

Examining the process of racialisation in American Discourse, with particular reference to Neo- Nazism within White Supremacist ideologies.

Introduction to key debates

The imagination of the racist mind within the American context is one which is continually controversial, particularly due to the highly publicised on-going risks of radical religious and ethnic conflicts in contemporary America. Understandings surrounding the ideologies within America will be discovered, particularly in relation to the statement that there is 'there is no unitary racial ideology in the United States' (Omi, 1990: 2-3). The text aims to both acknowledge and support this notion and reflect upon the most extreme race hate groups demonstrating this, but also to hypothesise that there are commonalities throughout American discourse which many offer suggestions that the process of racialisation is an inherently racially biased one, with an underlying basic unitary ideology.

Following a brief history of immigration into America and a brief insight into a threat of the loss of nativism, a somewhat psychological breakdown of the process of prejudice will be depicted in relation to individual racial categorisation and also more holistically in relation to America. This will aid in constituting an argument for the racial inequality inherently embedded within American history. With reference to insights into those deemed vulnerable particularly following World War Two, the controversial history of America's process of racialisation will then be explored, with particular reference to persuasive the relationship between traditional Nazism and American science and the racist undertones within American media and in the inherent superiority of whiteness which, it can be argued, subconsciously instigated racial extremism, for vulnerable racially branded groups. In order to do so, questions must be raised surrounding the dynamics of race and ethnicity and how racialisation can be comprehended as not only those can be recognised as of a 'common descent and a common cultural heritage or tradition, and those who are so regarded by others' (Smith, 1986:2); but also the ambiguously racialised groups such as Jews, particularly within Neo-Nazi attitudes.

The Construction of whiteness will be investigated with the intention of understanding the often unexplored undertones of racial discourse in America, and how these inherent subtle connotations within various arenas of America which both display the process of racialisation currently in American discourse; Questions will also be asked surrounding the foundations of the motives behind extreme race hate imaginations. This is not to insinuate that the conflicts presented by extreme white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups is reasonable or to legitimate the radical philosophies these groups propose; and the history of such groups will be reflected upon in order to acknowledge the severity of the dangerous concepts amongst these groups.

Following this, a history and analysis of eugenics, and specifically Nazi eugenics, will aim to illustrate how the presence of American scientists may have founded some roots for prejudicial racism in the twentieth century in America. This will also reveal the founding of radical anti-black and anti-Semitic ideologies on the basis of scientific determinism which can be recognised throughout contemporary white supremacist, and particularly neo- Nazi, imaginations.

The media will also be offered as working dualistically in both projecting the constructed notion of whiteness and the subtle racial philosophies which, it can be contended, is inherently within American heritage and therefore American media. What will also be offered is examples of how white supremacist organisations transmit the ideologies using the media to gain both popularity and social and political notability, but the dichotomy between the use

of media to exert racist ideologies and the rejection of the way in which the controlled media portrays the organisations. Finally, references will be made to the Columbine massacre which aims to conceptualise the real effects that media can have upon transmitting ideologies of any kind to individuals.

Finally, a discussion of the conclusions observed from the research will aim to recognise that drawing theoretical arguments on such profound issues can inevitably lead to a desensitisation of the dangerous effects far right ideologies has in real terms in contemporary American culture. Recognition will be drawn here in order to recognise this.

A brief history

Almost twenty three million immigrants gained settlement in America during 1877 and 1914, a particularly prominent period of the mobilisation of immigrant populations. During this time, America was also realising a vast transformation into industrialisation, but also economic depression and labour tensions and this is reflected in geographical and economic disparities between racial communities. (United Bureau of the Census 1975: 105-6). Historically, the treatment of immigrants during and thereafter this period is documented, particularly in relation to the treatment, conflict and violation of black and ethnic minority immigrants; however it is all true that the patterns of such conflict were dispersed amongst many collective groups, and not evenly, within America, and this notion is still acknowledged in contemporary American ethos, suggesting historically a presence of multiple racial ideologies within America (Omi, 1990; Olzak, 1992). Whilst much economic, political and social hysteria surrounding the diversity of race in America has been overcome, the distant presence of racism and racial hate is still recognisable. The correlation between immigration into the United States and the radical racist movement is a noteworthy one; the flow of American immigration and the immigration policies which regulate this immigration often instigated heightened nativism and conflict regarding power relations. The threat of losing native power has manifested in violent, symbolic action including the destruction of churches and schools occupied by immigrants and resurgence in anti-Semitic ideology (Sitkoff, 2001).

Prejudice in context

Commonly, the history of American immigration and the public reaction to immigration is recognised as central to the development of radical race hate organisations within America, along with substantive material on the historical development of racist ideology, the activities of racist organisations and the activities of policy makers to engage with the termination of such groups. Little evidence however has been dedicated to the process of racialisation through stereotyping and prejudice and the arguably critical consequences of in group relationships. Before introducing the situational and cultural racisms in the United States, the following aims to recognise the importance of the operations of stereotyping and prejudice. Prejudice, (an ill feeling towards other person(s), usually not based on valid evidence and as a negatively charged prejudgement) and discrimination are two of the most problematic and prominent paradigms encountered by humanity' (Bethlehem, 1985). Prejudice is a direct prerequisite to stereotyping of out-groups and the generalisation developed through this rhetoric is pivotal historically, an example of this is the mass obedience of the extermination of blacks and Jews in the Holocaust. However, not all prejudice and stereotyping is witnessed within sensational historical events, and what is considered to a far lesser extent is the inherent, routine and perhaps uninteresting categorising of persons in everyday cognitions (Gough and McFadden, 2001). The simplifying of out-groups creates an essential dichotomy and if these prejudices develop, as in the case of any racisms, groups or individuals can be dehumanised. This is so powerful as even unfounded and flawed stereotypical inferences about other out groups can rapidly perpetuate (Kleg, 1993) and can lead to differential treatment on local and national levels such as racial profiling and victimisation of groups within the criminal justice system from the state and individually

through the creation of 'otherness' (Howitt et al, 1989). Dehumanisation has also been witnessed throughout American history particularly in relation to the Columbine tragedy in which the effects of extreme racial stereotyping lead to mass killings (which will be discussed more so later). This contests the notion of a racially equal America which is often presented in American culture, questions the basis of political neutrality and argues the racially laden values that will exist due to the inevitability of all peoples cognitive judgements; stereotypes work dualistically, as cognitively inevitable, and socially and historically implied. Particularly, arguments will be offered which suggest that inherent prejudice create political ideologies, and legitimize these power structures. This is the basis for which other arguments will be framed throughout this work.

Neo- Nazism and White Supremacist ideologies

Somewhat contradictory to the popular notion throughout America of an absolute rejection of hierarchical racial disparities, Neo-Nazi ideology persists as an extreme but reified consciousness in American society (Hamm: 1993). Following the sensational history of racial and religious demoralisation of vulnerable groups, particularly Jewish communities, in Nazi Germany and throughout Europe during World War Two; a rebirth of radical extreme right ideologies permeated throughout Europe and America, and later in 1970, a further resurgence of right wing extremism with the intension of classifying racial supremacy, particularly to the advantage of white male citizens of the United States and to the disadvantage of black people (specifically between southern white Americans and Southern black Americans), ethnic minorities and religious minorities (Olzack: 1993). Neo-Nazism saw a resurgence of influence and power in the 1980s under the power of Ronald Reagan, who focused on the power and prosperity of white American youth (Lipsitz, 2006); a time of arguably a dominant and systematic racial ideology in which racisms were relatively active. It should be noted here that neo- Nazism constitutes only a small minority of racist ideologies and only constitutes a category within a much wider and perhaps more culturally influential variety of racist discourses within what many recognise as white supremacy, which collectively seem to seek 'otherness' or 'racialised others' (Daniels, 1997).

White supremacist organisations (arguably established from what is now identified as the Ku Klux Klan in the 1860s but was officially recognised in 1915) are primarily expressing a desire for dominance of the white race, and attempts to exert this notion through the gaining of political and economic credibility (Moore, 1991). Contrary to contemporary popular perception that such organisations are marginal in conventional society, radical racist parties have progressed through periods of popular regard, particularly during the 1920s in which the Ku Klux Klan proved successful amongst Caucasian Protestant Americans (Wade, 1987). The Klan can be seen to encapsulate many parties and ideologies of a white supremacist nature including 'Christian Identity [...] Neo-Nazi Skinheads, and Creativity' (Daniels, 1997), sharing a collective commitment to constructing white dominance (Langer, 1990) alongside arguably an expression of right wing ideology socially and culturally underpinned by a fundamentalist rhetoric in American culture (Sitkoff, 2001). A particularly substantial and troubling link can be noted within the resurgence of physical violence demonstrated by those advocating white supremacy, particularly the skinhead movement, advocating neo-Nazi ideology, particularly anti-Semitism (Stanton, 1991). Such acts have been demonstrated in serious violent methods, particularly against black men.

With the concerning rise of white supremacist action in recent American history, it is imperative to discover correlations in the nature of persons choosing to advocate white supremacist action in order to understand the intimate processes behind such groups, and also to understand the common careers of racial hate that contemporary groups engage in. Many social commentators such as Aho (1990) states that the traits of white supremacist members are relatively representative of the population of America economically, educationally and employment which is contrary to the somewhat demonic image of the white supremacist skinhead in popular American judgement (Hamm, 1993) and racist ideologies are still very much embedded in contemporary American culture.

However, others recognise common characteristics of 'the white supremacist' (and particularly neo- Nazi parties) are portrayed primarily as constructed upon a working class awareness seeking to realise economic advantage, particularly throughout periods of economic depression. Hamm (2003) offers a theoretical analysis on the consciousness of the American working class youth to postulate determining factors for individuals to engage in far-right subcultural activity. According to Hamm, this process occurs within working class families as a direct product of the importance of economic prosperity instilled into working class American youth; the status frustration experienced by these youths as they enter the economic domain, and this frustration is released through victimising those who may pose a threat to a prospering economic career, namely ethnic minority citizens. Although evidence also suggests to frustrations and threats to other domains such as inter racial marriage (particularly black males and white females) and ethnic minority persons attempting to engage in typically American social activities, which suggests more than simply economic explanations for neo-Nazi ideology (DePuy et al, 1992).

With the support of media outlets promoting racist ideology (which will be discussed in more detail later), 'vengeance [becomes the] soul of Nazism. It is a soul, however, that I deeply rooted in chaos' (Hamm, 2003: 211). Such an understanding of the motives propelling the dangerous action of white supremacist organisations can prove extremely effective and this has proved so in the effective termination of large white supremacist organisations, particularly due to the invasive actions of civil rights strategies in publicly exposing and demeaning white supremacist organisations and thus, reducing the prospect of terrorist action in America (Verney, 2000). The irony here however is that the contingency of future terrorist action and the racial hatred of white supremacy as a whole is arguably based upon inherent racism within American discourse (which will be suggested throughout this text); if this inherent racism is accurate, the disassembling of extreme racist ideology will always be somewhat inadequate. The innate and fundamental racisms embedded within America which could be stimulating the progression of white supremacist remains uncontrolled and underplayed which, it can be suggested, renders the continuing of white supremacist action inevitable.

Constructing 'whiteness'

In examining nature particularly of white supremacist groups, a natural negotiation is assumed between the normality of whiteness and the otherness of minority groups; and this should be assessed in order to question the neutrality of race relations in popular contemporary American culture. According to Hill, American modernity constitutes a silent dominance of 'whiteness'; and this construct supplies power to those deemed truly American, which is often attached to white persons, and predominantly white males in political, public, economic and geographical spaces. Hill states this collaborates with a subtle hidden aggression towards though who may endanger this racial hierarchy, specifically non-white or non-Christian persons (Hill, 2004). It is argued that America historically developed the notion of whiteness, with a popular notion throughout philosophy and science that every form of civilisation originated from the Caucasian race (Gobineau, 1853); reinforcing the apparent superiority of the white race and labelling other races as inferior. This notion of white supremacy is understood in contemporary contexts within the principle of organisation in the everyday status quo, following a demand for the complete rejection of the presence of racialised others, primarily black or ethnic minority citizens. These processes can appear to result in methodical advantage for the constructed white majority. The effects of this construction of the white advantage would inevitably infiltrate prejudice and vulnerability, particularly for Black people, Jewish people, Catholics, and other groups such as socialists and immigrants (Bonnett, 2000). Significantly, this ideology appears to be a milder reflection of the ideals suggested by white supremacists to reclaim superiority for the white identity; in this nature, the process of radical racialisation is reflective of the mainstream American situation (Omi and Winant, 1986), but this can be argued as calling into question that 'there

is no unitary racial ideology in the United States' (Omi, 1990: 2-3); and suggest an underlying racial ideology by which other ideologies cultivate.

The empowerment of whiteness in its structural nature in the United States cannot be ignored according to Delgado and Stephancic (1993) and this can be demonstrated through the process of racialisation of Jewish communities in America post-war, in which Jews; who cannot be visually classified in terms of racial characteristics, are still subjected to significant racialised stigma; and even prior to this within medieval artwork in which Jews were represented with a black face, interplaying racial categorisation between religious and racial spheres (Evans, 2009). Gilman notes the 'concept of colour is a quality of otherness, not a reality. For not only are blacks black in this amorphous world of projection, so too are Jews' (Gilman, 1985: 107). This is suggestive of the constructive nature of 'whiteness' in America; the Jewish American is not necessarily black, but is not seen to exercise the identity of white (Ridgeway, 1990). This notion is significant as it appears to dynamically question both the metaphorical head turning of America away from the historical old world economic slave inequality, and also the rejection of National Socialism and race hate groups as completely fragmented from the racial undertones within American discourse; suggesting such racist organisations are in fact displaying the 'permanence of racism' (Bell, 1992).

Biology and Scientific racism

In order to comprehend the fanatical nature of extreme white supremacist, and particularly neo- Nazi, belief systems it is imperative to uncover the subject of eugenics, and scientific explanations of what constitutes race. Although scientific racism is largely no longer a governing principle of racism particularly since the nineteenth century, the notion of genetics and biology is still a model exploited in order to validate the racial purgatory throughout race hate groups against the foreign other in contemporary terms, originating from the anti-Semitic Nazi ideology in Nazi Germany (Kühl, 2002). The end of the eighteenth century witnessed a rise of race related scientific study, particularly in North America, which soon gained social reputation and ultimately gave rise to the devastating mortalities witnessed under Hitler's Nazi eugenic regime in which science, in its most provocative and controversial, was the motivation offered for the mass homicide in Nazi Germany. However, it must be considered here that the history of biological determining race and categorising pure breeds of race conceptualised prior to the uprising of Nazi eugenics; with the United States acting as a 'bold leader in the realm of eugenics' particularly from 1912, in a growing relationship between German and American scientists and eugenicists. This would prove significant as eugenicists would shape the foundations of immigration policies and policy making (Kühl, 2002). Notably, this relationship, particularly moving into the twenty first century, would be largely politically underplayed as the concept of scientific racial inferiority would be abandoned in the 1930s as 'the scientific basis for discrimination against blacks and Jews was questioned by prominent figures' as merely excusing national racism (Kühl, 2002: 77).

Although traditional scientific interpretation of racialisation transformed from anti- Semitic and white Supremacist discourse, to a far more socially eugenic hypothesis, the philosophy of creating a Nordic race penetrated political, social, militant, scientific and economic arenas in America through manipulative propaganda. It can be considered as the ancestry to the founding of National Socialism and white Supremacist concepts particularly for anti-Semitic groups such as American Neo-Nazis, tapping into the laws of biology which have dictated the course of human historical development (Goldberg, 2006). The concept of scientific racism is often publicly and politically rejected however one can contest this rejection. The process of racism is reified and widespread, and alongside the complex and evolutionary nature of science and the multiple forms of science and biology, scientific racism has and quite possibly will reoccur (Tutton, 2007). The acceptance and encouragement of scientifically categorising race from American eugenicists and scientists historically legitimised racial hierarchies and eradicating these notions completely is inevitably

problematic. The ideology is internalised within twentieth century culture and, controversially, is in some part a responsibility of American science.

Media discourses

The media is so powerful in the transmission of racialisation simply because of its prevalence in Western societies. American media works pluralistically in surveying potential risks and threats to the value positionality of American communities, structuralising the positions of communities and transmitting customs and models of heritage through generations (Law, 2002). The representation of the infiltrators of race hate conflict has been discussed and this is important in understanding how the perception of these groups within popular American opinion aids in distancing such groups from mainstream society. What should also be acknowledged however is the two outlets of media discourse which can be correlated with racist imaginations; the first being the process of transmitting racist ideologies through media and technology in both classical and contemporary white supremacist rhetoric; and the second being the process of racialisation within American media which may influence racist philosophies and the attributions of stereotypes instigated and reflected in media discourse.

Media can not only act as an outlet for the racist ideologies of white supremacist organisations, but also as a formulation of prejudice within itself. Historically, and particularly throughout the twentieth century, the use of media was used extensively in openly and frankly advocating and actively encouraging racism in America. Daniels (1997) offers a comprehensive breakdown of the history of the race within the media and explicitly refers to various publications which advocated the dominance of white men, presenting the white man as a victim of those threatening the white race, heterosexual, Christian dominant male. The use of derogatory racism in such overt terms within the media is no longer accepted and the media could never portray overtly racial ideology today, however this is not to imply that racist undertones do not exist with media discourse. According to Wilson et al (2003), the fabrication of race and the implications of this to non-white groups, and those racialised through religion, is reflected through media discourse and can act as a presentation of how populations are divided; whilst regurgitating the ideologies of the majority. This reflection throughout the various forms of media can serve in highlighting the minority and through highlighting this, can reaffirm racial stereotyping. The characteristic of the white American youth skinhead has already been analysed, but what is also apparent is the focus on black youth within the media and communities representing a minority. American media often sensationalises the deviant nature of youth minority subcultures, interracial conflicts and illegal immigration (Wilson et al 2003). The amplification of deviancy amongst minority ethnic groups alongside a significant absence of positive media serves powerfully in constructing a deviant, dangerous and unproductive identity attributed to non-whites; an identity which is both destructive within itself and destructive to the white identity.

The representations that white supremacist groups produce in order to validate their argument in demoralising non-white persons cannot remain powerful unless the organisations transmit these ideologies and media networks are often an outlet in which such ideologies are negotiated; this also a technique organisations practice to gain popularity and affiliation. Media interpretations of non-white persons is often exposed as an outlet for far right ideologies, often preaching census figures, birth rates of non-white children and an apparent growing threat to the economy. As well as telephone chat lines and the use of virtual messaging, the internet is a primary source of relaying racist ideologies and popularising membership to organisations advocating race hate (Wilson et al, 2003). The American Nazi Party.com website is a primary example of a virtual environment in which radical racial ideologies can be transmitted in order to gain popularity. An ironic dualism can be noted within many websites advocating and promoting racist ideologies, and is also the case within the American Nazi Party website; these virtual environments are relied upon in

order to transmit ideologies, but organisations often demonstrate resentment towards the way in which popular media represents radical racist ideologies. Resentment is often felt against the way in which parties are often identified as violent, subcultural and deviant. Websites instead advocate the professionalism of their political organisation such as in the nslobbyist.com.

The effects of the representations of the media in its many forms has had very real consequences for America and a particular example of this is the tragedy witnessed in 1999 in a school in Colorado in which two teenage boys massacred in total thirteen people before ending their own life. The question of Neo-Nazi ideologies has often been offered as the underlying cause for the devastation of this devastating event; particularly in relation to the genocidal undertones that Neo-Nazism is accused of advocating (Ramsland, 2005). What was also apparent was the use of media footage and archives of Nazis, violent American movies and documentaries of Adolf Hitler viewed prior to the massacre (Broyles, 2011). The media is a problematic body however, particularly the American news media. If accounts of the media is accepted, and an inherent racial imbalance is deeply rooted within America's social and political heritage (Banton, 1977) then it can be contended that transmission of customs and models from the media is simply a replication of the normality of whiteness and the oppression of any communities which do not conform to this culture. Whilst analysing the events of the Columbine massacre is important in reflecting the dangerous and detrimental effects that media can have upon individuals, what is also observable is the more mundane rhetoric of contemporary media in which racial value is transmitted everyday. The media is pinnacle in understanding the movements of white supremacist ideologies however so must be evaluated in order to deconstruct the transmission of racisms.

A final thought

In order to draw conclusions from this research, three observations should be considered. Although one can recognise ambiguities across violent and extreme racially derogatory groups including disparities in the motives, intentions and ideologies of extreme racist groups throughout America; commonalities can also be recognised in an underlying cause, which is arguably a desire for hierarchical racial ranking and dispersion of power upon these terms (Hamm, 1993). However, this consideration cannot encompass the anomalous and unpredictable nature of extreme supremacist groups into an over simplistic and generic formulae; and neither can one 'dismiss the organizations, or their discourse, as irrelevant [and as] only a distant threat' (Daniels, 1997: 3) without recognition of the very real significances of extreme racial discourse.

The positionality in which far right organisations is considered is vital in explaining the presence of such groups and the threat these groups may pose. Daniels (1997) acknowledges this as circumstantial, as white supremacists represent of the population, those who represent the majority, which in this case is the white American, the threat of such groups is perceived as distant; however for potentially vulnerable groups, such as black American citizens, the threat becomes reified. (Daniels, 1997: 4). What must also be considered is the lower level racial shadow cast within American politics, socialisation, media and science; a 'racial system of interacting ideas and practices that mock the nations ideas of equality and democracy and perpetuate racial inequality and conflict' which threatens the validity of the status quo within Americas racial ideology (Evans, 2009: 8). With the unprecedented effects of post September 11th 2001, the extremity of such groups cannot be distanced or disregarded as radical and unexplainable performances of racism. It is arguable that the construction of whiteness within American culture is somehow impaired, alongside a possible resurgence of the 'othering' of minority groups who may ultimately be encapsulated as the threat to authenticity of the white American identity; threatening the racial diversity within modern America (Hill,2004).

Conclusion

America cannot dismiss the dangerous presence of white supremacist organisations or even distance their presence from mainstream American discourses. It has been argued throughout this text that the notion of white racism is inherently visible throughout American (particularly political) spheres. If this notion is accepted and the extreme far right organisations are mimicking (although far more radically) and 'converging with the cultural and political center' (Omi, 1991:85); dismissal becomes impossible.

The future of minority groups however is not simply at the mercy of the white majority, and the condemnation of these groups cannot be ignored as inevitable. What is also true of twenty first century America, in which minorities are growing in size, quantity and diversity and increasing their social and political voice; whilst minorities such as Blacks, Asian and Latinos are using this growth to confront the overgeneralisation of minority groups as 'black' against the superior 'white'. Use of the term minority has been used throughout this work, however reflecting upon the language used to describe these groups as a 'minority' reflects a small group which is insignificant; this is not the case.

People of colour already constitute thirty percent of America and these statistics will continue to grow (Wilson et al, 2003). Not only will radical racist organisations be obliged to accept that America is increasingly ethnically, culturally and religiously diverse, but the underlying dichotomisation between the white race, and the racialised 'other' will have to be questioned and the inherent and underlying ideologies need to be revealed and eradicated. Only then, can the attempt to terminate racist organisations become truly effective.

The on-going battle between civil rights U.S agencies and growing violence from far- right organisations, with an arguably cyclic battle between increasingly invasive political forces and increasingly violent acts of protest, remains as the question of race is still unresolved; as the presence of white supremacist organisations still problematizes the resolution of race relations.

The question of whether 'there is no unitary racial ideology in the United States' (Omi, 1990: 2-3) is a problematic one. It appears that there are underlying racist connotations within racist organisations and discourses, it is also relevant to suggest that organisations do not instigate unitary ideologies. However what this paper has suggested is that the formation of racial ideologies is somewhat inevitable. Whether the racisms resonate within the media, through extreme racist groups or through subtle political agendas; the radical racial ideologies are inevitable, historical, inherent and powerful through the American paradigm.

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