Modern and Classical Racism toward Refugees among North Queenslanders

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Overview

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Introduction

- Politics and media- negative attitudes towards refugees have become the norm in our political discourse.
  - Does this suggest high prevalence of prejudice in the Australian community?
- Is prejudice towards refugees becoming more socially acceptable (more socially desirable)?
- Clear link between prejudice and social desirability.
- Our study - What is the relationship between different types of racism and social desirability in Tropical NQ?

Introduction

Some definitions:

- Classical racism: blunt and direct form of prejudice.

- Modern racism: more subtle, and perhaps more socially acceptable/desirable.

- Social desirability: the extent that participants will respond in a way that they see as socially acceptable, or safe.

Introduction

- Social Desirability scale often used alongside measurements of 'taboo' traits.

- High social desirability = less likely to report socially unacceptable personal beliefs.

- Therefore, negative correlation between SD and prejudice would indicate prejudice is undesirable, and participants are hesitant to report prejudicial attitudes.

- Previous Australian research has observed such results (Schweitzer et al., 2005).

Introduction

Our study aimed to investigate three hypotheses:

- Hypothesis 1: North Queenslanders higher in social desirability will be lower in classical racism

- Hypothesis 2: North Queenslanders higher in social desirability will be lower in modern racism

- Hypothesis 3: North Queenslanders will express higher levels of modern racism than classical racism

Method

- Scales Used:
  - Classical and Modern Racial Prejudice Scale (Akrami, Ekehammar and Araya, 2000)
    - Determines overall racial prejudice
  - Marlowe Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Reynolds, 1982)
    - Determines the degree to which participants respond in a socially desirable manner
  - Realistic and Symbolic Threat Scale (Schweizter et al. 2005)
    - Determine reasons for prejudice and perceived threat
  - Prejudicial Attitudes Survey (Stephan et al., 1998)
    - Examines participants attitudes toward refugees

Method

Table 1

Demographic Information

	N	Percentage	Mean Age (SD)
Male	107	34.4	35.1 (14.6)
Female	207	65.6	32.0 (12.8)
Total	314	100	33 (13.5)

- The study consisted of 314 participants (male: 107, female: 207) from the tropics with an average age of 33 (min: 18, max: 70).

Method

Table 2

Field of Employment

	N	Percentage
Hospitality/Retail	62	19.7
Finance	3	1.0
Australian Defence Force	12	3.8
Emergency Services	7	2.2
Public Servant	10	3.2
Social Services/Community Organisation	7	2.2
Tradesperson	9	2.9
Health	113	35.9
Other	31	9.8
Not Applicable	60	19.0
Total	314	100.0

Results

Table 3

Percentage of Participants Scoring Low, Medium or High on Classic and Modern Prejudice Measures

Factor	% scores in 'Low' range	% scores in 'Medium' range	% scores in 'High' range
Classical Racism*	37.3	59.9	2.9
Modern Racism**	36	58.6	5.4

* Scores from 8-18=Low, 19-29=Medium, 30-40=High.
** Scores from 9-21=Low, 21-33=Medium, 33-45=High

Mean (SD) for Classical Racism- 20.2 (4.9)
Mean (SD) for Modern Racism- 24 (5.4)
Mean (SD) for Social Desirability- 16.3 (2.5)

Results

Table 4

Correlations Between Social Desirability, Prejudice, and Racism

	Classical Racism	Modern Racism	Social Desirability
Classical Racism	1	.729**	-.053
Modern Racism	.729**	1	-.091
Social Desirability	-.053	-.091	1

** p < 0.1

Discussion

- Hypothesis 1: North Queenslanders higher in social desirability will be lower in classical racism
  - Not supported
- Hypothesis 2: North Queenslanders higher in social desirability will be lower in modern racism
  - Not supported
- Hypothesis 3: North Queenslanders will express higher levels of modern racism than classical racism
  - Supported

Discussion

- It appears that individuals may perceive negative attitudes towards refugees as acceptable

- Politicians and the Media

  - Refugees are described as hostile, criminal, economic opportunists, disease vectors (Haslam & Holland, 2012; Watson & Riffe, 2012)

  - Legislation is also put in place under the guise of deterring terrorists and to take advantage of public fear (Jupp, 2006; Haslam & Holland, 2012; Pederson, Fozdar, & Kenny, 2012)

  - The example set by the media creates a standard which accepts negative attitudes toward refugees (Bastian, 2012)

Discussion

- Participants expressed modern racism but not classical racism despite no evidence of social desirability
  - It is not socially acceptable to be overtly racist
  - As a result, we would expect modern racism to be more prevalent than classical racism (Pedersen & Walker, 1998). This is what we found.

Discussion

- Lack of education
  - False beliefs (Pedersen, Watt, & Hansen, 2006)
  - Media and politicians perpetuate false beliefs (Pedersen, Fozdar, & Kenny, 2012)
  - Diversity education has been somewhat effective in reducing prejudicial attitudes (Hogan & Mallott, 2005)
  - Should also consider emotional features of attitudes (anxiety, distrust, frustration) (Islam & Jahjah, 2001)
- Implicit attitudes
  - Some research has suggested a possible implicit nativist attitude (Knoll, 2013)

Conclusion

- Modern racism was reported more at higher levels than classical racism

- Prejudice is changing, not disappearing

- Likely due in part to:
  - Media and politician representation
  - Lack of education (false beliefs)
  - Implicit attitudes

- In future, it would be beneficial to investigate how prejudice is expressed in Australia and how to reduce it

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