People of colour' and a few 'Whites' attested to the ongoing existence of racism and affirmed the long history of racial discrimination in the USA, while the rest of the Whites minimised or denied racism. Bell (2003) argues that these divergent views of racism reflect the different lived experiences of her participants. The 'White' view in particular represents a lack of consideration about how the racist narrative continues in the USA. Bell argues for a greater under-

standing regarding the history of race relations in the USA to facilitate change.

In a similar way to Bell's (2003) findings, the narratives on Facebook Page1 reflect racist views already present in Australian society. Social construction theorists describe the development of racist attitudes in Australia as evolving from 'old racisms' to 'new racisms' (Dunn *et al.* 2005). Old racisms, based on social hierarchy and separatism, stemmed from racist policies and practices that developed after colonisation, such as the disenfranchisement of Indigenous Australians and the White Australia policy (which sought to restrict the flow of immigrants from non-European countries). After relaxing the restrictions on immigration, new racisms evolved emphasizing cultural difference. According to Pedersen *et al.* (2012) one of the primary reasons given for intolerance or prejudice against migrants is that they do not share Australian values. In their quantitative study Pedersen *et al.* (2012:5) point out that in surveyed communities who hosted Middle Eastern migrants 'twenty-nine per cent of participants noted that there was a perception in the Australian community of a conflict between 'Middle Eastern culture' and 'core Australian values' and/ or the concern that Middle-Eastern Australians would not integrate'. People and cultural groups with perceived different cultural values and practices have come to be seen by some as a threat to (predominantly white) national identity.

The exclusion of people based on the perceived threat to Australian national identity posed through the expression of undesirable cultural values is in distinct contrast to cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism as an ideology calls for cultural inclusion. A worldview based on cosmopolitanism recognises the reality that in multicultural societies such as Australia with high levels of immigration, cultural difference is engaged with on a daily basis in many different ways. While this engagement does not necessarily lead to embracing cultural difference as called for by Beck (2002), Onyx *et al.* (2011) and Calcutt *et al.* (2009) suggest that it contributes to a perception that cultural difference is natural. It is then possible to develop of a level of trust and understanding that facilitates cultural acceptance, tolerance and inclusion. This everyday productive engagement with cultural difference potentially contributes to a harmonious culturally diverse society. However, the worldview put forward in the narrative of Facebook Page1 works against a utopian view of cosmopolitanism by promoting a racist worldview based on disapproval and intolerance.

In addition, the narrative on this page goes further than simply reproducing existing everyday racist worldviews. The aim of the authors is to build a community of people who perpetuate this worldview. Miller (2011) argues that one of the most significant impacts of Facebook is in the revival of communities

through the avenue of social media. These communities are built through the ease of interaction on platforms such as Facebook. As part of these communities, people interact and spread ideas through likes, shares and comments. Posts that are liked, shared and commented on by members of the Facebook Page1 community not only show up in their own news feed, but may show up in their friends' news feeds as well (depending on the privacy options selected), and friends of friends, and so on. This potentially increases the number of people who read a post and interact with it exponentially. This explains how at the time of this research one post attracted 120,000 likes despite the number of followers of the page being 58,000. It also explains how the number of followers of Facebook Page1 has since grown (64,200 in January 2016).

The growth of Facebook communities and the perpetuation of worldviews on Facebook may also link to the offline world. Miller (2011) also points out that people do not just exist on Facebook, it is just one of the social networking structures that people are a part of. Miller's ethnographic research in Trinidad shows that Trinidadians have their own unique way of using Facebook that fits in with their everyday lives. Trinidadian people consider their Facebook friends as part of their social network or community–friends on Facebook are often friends in everyday life. Miller also noted that increased interaction on Facebook led to increased interaction offline. In this case what happens on Facebook also flows to offline or everyday social activities.

The connection between Facebook interactions online and everyday interactions may also apply to the narratives put forward in a Facebook community such as Facebook Page1. In a similar way to the Trinidadian case the narratives on Facebook Page1 may extend to people's everyday lives. It could be argued that these narratives reflect and shape narratives in offline communities in a similar way to narratives more generally. Proponents of narrative theory argue that narrative works in a circular fashion – existing narratives reflect a pre-understanding of life and narratives about life change it into a more fully developed understanding of life (Bruner 1990, 1991; Mattingly 2008; Lai 2010). In a similar manner, narratives about cultural difference in a Facebook community such as Facebook Page1 are likely to add to already existing offline every-day racist narratives, therefore strengthening and potentially normalizing them.

The narrative of cultural exclusion on Facebook Page1 not only influences this Facebook community, it may influence other Facebook users and potentially extend to their offline worlds. This narrative not only reproduces existing everyday racist narratives, it extends and strengthens them. Cyber-racism works on Facebook Page1, by setting up a peripheral zone of citizenship in which

some citizens (particularly certain migrants) who do not conform to a specific version of 'the Australian way of life' as characterized in narratives on the page, are excluded from the multicultural ideal which underpins Australia's contemporary engagement with national identity. Racism's persistence in Australian society and its rapid digital evolution into cyber-racism troubles the notion that multiculturalism as a social organizing framework for society can offer safety and inclusion for all citizens. While cosmopolitanism promotes cultural tolerance, acceptance and inclusion, the worldview promoted on Facebook Page1 promotes the opposite view of cultural exclusion. It therefore undermines the prospect of cosmopolitanism in Australia.

CONCLUSION

As part of the Cyber-Racism and Community resilience project this research is motivated by a desire to understand how racism is spread on social media, and the development of strategies to combat cyber-racism. Understanding the narrative on Facebook Page1 and how it is perpetuated gives insight into how such an exclusionary worldview might be countered. If social media can be used to perpetuate an exclusionary worldview, it makes sense that it can also be used to develop and promote alternative worldviews that encourage tolerance and inclusion of cultural difference thereby encouraging cosmopolitanism. Further research as part of this doctoral project will explore social media strategies to counter cyber-racism.

Counter-cyber-racism strategies could also benefit from research that more fully explores the connections between the online world and the offline world of those participating in cyber-racism. Current research validating the connection between people's online social media networks and their offline worlds has been conducted as part of the Global Social Media Impact Study (2016); however, this research is not specifically looking at cyber-racism. The discussion presented here and related to cyber-racism on Facebook Page1 theorises that such a connection is likely because of the reality of peoples' multiple online and offline connections. Further cyber-racism research could benefit by understanding more thoroughly how racism on social media contributes to racism more generally. This would also contribute to more targeted counter racism strategies on social media.

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NOTES

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