Belonging and Public Space: Racism and the Right to the City

#OtheringandBelonging
Dissecting Islamophobia and Islamophobes and the lessons for bridging

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Dissecting Islamophobia and Islamophobes & the lessons for bridging

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Othering & Belonging Conference
Breakout Session
“Belonging and Public Space: Racism and the Right to the City”

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Welcome & Setting

Othering, but also Belonging.

The mission of ‘bridging’.
The social and spatial variations of Islamophobia

Muslims facing the sharp end of contemporary racism in Western countries like Australia.

62% of Muslims have experienced racism in the workplace.

A threat to social order.

Islamophobia as a social malady, a national calamity (Dunn, 2018), and a creeping blight (Briskman, 2015).

Moving beyond the racial supremacists.

Anticipate Islamophobia to be associated with the organised racist groups (white supremacists).

What about ‘mainstream Islamophobia’, ambient Islamophobia (CRT)?
The social and spatial variations of Islamophobia

But unlikely to be universal in its manifestation: across social groups. Requiring different remedies and interventions.
• Contrasting anti-Muslim and anti-Asian sentiments
Islamophobia and city rights

Variations in Islamophobia

Variations in perceptions of Islamophobia

Muslims avoid such areas.
Where Islamophobes feel sanguine with performances of Islamophobia.

E.g. Cronulla, Sydney (2005 riots / program) (Itaouï). or the North and Outer-East Bay regions (where few Muslims live).

Attacks on safe spaces / havens (Mosques, centres & schools).

Opposition to such places in their construction / municipal approval (Dunn et al.; Cesari; Gale; Selod 2015).

Statements about who does and does not belong in the nation and within the locality.
Responding (bridging): local anti-racism and bearing witness

That racism is 'everywhere but different' (context matters).

That regional variations of intolerance (and also the bases of anti-racism) are essential in any consideration of anti-racism initiatives.

“The political task is therefore to situate antiracist struggles in those sites where they will have most effect” (Kobayashi and Peake, 2000:398).

Anti-racism must be situated in such a manner that it has the strongest effect.
Responding (bridging): local anti-racism and bearing witness, cont.d

Is there any point telling racists that their thinking is wrong?

What role for evidence and reality in a ‘post-truth world’?

New discourses (new rhetoric and performatives) steeped in care, mutuality and transcendence.

But Islamophobia (for e.g.) is not universal in its manifestation: across social groups.

Requiring different remedies and interventions.
Responding (bridging): local anti-racism and bearing witness, cont.d

Bearing witness (bystander action)

“When that woman was willing to speak up in front of the whole bus and tell that man that he was being rude and his behaviour made her ashamed, I knew that there were people who were not happy about what is happening. This is important. We worry about our children growing up here. We have to keep saying that we are in this country because we believe it is good, and that our children will grow up and make a good life and help others here” (Iraqi-Australian Female 2003-5, informant to the Islamic Women’s Welfare Council of Victoria, 2008:60).

Productive effects, confirming senses of belonging, citizenship and community.

Public campaigns to draw attention to the social merit of ordinary people ‘bearing witness to’ and protesting everyday racist incidents.
Responding (bridging): local anti-racism and bearing witness, cont.d

Leveraging bystander action

Stated preference to help (@75%), but people under-deliver (@30%).

Obstacles:
* perceptions of risk to the self, and to social status
* a lack understanding what to do or say
* a lack certainty as to whether the event was racism

Facilitators:
* better understandings of what can be done
* a literacy of racism

But need the regulation, proscription and policing to monitor the purposefully and intentionally racist.
The Challenging Racism Project: Projects & symposia

Follow us on Twitter @ChallengeRacism & Facebook: Challenging Racism Project
Benefits of being an active bystander

Speak up
- Community becomes more connected
- You’ll feel better knowing you’ve taken a stand
- Perpetrator realises their attitude is not shared
- Target feels more supported and less disturbed

Stay silent
- Community becomes more disjointed
- You’ll regret not taking a stand
- Perpetrator thinks everyone agrees with him/her
- Target feels more belittled and less connected
Motivators for active bystanders

- Desire to educate perpetrator
- Self-affirmation/validation
- Catharsis – expressing anger, disapproval
- Desire to aid target of racism

Obstacles

- Preserving interpersonal relations
- Gender role prescriptions
- The ambiguous nature of racism
- Fear of violence or vilification – being targeted by perpetrator
- Perception that action would be ineffective
- Impression management
- Desire to avoid conflict

Responding to racism

- Is this an incident of racism?
- Does the incident warrant confrontation?
- Is it my responsibility to intervene?
- How should I confront or intervene?
- Cost versus benefits of intervening?
- What motivates my action?
- What are the social norms around me?
Active bystander options

- Report the incident
- Seek help of friends, passers by or colleagues
- Confront the perpetrator
- Call it – “racism”
- Interrupt or distract the perpetrator
- Comfort the target
- Express upset feelings
- Use humour

Dunn, Nelson & Pederson (2011)
Developing Bystander Anti-Racism Skills and Gain Confidence

• Active bystander options in different settings and contexts
• Benefits of being an active bystander
• Coaching activity: practising being an active bystander
Four scenarios

**Train**
*Did you know?*

Almost 40 per cent of racist incidents occur in public spaces, including on public transport

**Shopping**
*Did you know?*

- Racism causes mental and physical distress, including a sense of social isolation
- Inaction from bystanders can make the experience of racism even more troubling
Four scenarios

**Sporting**

*Did you know?*

Being called an ‘offensive slang name’ is one of the most common forms of racism

**Online**

*Did you know?*

- Two out of three people witness racism online
- Social media plays an important role in changing social norms
Evaluation of Previous Training

How confident are you to respond to racism that you witness at UWS?

Pre-test | Post-test | Follow up
---|---|---
Not at all confident | 3.8 | 0 | 0
Not very confident | 26.7 | 6.7 | 7.4
Somewhat confident | 47.4 | 73.3 | 59.2
Very confident | 19.8 | 20 | 32.1
I don't know | 2.3 | 0 | 0
## Evaluation of Previous Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am more aware of racist talk and actions that takes place around me.</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am more willing to intervene when I witness racism.</td>
<td>84.5%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learnt new strategies/ways to help when I witness racism.</td>
<td>84.5%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The project did not have any impact on my knowledge of or perspective on racism.</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>71.1%</td>
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We are Yemeni American!!
We stand for our rights.
SURVEILLANCE ON OUR COMMUNITIES

PROTECT CIVIL RIGHTS

LESS SPYING, MORE TRANSPARENCY

NO SURVEILLANCE

YES CIVIL RIGHTS

PROTECT CIVIL RIGHTS
Stop Urban Shield
END POLICE WAR ON OUR COMMUNITIES
STOP URBAN SHIELD
END THE MILITARIZATION OF OUR COMMUNITIES
Stop Urban Shield

END POLICE WAR ON OUR COMMUNITIES
FUNDING FOR HEALTH & WELLBEING
NOT WAR GAMES IN OUR COMMUNITIES
DEFUND URBAN SHIELD