

Representing Australia: race, the media and cricket

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Abstract

Sport and representations of sport in the media are key sites for political and social struggles around race and nation. In order to explore how meanings of race are constructed in a sporting context, we undertook a discourse analysis of Australian print media coverage of two incidents of alleged racial vilification in sport. In one, Australian cricketer Darren Lehmann was suspended for racially vilifying the Sri Lankan team. In the other, Pakistani cricketer Rashid Latif was accused of racially vilifying an Australian cricketer. Our research suggests the following: first, there was strong condemnation of racial vilification; second, despite this, print media representations reflect a white versus black divide in world cricket; third, a Lehmann as victim/reverse racism theme emerged. We conclude that race is being mobilized as a potent but contested symbol of both inclusion and exclusion within Australia.

Keywords: Australia, cricket, media, nation, race, sport

In January 2003, Australian test cricketer Darren Lehmann was overheard by Sri Lankan officials shouting the words 'black cunts' while entering the dressing rooms at the Gabba, a cricket stadium in Brisbane, after his dismissal in a one-day cricket match between Australia and Sri Lanka. The officials who overheard Lehmann reported his conduct to the match referee, and, as a result, Lehmann, who apologized to the Sri Lankan cricket team, was instructed to undergo counselling by the Australian Cricket Board. He was later charged by the International Cricket Council (ICC), cricket's international governing body, and found guilty of racial vilification, the first cricketer anywhere to be found guilty of such a charge.

Lehmann was ultimately suspended from playing cricket for five one-day international matches. The following month, February 2003, Rashid Latif, a Pakistani cricketer, was also reported for racial vilification. Latif was accused by Adam Gilchrist, an Australian cricketer, of calling Gilchrist a 'white cunt' during a one-day international at the Wanderers Stadium in Johannesburg, South Africa. Unlike Lehmann, whose statement was clearly overheard by several people and who admitted to making the statement, Latif denied the charge and there was no clear audio evidence of the exact words he used in his confrontation with Gilchrist. Latif was cleared by the ICC match referee of a charge of racial vilification. This article analyses media discourses in 33 Australian newspapers, focusing primarily on the Lehmann case, while drawing on the Latif case as a means of enriching the analysis of media discourses around race and nation in the context of sport. We conclude that the discourses that emerged in the Lehmann and Latif cases represent a contested mobilization of race as a symbol, both of inclusion and exclusion, within Australian and international cricket.

Theorizing race and sport

In Australia, as in many other societies, white privilege structures social, political and economic relations so that whites occupy positions of dominance in the social hierarchy (Farquharson, 1999; Lipsitz, 1998; Wetherell and Potter, 1992). According to Lipsitz, 'possessive investment in whiteness' benefits whites at the expense of non-whites (Lipsitz, 1998: vii). In this view, all aspects of society, including sport, are structured so that whites have an advantage over non-whites, and whiteness as an identity is protected and maintained so that its associated privileges are also protected and maintained (Frankenberg, 1993; Lipsitz, 1998). In particular, social and cultural relations operate to 'encourage white people to expend time and energy on the creation and re-creation of whiteness' (Lipsitz, 1998: vii–viii). Australia has been structured as a white society by dominant groups since settlement. Through the White Australia Policy, legislative and administrative processes, and everyday social and cultural practices, the Australian nation has been constructed as white (Moreton-

Robinson, 2005; Zevallos, 2003). In Australia, as in other colonial societies, sport has played a significant role in the racially based social construction of the nation (Bale and Cronin, 2003; Booth and Tatz, 2000; Hage, 1998). At the same time as the indigenous population faced massacres and legal and physical segregation in the 19th and into the 20th centuries, cricket was at times promoted by the colonizers as a means of promising a way for indigenous people and settlers to interact (Booth and Tatz, 2000). Notable here was the 1868 Aboriginal cricket tour to England, a team that was highly successful and has since been acclaimed as the first team to represent Australia overseas. Even here, claims that the 1868 touring team 'represented' Australia are:

... [a] wild travesty of the power relations that characterise Australian history. None of the indigenous team members, nor their descendants, would play any role as national subjects, *except by their exclusion*, in the process that culminated in the making of a federated state, 'Australia', in 1901. (Perera, 2000: 19, italics in original)

As McKay et al. argue, 'the Aboriginal experience of sport since white settlement parallels that of post-colonial race relations in general: exclusion, racial stereotyping and exploitation' (2000: 291). From the mid 19th century, in Australia and elsewhere, sport was also adopted by the white, middle-class colonizers as a means of selfimprovement. A physical form of Christian morality, known as 'muscular Christianity', promoted athleticism as a means by which young, white, middle-class men could learn the values of 'cooperation, loyalty, courage, obedience to the rules, dedication and persistence' (Booth and Tatz, 2000: 49). Through such processes, sport became central to the racial dimensions of colonialism in Australia, and continues through to the present day. In his analysis of current Australian Prime Minister John Howard's embrace of cricket, Brett Hutchins argues that, given the dominance of whites at all levels of cricket in Australia, the sport of cricket lets Australia's conservative political leadership reinforce an 'anglo-centric nostalgia' for a white British past, and serves to mask the nation's diversity (Hutchins, 2001: 62). Through such processes, sports such as cricket become the sites for racebased political projects.

The interaction of sport and race is highly contested. As Carrington and McDonald (2001) have argued, on the one hand, sport has been an arena where cultural forms of racism have been successfully challenged, at least in the United Kingdom (UK), but at the same time, sport also provides a forum in which racist sentiments continue to be expressed. Hartmann also argues that sport in the context of race should be understood as a 'contested terrain', making the critical point that while sport can be a site through which racial stereotypes and hierarchies are reproduced, it can also be a space where they can be 'questioned, challenged and changed' (2003: 453). That is, while sport is often, and appropriately, analysed as being representative of broader social relations, it is an important site in its own right for the production, reproduction and transformation of social relations.

Race, of course, does not only influence cricket in Australia. At cricket's most elite level, the test level, cricket is played predominantly by England and its former colonies. Of those former colonies, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and, until recently, Zimbabwe select predominantly white teams. Teams with a majority of black players include Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and the West Indies. The British media's view towards its sports, including cricket, has been 'that England gave these sports to the world, and that therefore England should naturally be able to beat other nations' (Brookes, 2002: 96–97). That England has not often been able to do so in recent times has been a source of national shame, but also a source of pride for its former colonies. Indeed, for postcolonial nations such as India and Sri Lanka, success on the world sporting stage is a way of 'expressing [their] independence both to the former colonizer and to the wider world' (Mills and Dimeo, 2003: 113). Victory against the former colonizer becomes a significant political, as well as sporting, statement.

Among the test playing nations in which cricket has been dominated by white players and administrators, the Australian cricket team has been one of the slowest to desegregate, remaining almost entirely white. Notably, the English team, which has recently had a captain of Asian descent, is more racially integrated than the Australian team, and has been for at least two decades (Bale and Cronin, 2003). In post-apartheid South Africa, part of the shift towards building a non-racial rainbow nation has been to develop quota systems, in which teams have been required at particular times to have a certain number of black players in the squad (Farquharson and Marjoribanks, 2003). In all these cases, race is central to the construction of both sport and the nation.

Representing the nation

When race operates as a base for nation-building, it may do so directly through government policy, as evidenced by the White Australia Policy, but it also operates indirectly through social or cultural activities and symbols, including sport. In this regard, Benedict Anderson's (1991) work on 'imagined communities' continues to be of significance to debates around the nation. According to Anderson, members of a nation will not know all the other members of the nation, but are brought together by 'the image of their communion' (1991: 6) with the media playing a significant role in this process. These imagined communities are not necessarily unified, but are the outcome of highly contested processes in which political, economic and symbolic power are mobilized both to include, and to exclude, individuals and groups (see Anderson, 1991; Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992; Gilroy, 1992; Marx, 2003).

Directly relevant to these debates and to the focus of this article is Perera's analysis of cricket as a site where questions around the nation were played out in the context of Australian and Sri Lankan cricket in the 1990s (Perera, 2000). Her analysis reveals that sporting victories in Australia and Sri Lanka are celebrated as 'victories for a national identity, a national way of life, and appropriated into the project of the state' (Perera, 2000: 16), but also that cricket in the Australian context operates as a site of race-based inclusion and exclusion, both within Australia and in Australia's relations with other nations including Sri Lanka.

Ghassan Hage has also shown how the concept of multiculturalism is in practice white and male multiculturalism (1998: 134). In particular, he explores the ways in which the *we* of multiculturalism reinforces processes of inclusion and exclusion, by contrasting a white *us* with a non-white *them*, rather than recognizing that 'we are a "multicultural community in all our diversity"' (1998: 139). Hage's research suggests that struggles that occur around the nation take place in symbolic contexts such as the media, as well as economically and politically.

Gale (2004) and Osuri and Banerjee (2004) reveal ways in which the media in Australia form a key site for understanding the nation and its interaction with race. They have argued for the need to analyse everyday experiences of the nation and of race, with a focus on the mediated national and local contexts in which such experiences take place, and through which 'the idea of whiteness itself remains a governing force in the construction of the kind of nation that Australia is and the political or cultural alliances it has with other "white" nations' (Osuri and Banerjee, 2004: 160).

Crucially for our purposes, there is an increasingly close relationship between the media, the nation and sport, with the media playing a key role in 'producing, reproducing and amplifying' discourses around sport, the nation and race (Blain et al., 1993: 15; see also Farquharson and Marjoribanks, 2003; McKay et al., 2000; Mills and Dimeo, 2003; Perera, 2000; Williams, 2001). Indeed, for many, sport is consumed through the media rather than through direct participation or attendance at games. As a result, the media are a potentially powerful site for the framing of discourses around the relationship between sport and race in national contexts. While media coverage of sport tends to reproduce and amplify dominant understandings of race and nation, it also has the capacity to offer alternative interpretations, and thereby has the potential to contribute to transformations in social relations.

Methods

Media discourses of race in Australia

We undertook a discourse analysis of Australian print media coverage of the Lehmann and Latif cases to explore their significance for understandings of the interactions between race and nation. While these cases cannot be generalized to all media coverage of race and sport in Australia, the Lehmann case in particular is significant because he became the first player to be suspended for racial vilification. As a result, the case received a large amount of media coverage. Further, the emergence of the Latif case in the context of the Lehmann case, provided a space for significant media discussion around contested understandings of race and nation. In analyzing these cases, our emphasis is on media framings of race and nation in a sporting context, and not on the individual cricketers involved.

The notion of framing is used here to suggest that through decisions about which issues to report, and how to report those issues, the media present particular versions of 'social reality' (Schudson, 1995; Van Dijk, 1997). While these frames are not the only versions of 'reality' available, the wide circulation of media forms gives the views presented in the media a significant potential to 'reflect and influence the formation and expression of culture, politics and social life' (Garrett and Bell, 1998: 4). This potential is heightened further in the case of high-profile sporting 'media events' which 'spotlight some central value or some aspect of collective memory' (Dyan and Katz, 1992, quoted in Steenveld and Strelitz, 1998: 616). The VB Series one-day matches held every summer in Australia, the tournament in which the Lehmann case arose, are major sporting events. Similarly, the Cricket World Cup, the tournament in which the Latif case arose, is the major international one-day tournament held every four years.

There were 682 newspaper items (including articles, editorials, opinion pieces and letters to the editor – understood here to include all contributions from readers, including letters, emails and street talk) from 33 Australian newspapers between 15 January and 31 March, 2003 that mentioned Lehmann or Latif in the context of these two cases. The dates represent the time period between Lehmann's statements and one week after the final of the Cricket World Cup. The items were analysed thematically (Esterberg, 2002), with each one treated as a separate piece of data. The goal of this analysis was to provide insights into the ways in which the media framed these incidents, with a particular emphasis on the language used and its relation to the social and political context, rather than on the counting of key words or images, which tends to predominate in content analyses of media discourse (Van Dijk, 1997).

Articles were found by a combination of LEXIS-NEXIS and Factiva database searches of Australian newspapers using the keywords 'Lehmann' and 'Latif'. All articles using either of these words were selected. This initial selection was then reduced to those articles that mentioned Lehmann or Latif in the context of the

incidents under analysis, excluding articles that mentioned either player in other contexts. This process gave us 682 items. We then separated the sample into items in which there was discussion of the cases, and items in which it was simply mentioned that either Lehmann or Latif had been involved in a race-related incident. An example of the latter is the phrase: 'the suspended Lehmann'. If this type of statement was the only reference to either Lehmann or Latif in the item, it was coded as one in which either player was 'mentioned', without any further discussion. This left 519 items, which were analysed thematically as discussed above.

Many of the articles published were duplicates, being written by the same author and using the same words. However there were often variations in word count, indicating different editing processes, and in some cases the author added new material to later versions of the same article. In addition, articles appearing in different newspapers had different headlines. In terms of the research process, these repeated articles in different newspapers were counted as separate items because they would reach different audiences in different states. Appendix 1 lists the newspapers that we used. Appendix 2 shows the numbers of items by month of publication.

Themes

The Lehmann case

In January 2003, Australian cricketer Darren Lehmann was overheard calling the Sri Lankan cricket team 'black cunts' while going into the dressing rooms after he had been given out by the umpire while batting against the Sri Lankans. Early media coverage focused on uncovering the details of the incident. Lehmann did not deny that he had vilified the Sri Lankans, but sought to explain that he had made the comment 'in the dressing room, the heat of the moment and out of frustration' (Brown, 2003: 29). Nevertheless, Sri Lankan officials complained about the incident to the match referee, but declined to lay charges against Lehmann.

Despite a long history of racism in cricket (Williams, 2001), racial vilification is no longer considered acceptable in cricket, and there are regulations in place seeking to prevent racial vilification from occurring during matches. Under the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Team Officials, racial vilification can be ruled a Level 3 offence:

Using language or gestures that offends, insults, humiliates, intimidates, threatens, disparages or vilifies another person on the basis of that person's race, religion, gender, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin.
(International Cricket Council, 2002: 8)

Lehmann was ultimately charged with a Level 3.4 Code of Conduct offence by ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed. He was found guilty of racial vilification and suspended for five one-day international cricket matches by the ICC. After the Lehmann incident, the CEO of the Australian Cricket Board, James Sutherland, was quoted in the Advertiser as saying:

It is clear that he [Lehmann] has acted in an undesirable manner and steps will be taken to see that behaviour such as this is not repeated. Cricket's distinct place in Australian society brings with it a necessity for players and officials to exhibit high standards of personal behaviour on and off the field. (Hurrell, 2003: 2)

After the charges were laid and Lehmann found guilty, the newspaper coverage shifted from focusing on the incident itself to a broader discussion of its consequences both for Lehmann and for world cricket more generally. Media framing of the Lehmann case centred on four themes: first, condemnation of racial vilification; second, a black/white divide in world cricket; third, Lehmann as victim; and fourth, that the incident was another example of 'bad behaviour' by the Australian team. We discuss each in turn.

Condemnation of racism

Through the coverage of the Lehmann case, and then of the Latif case, a number of journalists and people reported in the media condemned racism in cricket. These views suggested that Lehmann's suspension would make it apparent internationally that cricket authorities would not tolerate incidents of racial vilification. Further, the cricket authorities were exhibiting a willingness to use punitive regulations to enforce their commitment to ending racial vilification. For example, Robert Craddock, a journalist who wrote in depth on the incidents, explained:

Darren Lehmann's entirely justified five-match ban proves cricket at last may be getting the strong world leadership it has been craving for decades. . . . By taking such strong action against his home nation, [ICC chief executive Malcolm] Speed forcibly made the point that the game had zero tolerance of racial insults. And so it should. It was the most impressive piece of decision making by an ICC administrator for a decade. (Craddock, 2003a: 89)

Similarly, Mike Coward, one of Australia's leading cricket journalists wrote that:

Darren Lehmann's ignorance and stupidity have done Australian cricket a terrible disservice. His racial abuse of the elite cricketers of Sri Lanka is unforgivable and Australian cricket will suffer because of it. (Coward, 2003: 26)

In a few instances, journalists made a link between the specific case of racial vilification and broader issues around race and racism, with social commentator Hugh Mackay arguing that 'Darren Lehmann's infamous racial slur is but a symptom of a society in which intolerance and discourtesy are given increasingly free rein, even while we pretend otherwise' (2003: 35).

While there was a consensus in the media coverage that racial vilification must be condemned, another strategy developed in the media coverage, which was to divide the cricket world into white and black playing nations. Black/white divide in world cricket Media representations emphasized a black/white divide among cricketing nations. Craddock notes:

... there is enormous black versus white tension among major [cricketing] nations, which is so great that India and Pakistan, who completely loathe each other, vote as one at ICC meetings because they hate the white nations even more. (2003c: 143)

That this divide exists was constantly reinforced through the media framing of the Lehmann, and Latif, cases. For example, an article in the *Herald Sun* stated: 'Former top bowler Geoff Lawson accused international cricket officials of making Lehmann a scapegoat to soothe black-white tension in the international game' (Hurrell et al., 2003: 1). This type of statement implies that 'black' is a broad category encompassing people of African, Caribbean and South Asian origin as an undifferentiated racial group. In framing the case in terms of white/black divide in world cricket, media coverage reasserts the notion of Australia as a white nation, thereby downplaying any conception of Australia as being a multiracial or multicultural society, while also denying the indigenous history of Australia.

Lehmann as victim

Once it was clear that Lehmann was going to be charged with racial vilification, several of the articles included comments representing Lehmann, and not the Sri Lankans, as the victim. Reports even went so far as to call Lehmann a scapegoat, saying that he had to be punished to provide an example to other cricketers. At times, media reports suggested that Lehmann was being singled out because he was white. For example,

'That's always been a racial divide as far as India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are concerned. They [the ICC] are using Darren Lehmann as a scapegoat' (former Australian cricketer Geoff Lawson, quoted in Hurrell et al., 2003: 4).

The implication of such claims is that Lehmann was unfairly being singled out on the basis of his whiteness. Other articles quote people arguing that Lehmann should not be branded a racist (Jeloscek, 2003; Pierik, 2003), suggesting that this charge would damage Lehmann's reputation. Several items attempted to highlight a seeming unfairness of the incident by noting that, at the same time that the ICC was punishing Lehmann, it was also planning for the Cricket World Cup to take place in Zimbabwe and South Africa. At the time, the Zimbabwean government was being accused of wide-ranging human rights abuses, including seizing white farmers' farms without compensation (Peel, 2003). Journalists and letter writers asked why it was that the ICC was condemning Lehmann while essentially condoning racism by holding the World Cup in Zimbabwe. The following letter to the editor is an example:

Does the I in ICC stand for Ironic? Lehmann gets a five-match ban for uttering a racist statement. Zimbabwe enacts racist policies for years and gets rewarded as joint hosts of the World Cup. (Koop, 2003: 10)

Given the media framing of world cricket into a white and black divide, these discussions brought 'whiteness' to the centre of the debate. In particular, the ICC was portrayed as pursuing a white player, while downplaying the more severe race-based vilification on the part of the Zimbabwean government, taken to represent black cricket nations.

Unlike the 'condemnation of racism' theme, which commonly appeared in articles, editorials and opinion pieces, the 'Lehmann as victim' theme was particularly apparent in letters to the editor:

Re Lehmann's racial slur: I had thought that the era of ridiculous political correctness had passed. (Mason, 2003: 14)

In this type of letter, the writer disputes the framing of the incident, asserting the view that the whole case was a politically motivated over-reaction to a minor incident.

Another example of 'bad behaviour'

The Australian cricket team had been involved in a number of negatively received incidents in the year prior to the Lehmann incident. They were portrayed as 'sloggers', that is, as players who verbally abuse their opponents in order to put them off their game, and as out of control. Some of the coverage of the Lehmann incident put it in the context of the 'bad behaviour' of the Australian cricket team in general:

ACB chief executive James Sutherland said yesterday he would ask the duo [oneday captain Ricky Ponting and vice-captain Adam Gilchrist] to work with the board's cricket operations manager Michael Brown on ways of upgrading the side's behaviour in the wake of Darren Lehmann's 'black ...' racial slur and other recent indiscretions. (Craddock, 2003b: 36)

Another article noted that this was the third time in three weeks that an Australian player had had official action brought against them 'for displays of bad temper and bad sportsmanship since January 1' (The Age, 2003: 20). This contextualizes the Lehmann racial incident as another example of a lack of self-discipline among the Australian team in general. In some items attempts were made to excuse the behaviour as something that happened in the heat of the moment. For example, one letter writer commented that:

With these things we sometimes take things a bit too far. He's just a normal person, fair enough he does play for the Australian team, but he is only human. His emotions were running pretty high at the time and it was perhaps the wrong place at the wrong time to say those things. (Russell, 2003: 12)

This letter indicates that this theme is closely linked with the Lehmann-as-victim theme. Because the incident is just another example of bad behaviour, Lehmann is actually a victim. The four discursive themes that emerged in Lehmann case existed simultaneously. Each of the discourses represents a different media framing, and in combination they provide multiple, competing interpretations of the incident.

The Latif case

Less than a month after the Lehmann incident, during the Cricket World Cup, the Pakistani wicketkeeper, Rashid Latif, was accused by Australian wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist of calling Gilchrist a 'white cunt' while he (Latif) was batting in a one-day match. Newspaper coverage of this incident drew instant comparisons with the recent Lehmann case. Unlike Lehmann, however, Latif did not admit to the charges, and with Gilchrist as the only witness and no clear recording of the alleged statement available, Latif was found not guilty by the ICC match referee. Nevertheless, the Latif case was the topic of 97 newspaper items, mainly over two days. Almost all of these articles compared the Latif and Lehmann cases directly, in particular focusing on the ways in which cricket officials handled them.

The themes emerging from the Latif articles reaffirmed the themes from the articles focusing solely on the Lehmann case. In particular, the coverage of the Latif case raised issues around two discourses: a black/white divide in cricket; and a reverse-racism theme centred around a concern that Gilchrist was being victimized because, despite Gilchrist's trustworthiness, Latif was not charged with racial vilification. Of the two themes in the Latif case, the reverse-discrimination theme dominated. For example, journalist Robert Craddock asked:

Would Latif have used the same language (in reverse) as Lehmann if those words had never been uttered a few weeks ago? Would Gilchrist have immediately reported the matter to the umpire if Lehmann had simply been warned for his outburst? (2003d: 69)

Similarly, an editorial in the *Herald Sun* stated:

The epithet that followed [Latif's use of the word 'white'] was coarse, but not what matters here. The key word was 'white'. If Lehmann was banned for using the word 'black', why was no action taken against Latif? (2003: 20)

Underlying these discourses of reverse discrimination is the idea that Lehmann, and along with him other white people, are being unfairly targeted in debates over race. In these discourses, non-whites have the upper hand and white people are disadvantaged. For example:

Once again, the ICC has shown its ability to apply double standards by clearing the Pakistani cricketer accused of racially vilifying Adam Gilchrist. Darren Lehmann was found guilty and suspended over comments he made in the Australian dressing rooms. But, when the situation is reversed and happens on

the ground, on top of a microphone, Gilchrist is made to sound petty for mentioning the incident. (Griffiths, 2003: 16)

This letter was typical of letters written to newspapers in response to the Latif incident. The Latif case was often linked with the Lehmann case in its media framing. The Lehmann case was used to highlight that it was unfair: Latif was found not guilty but Lehmann was. The notion of 'double standards' suggests that there is one standard for white cricketers and another for blacks. The implication is that whites are more likely to be held accountable for racist behaviour than blacks, and that these cases are actually examples of reverse racism on the part of the ICC.

The Latif case appeared in the context of the aftermath of the Lehmann case, but because the alleged perpetrator is black in the Latif case, the two are substantively different. Most of the media framing of the Latif case did not acknowledge this, but some journalists did locate the Latif and Lehmann cases in their historical contexts. Patrick Smith wrote, for example, that:

To call a black person a black c... is to validate history. A history that shows the systematic persecution of black people around the world. . . . To call a white cricketer a white c... is to abuse him, but it hardly vilifies him, for there is no context for it to be vilification. (2003: 35)

Peter Roebuck and Greg Baum, among others, made similar points, with Baum arguing that:

Strictly speaking, there are no degrees of racism; in any form, it is detestable. Practically, the weight of centuries of oppression mean that 'black' has a more pejorative meaning than 'white' as a form of put-down. (2003: 2)

This type of reporting was less common than the items that exemplified the reverse-discrimination theme.

Discussion

This study of the Lehmann and Latif cases provides important insights into racial vilification in the context of elite sport and into the use of racist language in everyday contexts. For example, it is taken as given that Lehmann's calling of the Sri Lankan team 'black cunts' is inappropriate, and that if Latif did call Gilchrist a 'white cunt', then that is also inappropriate. In both cases the newspapers focused on the implications of being called a racist for the individual players involved, and on the contexts in which it was appropriate to bring racial vilification claims. In particular, they did this by setting up a white/black divide in world cricket as a frame for the discussion and analysis that followed. It is at this point that we begin to see the ways in which understandings of race and racism are contested, and the ways race is mobilized as a symbol of inclusion and of exclusion. At the same time as players are criticized, and punished, for using

racist language, there is significant debate over whether or not the use of racist language by a white player makes a person a racist. There is also an attempt to compare racial vilification on the part of a white player with other examples such as other 'bad behaviour' by cricketers or the Zimbabwean government, with the effect of minimizing the significance of the racist incident.

Our case studies support the argument that sport is a form where meanings of race are contested and racial hierarchies are both challenged and reinforced, in this case through the print media (Hartmann, 2003). Our case studies show competing views of the meaning of racism in cricket. Although the predominant themes were the black/white divide in cricket discourse, the Lehmann-as-victim/reverse-racism discourse and the anotherexample- of-bad-behaviour discourse, there was discursive space for a competing discourse: the condemnation-of-racism discourse. The condemnation- of-racism discourse can be viewed as an alternative framing of the Lehmann case, one that challenges the apparently dominant view of racist behaviour in sport. This indicates that sport does not merely reflect broader social relations, it is in itself a space where meanings are actively contested and developed.

With respect to nationhood, the Lehmann case in particular strengthens the conception of Australia as a white land. This is evident in the black/white divide theme: viewing cricketing nations in such essentialist terms reinforces the connection between race and nation. Here, Australia is portrayed as a white nation, not a multiracial one. However, there is some scope given for alternative understandings of race in the Australian context. By analysing the multiple media framing of this case, we are able to see a more complex picture of how race and racism are framed in the sports media.

Along with others (e.g. Gale, 2004; Osuri and Banerjee, 2004), our research highlights the need to conduct in-depth analyses of particular cases. It is only through this type of analysis that we can see how the relationship between race and nation develops in practice because it uncovers the processes by which racial meanings come to change. We have found that there is not one overarching media frame used to interpret incidents of racism in sport. Rather, there are competing frames that offer alternate views of these incidents.

Media representations of the racial vilification of the Sri Lankan team are part of a larger historical discourse of white colonialism and supremacy, where the black bodies of the colonized are considered inferior to the white bodies of the colonizers. In this way, the media representations analysed here are an example of the possessive investment in whiteness, in that they preserve and promote the value of whiteness. For example, while there is condemnation of racial vilification, the newspaper discourses in these cases explore the influence of such vilification by mobilizing a construction of a white/black divide in world cricket, and by suggesting that white cricketers are the victims of reverse discrimination. In the context of these cases, these representations reassert the dominance of

whiteness as a means of including and excluding people, and even nations. It is the white players who come to be represented as victims, while the ICC comes to be seen as inappropriately representing the interests of a supposed unified block of black nations. In sum, what emerges in these cases is the contested mobilization of whiteness in media discourse as a means of asserting both inclusion in, and exclusion from, a white Australian nation.

Appendix 1: List of newspapers

Australian Associated Press
Australian Financial Review
Canberra Times
Courier Mail
Daily Telegraph
Herald Sun
Hobart Mercury
Illawarra Mercury
Manly Daily
MX
Northern Territory News
Northside Chronicle
Sunday Territorian
Sun Herald
Sunday Age
Sunday Herald Sun
Sunday Mail - Queensland
Sunday Mail - South Australia
Sunday Tasmanian
Sunday Telegraph
Sunday Times
The Advertiser
The Age
The Australian
The Cairns Post
The City Messenger
The Gold Coast Bulletin
The Newcastle Herald
The Sydney Morning Herald
The Weekend Australian
The West Australian
Townsville Bulletin
Townsville Sun
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Appendix 2: Numbers of items by month of publication

Table 1: Numbers of items by month of publication

Month	Letters to the editor**	Editorials, opinion pieces and articles	Mentioned only*	Total
January	83	271	63	417
February	26	106	96	228
March	0	33	4	37
Total	109	410	163	682

*Items where the incident was briefly mentioned but not discussed.

**Letters include letters to the editor, emails, and street talk.

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