

2012

Australian National School Chaplaincy Program : a critical discourse analysis of online newspaper portrayals

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**Australian National School Chaplaincy Program: A
Critical Discourse Analysis of online newspaper
portrayals**

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Bachelor of Communications**

**This thesis is presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of Bachelor of Communications Honours**

**Faculty of Education and Arts
Edith Cowan University**

2012

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ABSTRACT

The media's representation of the Australian National School Chaplaincy Program has not currently been addressed by social theorists. This thesis analyses online newspaper portrayals of the National School Chaplaincy Program, examining a total of eleven major state newspapers. Norman Fairclough's theory of Critical Discourse Analysis, and particularly his theory on the three main types of assumptions (Existential, Propositional and Value), is employed to examine how language is used to construct ideologies and discourses about the Chaplaincy Program. Four key issues are examined, which include: the role of chaplains, the use of government funding for the Program, as well as church and state boundaries. The fourth issue analysed is the 2011 High Court Challenge. The challenge began when Queensland father Ron Williams contested that the Chaplaincy Program was unconstitutional because it breached Section 116 of the Australian Constitution, which claims that the 'Commonwealth is not to legislate in respect of religion'. The news articles have been analysed during 2006 when the Program was first announced, 2007 during the commencement of the Program, and 2011 when the High Court Challenge began. The results from the analysis reveal mixed responses, with news articles in 2006 and 2007 portraying a more positive representation of the Chaplaincy Program. On the other hand, in 2011 the Program was portrayed more negatively due to considerable support for the High Court Challenge. The compiled findings demonstrate that online newspaper portrayals of the Chaplaincy Program are predominantly biased based upon the assumptions made by journalists, and the people they choose to represent in their news articles. This research provides new insight into how spirituality is represented within Australian media, particularly analysing and reflecting on the way in which newspaper discourse represents religious chaplains within state education.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- (i) incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;
- (ii) contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or
- (iii) contain any defamatory material.

Signed:

Date:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my family for being so supportive of my studies. I would not have been able to do this project if it were not for their compassion and generosity. I am especially grateful to my supervisor, Dr Danielle Brady, for offering her support, wisdom and kindness in helping me to accomplish this thesis. I am also very thankful to my lecturers for their knowledge and encouragement throughout my degree.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	i
Declaration.....	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Background	3
Significance.....	4
Research Questions	5
Chapter Two: Literature Review	6
Sociology	7
Media	11
Religion.....	15
Conclusion	20
Chapter Three: Research Methodology.....	22
Methodology and Theoretical Framework.....	22
Sampling Rationale	24
Analysis.....	26
Chapter Four: Findings.....	28
Role of Chaplains.....	28
2006/07 Newspaper Coverage	28
2011 Newspaper Coverage	32
Funding	35
2006/07 Newspaper Coverage	36
2011 Newspaper Coverage	38
Church and State boundaries	42
2006/07 Newspaper Coverage	42
2011 Newspaper Coverage	45
High Court Challenge	47
2011 Newspaper Coverage	47
General Discussion.....	51
References.....	57

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Since the September 11 attacks theorists have examined how religion and spirituality have become increasingly sensitive and controversial news topics (Aly, 2007; Bouma, 2006; Lucas, 2004). The National School Chaplaincy Program in particular has been one of the many current debated spiritual topics in Australian online newspaper media, since 2006 (AAP, 2006, October 29; AFP, 2010, February 16; Dillon, 2011, January 28; Edwards, 2007, March 25; Maley & Alford, 2011, April 27; Packham, 2010, June 18).

For this thesis I have examined how the National School Chaplaincy Program (the Chaplaincy Program or the Program for short) has been represented by online newspaper media, using Norman Fairclough's method of Critical Discourse Analysis. The Chaplaincy Program, religion and spirituality, media representations and Critical Discourse Analysis have varied interpretations, which I will explain for the context of this project.

The Chaplaincy Program was established by the Howard Government in 2006 and continues to be a government funded program to this day (Australian Government, (2011) . Schools across Australia are able to apply to the federal government for the funding of a chaplain in their school. The government pays for half of the annual income of a chaplain, and the school raises funds for the other half (Australian Government, 2011). The choice of chaplain is made by the school community and approved by the government. The Chaplaincy Program is entirely voluntary and is there to provide pastoral care to students and staff. In the "National School Chaplaincy Program Guidelines" (2010) it states:

The objectives of the National School Chaplaincy Program are to assist schools and their communities to provide greater pastoral care, general religious and personal advice and comfort to all students and staff (p. 4).

One very important definition, which also needs to be explained here, is the distinction between religion and spirituality. The definitions of religion and spirituality are constantly being (re)defined, by theorists and the government alike (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011b; Australian Human Rights Commission,

2011; Hoover, 2006; Sidoti, 1998). For this thesis I will employ definitions from the Australian Human Rights Commission's (AHRC) (2011) report on religious freedom in Australia.

The AHRC (2011) explain that being spiritual is about having a "relationship with otherness, with powers, forces and beings beyond the scope of the material world. The other might be God, nature, land, sea or some other person or being" (p. 7). Thus spirituality is considered less formal than religion. The AHRC (2011) states:

Religion can be taken to refer to an organised form of maintaining, promoting, celebrating and applying the consequences of engagement with what is taken to be ultimately defining... These activities are usually done by or in association with a group, an organisation and/or a community (p.7).

Despite the noticeable separation of the two terms, I will be using them together because I believe it encompasses the devout practices of both religion and spirituality.

My analysis of the Program within online newspaper articles will examine how language is used to construct and represent ideologies. I use the term 'representation' as explained by cultural theorist Stuart Hall, who (1997) states:

In language, we use signs and symbols- whether they are sounds, written words... even objects- to stand for or represent to other people our concepts, ideas and feelings. Language is one of the 'media' through which thoughts, ideas and feelings are represented in a culture. Representation through language is therefore central to the processes by which meaning is produced (p. 1).

Media representations will be explored, when I conduct my chosen method of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) using Norman Fairclough's method from his book *Analysing discourse: textual analysis for social research* (2003). Fairclough examines how language produces ideologies and discourses, which in turn influences social formations, which is why I will only analyse the construction of news media stories rather than audience's interpretations.

My reason for analysing online newspaper reports' representations in particular is because they have provided information to the public, not only about the establishment of the Chaplaincy Program, but also about changes to its implementation (AAP, 2006, October 29; Koutsoukis, 2006, June 11). The media has

also reported about the Program's acceptance and rejection by different social and government groups (AAP, 2006, October 29; Peatling & Patty, 2006, October 31; Rowbotham, 2006, October 30). Thereby newspaper reports are a valuable resource for examining the development of the Chaplaincy Program.

Background

When I began my investigation into the Australian media's portrayal of spirituality, I first examined Western society. From this research, particularly that undertaken by seminal theorists David Tacey (2000) and Gary Bouma (2006), I found that many diverse spiritual groups exist within Australian society.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Standard Classification of Religious Groups (2011b), the top five religious groups in Australia include: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism. There are more than 31 spiritual groups and 4 secular groups mentioned in the classification. As there are so many diverse spiritual organisations I researched literature which examined what some of these groups thought of media portrayals of spirituality. In the report by the AHRC (2011) they state:

The Church of Scientology raised the issue of anti-religious propaganda in media and advocated for a '...restriction on religious misinformation and misrepresentation known or reasonably known to be untruthful in the media' (p. 76).

There are more examples of these perceptions in my literature review, which demonstrate how the media can influence people's understanding and experience of spirituality. One issue that the AHRC (2011) examines in their report, which can impact upon the media's interpretations of spirituality, are the religious freedom laws of Australia.

Australia is a secular nation according to Section 116 of the Australian Constitution, which claims that the government has no right to impose religion on anyone, no religious test is required for those who wish to work under the Commonwealth and citizens are allowed to practice any religion as long as they are not breaking the law (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011a; Bouma, 2006; Sidoti, 1998). Even though these laws are in the Australian Constitution they are more of a guideline as it is up to each individual state to determine their own level of religious

freedom (Sidoti, 1998). The analysis of online news articles will also examine how the media portrays Australia's religious freedom laws with regards to the Chaplaincy Program.

Significance

The analysis of religion and spirituality in the media is still a growing discipline in Australian sociology (AAP, 2008, November 9). Certain religions, such as Christianity, Scientology and Islam, have been given close examination (Aly, 2007; Bouma, 1995; Hughes, 2006), but spirituality, in its entirety, has not had the same attention (Lucas, 2004; Richardson, 2004, 2006). Through my research of how the Chaplaincy Program is represented in newspaper media, I intend to build on the work of Gary Bouma (2006), James Richardson (2004) and David Tacey (2000) who have all examined how spirituality exists within Australian society. These theorists have analysed society's interpretations of spirituality, through ethnographic research, but have not developed a deep analysis of the media's representations.

The media is important to analyse because it has become so pervasive in our daily lives, and according to the latest independent media report (Allard & Doherty, 2008, November 9) and social theorists (Entman, 2007; Hoover, 2006), it has dramatically changed how we experience the world. The significance of analysing online media, in particular, is due to its increasing use by Australian citizens (Finkelstein, 2012, p. 89). Despite this use, I am not analysing online media merely because it has become more popular in recent years, but rather because it is another location within which Australian's are being exposed to contesting discourses about the Chaplaincy Program.

Some of these contesting discourses have raised concerns about the amount of taxpayer's money being invested into the Program, as well as whether the Program is in accordance with Section 116 of the Australian Constitution. One example of this conflict is that of Brisbane man, Ron Williams, who took the Australian Commonwealth to the High Court in 2011 to try and have chaplains removed from state schools (D. Harrison, 2011, July 12; Lutton, 2011, January 30). Mr Williams believed the Commonwealth and the Federal Government breached Section 116 of the Australian Constitution, which states that the government cannot

impose or promote spirituality (Parliament of Australia, n.d.). These matters are still being debated within the news media to this day, and because of this I argue that the Chaplaincy Program, as portrayed by the media, has become a significant topic to analyse.

Research Questions

1. How has the National School Chaplaincy Program been portrayed by the Australian online news media, between the years 2006 and 2011?
2. Do news media representations of the Chaplaincy Program encourage a particular viewpoint that promotes certain ideologies and discourses?

Section 116 of the Australian Constitution (Parliament of Australia, n.d.) states:

The Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion, and no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office or public trust under the Commonwealth.

3. Does the news media portray the Chaplaincy Program as aligning with the religious freedom laws of Australia?

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Within the discipline of sociology, the practice of religion and spirituality within western society has been of great interest (Aly, 2007; Bouma, 1995; Bouma, 2006; Breen, 2000; Garry, 2005; Richardson, 2004; Richardson, 2006; Tacey, 2000; Tambiah, 1990). The way in which individual countries express their religious and spiritual customs is unique, and represents another layer of national and cultural identity (Bouma, 2006; Hughes, 2006; Richardson, 2006; Tacey, 2000). However, the theoretical study of religion and spirituality as represented by Australian news media has had minimal attention (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011; Breen, 2000; Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson, 1992; Hall, 1997; Hoover, 2006).

The news media interprets local and global events which in turn constructs an image of the world and how it functions (Altheide, 1997; Entman, 2007; Gamson, et al., 1992; Jensen, 1990). Michael Breen (2000) in his chapter 'When size does matter: how church size determines media coverage of religion' states:

From the content of news, one can ascertain which groups are perceived as legitimate within a society. In a world where communications are instantaneous and where the pace of life is dramatically faster than it was even 25 years ago, consumers of news are forced to rely on the mass media for their understanding of the world in which they live (p. 161).

Media representations of religion and spirituality can assist in understanding how religion is perceived within society as either positive or negative, and can also outline whether religion is important at all (Breen, 2000). The analysis of religion and spirituality within Australia and its media will be examined in three sections.

The sociology section gives background to the ways in which religion and spirituality have been integrated within society. The media section examines how news media stories are constructed for a particular purpose and audience. The methodology used by theorists to analyse media and religion will also be identified. The religion section will concentrate on how Australia defines religion and spirituality as well as the relationship between religion and society. This section will also examine religious freedom in Australia and how media representations of religion and spirituality have impacted upon Australian citizens.

Sociology

The definition of religion was first critiqued around the time of the Enlightenment when Western rational thought sought to examine the concept of religion rather than just its experience (Tambiah, 1990). It was from the early European intellectuals of the Enlightenment “that a particular conception of religion that emphasizes its cognitive, intellectual, doctrinal and dogmatic aspects, gained prominence” (Tambiah, 1990, p. 4). As religion became objectified, theorists began to compare, contrast and grade the world’s differing religions. Tambiah (1990) states:

The characterisation of religion, its ‘justification’ by adherents (or its ‘denigration’ by its opponents), had to be done in a way that took cognizance of the extant scientific discourse and philosophical argumentation. There has been a felt need to provide a cognitive account of religious belief that made the intellectual exercise a parallel to a kind of objectivist scientific description (p.6).

In contemporary society it appears that this is nonetheless a predominant practice of Western theorists, who are still attempting to define and even construct a representation of what religion and spirituality are, and what they mean to Western society (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011; Bouma, 2006; Garry, 2005; Tacey, 2000; Tambiah, 1990). Victoria Harrison (2006) in her article: ‘The pragmatics of defining religion in a multi-cultural world’ states:

Scholars have sought to define religion so as to identify both what makes something a religion and what, if anything, distinguishes religions from secular social organisations like clubs (p. 133).

Theorists, who have tried to define religion and spirituality, usually comment that it is very difficult as the terms include a multitude of differing beliefs and practices (Bouma, 2006; Tacey, 2000; Tambiah, 1990). Gary Bouma (2006) argues that the term ‘spiritual’ has a more positive connotation than ‘religion’, which has less appeal “because of its association with formal organisations”(p.10). Theorists have thus been inclined to define the two terms separately so as not to offend diverse groups (Bouma, 2006; Tacey, 2000).

In his book ‘Australian Soul’, Gary Bouma (2006) claims that religion and spirituality relate “to dimensions of human life that intersect with but point beyond the ordinary, the temporal, the material and the physical; hence the use of such

prefixes as meta-, trans-, super- and extra-” (p. 10). Even though there are different organisations and groups, which call themselves either religious or spiritual, Bouma has put them under the same bracket as they both appear to relate to something beyond the physical.

Tacey (2000), on the other hand, examines the experience of the spiritual instead. Tacey (2000) argues that spirituality “is the desire for connectedness, which often expresses itself as an emotional relationship with an invisible sacred presence” (p. 17). He claims that the spiritual is not a physical premise or even a particular ritual, but rather the experience of another realm. Tacey (2000) states:

In the past, many of us believed that spirituality was a product of religious life and devotion, but we are having to face the fact that spirituality itself is larger, greater and much older than any organised religion. Spirituality is the primary category, the baggy monster, whereas religions are discrete categories of the spiritual realm.

These definitions have aimed to assist theorists’ analysis of religion and spirituality within contemporary society, particularly in cases where religion has needed to define and defend itself (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011; Bouma, 2006; Garry, 2005; Lucas, 2004; Richardson, 2006).

Religious freedom has become an important aspect of many multi-faith communities and is considered, by some theorists, a necessary requirement (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011; Bouma, 2006; Garry, 2005; Lucas, 2004; Richardson, 2004; Richardson, 2006). Richardson (2006) states:

If a society is homogenous in terms of religion, then there usually would be little concern about religious freedom in that society. If all agreed on religious matters, who would raise the question of rights of religious minorities, and why would it even be raised (p. 274).

The United States Constitution was the “first modern national governing document”, according to Richardson (2006), which allowed people to independently choose and practice any religion so long as they abided by the law (p. 273). Even though religious freedom is still a new model, it is considered a “universally declared value in today’s world” (Richardson, 2006, p. 271). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 18 claims that “everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion” and to be able to change their belief or religion of their own

accord, and to practice their religion in a community or by oneself (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011, p. 2).

Despite this declaration, which has been adopted in countries such as Australia, America and Britain, some nations have limited or vague laws regarding religious freedom. These limitations have made it difficult for many religions and spiritualities to practice their teachings or even be accepted within their communities (Bouma, 2006; Garry, 2005; Lucas, 2004; Richardson, 2006; Tacey, 2000). Both Lucas (2004) and Richardson (2004) argue that it is the New Religious Movements (NRMs), as well as other minority faiths, in particular, which have a harder time integrating within society because of prejudice.

Bouma (2006) and Richardson (2004; 2006) define new religious movements (NRMs) as religions or spiritualities which are new to a country or have recently expanded within a country; these spiritual groups are sometimes, but are not always, 'new' in terms of existence (Bouma, 2006; Richardson, 2004; Richardson, 2006). All religions, but particularly NRMs, have been greatly influenced by religious freedom laws, which not only define their organisation, but also impact upon their level of independence throughout Western society (Bouma, 2006; Garry, 2005; Lucas, 2004; Richardson, 2006; Tacey, 2000). Lucas (2004) states:

New and minority religious communities in any culture or nation face an uphill battle for survival. This is because these communities often challenge or reject the normative order of society (p. 341).

Bouma (2006) argues that social policy makers aim to protect society from harm, which includes from "bad religions" (p. 179). Bouma (2006) explains that "the claim that a group is harmful may be used by one religious group to exclude another" and that "cult-busting is a worldwide movement" (p.179). Bouma (2006) states:

There is no question that some religious associations can cause harm. The extremely difficult problem faced in these cases is always one of selecting the criteria to apply (p. 179).

Bouma (2006) argues that in the early days, Christianity was seen as dangerous, Quakers were also seen as a threat, and that sometimes it is because the religion is new and different that people are weary of its honesty and legitimacy (p. 180). This has had an impact on the rights of NRMs and indeed all religions. In

terms of the general acceptance of religion within society, some theorists agree that religion has prospered, but there has been a very public struggle between those who want religion and spirituality to flourish, and those who do not (Bouma, 2006; Garry, 2005; Tacey, 2000).

Some of the concerns about religion have been fuelled by social strife and violence such as the September 11 attacks (Bouma, 2006; Tacey, 2000; Garry, 2005). Garry (2005) argues many secularists believe it was religion that caused the attacks and theorists who perhaps were weary of religion in the first place became even more so after this incident. Garry (2005) states:

An anti-religious secularism was even revealed in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. To many secularists, it was religion that had prompted the attacks. As philosopher Richard Rorty sees it, religion fosters intolerance and extremism (p. 122).

Some sociologists have expressed a deep concern that there has been a negative approach from theorists trying to understand and analyse religion and spirituality, and their practices within society (Bouma, 2006; Garry, 2005; Tacey, 2000; Tambiah, 1990). Tacey (2000) argues that even today those who are intellectually enlightened, or perhaps just secular or critical to religion, tend to view the “unknowability, mystery, and styles of paradox and poetry” within religion and spirituality as “some kind of hoax or system of thought designed to confound and ridicule common sense” (p. 28). Contemporary theorists have also conveyed the same paradigm of rational thought expressed by enlightened Western intellectuals. Garry (2005) states:

Critics claim that religion is undemocratic and encourages a blindly obedient, herdlike mentality. According to Professor Ira C. Lupu, religion undermines the ability of citizens to exercise independent and critical judgment (p. 122).

Tacey (2000) also argues that some non-religious groups describe the practice of spirituality as taking a “leap of faith” or having “blind trust”, something which is undesirable to rational thought (p. 18). Tacey (2000) states:

But blind trust or leaps of faith are hardly on the minds of those who have allowed themselves to be brought into a relationship with the sacred. These secular clichés are important only to the outsider’s perspective, which is always looking for slightly condescending and judgemental ways of describing what appears to be beyond its grasp (p. 18).

Bouma (2006), Garry (2005) and Tacey (2000) are in support of religion and spirituality within western communities, and claim that despite the negativity, there is a place in Western society for alternative practices. Bouma (2006) states:

Most spiritualities and religions offer hope in a variety of ways. Religious meaning addresses the issue ‘what is the point in anything, life, work, love, getting up in the morning?’...Spiritualities say that by attending to the more-than-physical in your life you will become attuned with the universe and as a result will be happier, healthier and wealthier-at least spiritually if not monetarily. Through encounters with otherness, self is affirmed, connected and made to feel part of a larger whole (p. 18).

Even though these theorists believe spirituality is beneficial and that many faiths can co-exist harmoniously, they have identified conflict between religious and anti-religious groups. Although there are laws which allow people to practice their religion as long as they are abiding by the set constitution, there is still suspicion and judgement. The media has a great influence on people’s perceptions of reality within contemporary society, and using media discourse, theorists have tried to examine how social policy and religious freedom have been represented (Altheide, 2007; Aly, 2007; Breen, 2000; Entman, 2007; Gamson Croteau, Hoynes & Sasson, 1992; Hoover, 2006; Moss, 1988; Teo, 2000).

Media

The media has the power to determine which ideologies are represented and reinforced to audiences, according to Entman (2007), Fairclough (2003) and Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes & Sasson (1992). These authors argue that the way a story is framed can determine how audiences perceive news reports. Fairclough (2003) states that “when the voice of another is incorporated into a text, there are always choices about how to ‘frame’ it, how to contextualize it in terms of other parts of the text” (p. 53). David Altheide also argues (1997) in his article “The news media, the problem frame and the production of fear”, that it is the framing of news stories which inevitably and ultimately impacts upon viewer’s perceptions of reality (p. 651). Altheide defines the frame as a ‘boundary’ which shapes what is included and excluded in a news story, which in turn influences the way the news report is delivered and interpreted (p. 651). Entman (2007) also defines framing as the

inclusion and exclusion of certain information, which is then brought together in a structure “to promote a particular interpretation” (p. 164). Entman (2007) states:

Framing works to shape and alter audience members’ interpretations and preferences through priming. That is, frames introduce or raise the salience or apparent importance of certain ideas, activating schemas that encourage target audiences to think, feel, and decide in a particular way (p. 164).

Framing and priming, according to Entman are techniques used by the media to facilitate agenda-setting, which is to define “problems worthy of public and government attention” (p. 164). The author argues that if media producers use framing and priming, which has the effect of creating a news slant, for particular stories over a period of time, the reason could be agenda-setting. Altheide (1997) claims that agenda-setting determines what people focus on and states: “Frames focus on what will be discussed, how it will be discussed, and above all, how it will not be discussed” (p. 651). Entman also argues that audiences are not told “what to think”, but rather “what to think about” certain issues (p. 165). Entman (2007) states:

The distinction misleads because, short of physical coercion, all influence over “what people think” derives from telling them “what to think about.” If the media really are stunningly successful in telling people what to think about, they must also exert significant influence over what they think (p. 165).

If slant persists “it may be systematically assisting certain entities to induce their preferred behaviour in others”, thereby the media may be encouraging support for certain groups or individuals within society (Entman, 2007, p. 166). Gamson et al (1992), declares that even though media producers have a certain ideology they want to promote, audiences are not passive but rather active interpreters of media messages (p. 373). The authors claim that contestation allows opposing groups the ability to redefine and contest dominant media representations. Gamson et al (1992) state:

The un-determined nature of media discourse allows plenty of room for challengers such as social movements to offer competing constructions of reality and to find support for them from readers whose daily lives may lead them to construct meaning in ways that go beyond media imagery (p. 373).

Klaus Jensen (1990) in his article 'The politics of polysemy: television news, everyday consciousness and political action' also claims that audiences interpret messages differently, thereby texts are polysemic. Jensen (1990) states:

The argument is that several interpretations coexist as potentials in any one text, and may be actualised or decoded differently by different audiences, depending on their interpretive conventions and cultural backgrounds (pp. 57-58).

Jensen (1990) argues that different readings can also be "an expression of opposition to the dominant forms of understanding implied by the media", so even though media content may be produced to promote a certain ideology, readers will interpret these messages or images differently (p. 58).

While some theorists, such as Altheide (1997) and Entman (2007), argue that audiences are passive receivers of media discourse, there are opposing arguments from Gamson et al (1992) and Jensen (1990), who claim that viewers are really active interpreters of media messages. Using a variety of methodologies, theorists have been able to, not only analyse news media messages, but also examine how audiences are engaging with media discourse (Aly, 2007; Breen, 2000; Fairclough, 1995, Hoover, 2006; Teo, 2000). These methods include: critical discourse analysis, content analysis, focus group interviewing and textual analysis.

In his book *Critical Discourse Analysis* Fairclough (2010, February 18) argues that Critical Discourse analysis "aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality" to determine between "discursive practices...wider social and cultural structures" (pp. 132-133).

Critical Discourse Analysis is used by Peter Teo (2000) in his article 'Racism in the news: a critical discourse analysis of news reporting in two Australian newspapers'. He conducts a textual analysis on Australian newspapers to determine whether there is an ideological subtext of racism.

Teo (2000) argues that racism has become imbedded in a "less transparent structure of power discourse that disguises dominance in naturalised discourses" (p. 8). He comments that newspaper text can have subliminal meanings; therefore critical discourse analysis is a useful method for breaking apart these meanings for a more transparent understanding of text (p. 8).

Similar methods have been used by theorists to examine how religion is mediated around the world through such analytical methods as: Textual Analysis, Focus Group Interviewing and Content Analysis (Aly, 2007; Breen, 2000 & Hoover, 2006).

Anne Aly uses both Textual Analysis and Focus Group Interviewing methods in her article “Australian muslim responses to the discourse on terrorism in the australian popular media” to examine Australian Muslim’s responses to negative media reports, which claim that they are terrorists. Aly (2007) states:

For the most part, attention has focussed on the bias against Muslims in the popular media, establishing Australian Muslims as victims of negative media stereotypes. This paper deviates from this emerging trend and explores alternative responses to the discourse on terrorism among Australian Muslims (p. 28).

Aly first undertakes a textual analysis of newspaper reports to demonstrate the prevailing local and global media discourse surrounding the Islamic religion in Western society. She also uses the method of Focus Group Interviewing to determine how Australian Muslims interpret negative media representations of their religion. Aly claims that even though textual analyses have been conducted on anti-Muslim media representations, no examinations have involved responses from Muslims. These methods of textual analysis and focus group interviewing allowed Aly to examine both media representations as well as Muslim perspectives, to gain a holistic view of the anti-Muslim discourse in Australia. Another theorist, Stewart Hoover, uses interviewing to examine how audiences analyse and interpret media messages about religion.

In his book ‘Religion in the media age’ Steven Hoover (2006) interviews American household audiences to examine how the media plays an important part in shaping cultural and social experiences of religion and spirituality. Hoover (2006) states: “As a fundamentally sociological project, our study has wanted to look to the contexts, influences, and consequences of the relationship between media and religion in the material spheres of cultural and social life” (pp. 264-265). Overall, the author reported that in each household “the media are universal and ‘taken for granted” (p. 265), and that mediated religion and spirituality had become a large part of people’s lives (p. 295).

Another method for analysing media is Content Analysis, which has been employed by Michael Breen (2000) in his investigation 'When size does matter: how church size determines media coverage of religion'. Breen examined the: Catholic, Mormon, Baptist, Jewish and Lutheran religious groups. Breen argues that media representations of religions which have a larger following are given a more positive representation than minority religions which are viewed as deviant (p.171). The author concluded that even though he examined dominant religions, there are many subgroups and minority religions whose representations have not been properly investigated (p. 173). Breen states that "from the content of news, one can ascertain which groups are perceived as legitimate within society" (p. 161).

These methods have been used effectively in demonstrating how the media helps to shape people's opinions of society including religion and spirituality. Theorists have examined the role of the media in reinforcing ideologies about religion and spirituality to determine its significance within Australian society. Theorists have also examined how Australians define religion based on their cultural religious heritage (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011; Bouma, 2006; Brady, 2006; Richardson, 2004; Tacey, 2000).

Religion

Definitions of religion and spirituality, within the Australian context have been diverse because of Australia's multi-cultural and multi-faith society (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011; Bouma, 2006; Brady, 2006 & Tacey, 2000). Bouma's (2006) definition of spirituality claims that "in Australia today, the 'spiritual' refers to an experiential journey of encounter and relationship with otherness, with powers, forces and beings beyond the scope of everyday life" (p. 12).

The Australian Human Rights Commission (2011) describes both religion and spirituality as two similar, but definitely separate rituals. The Australian Human Rights Commission (2011) states that religion refers "to an organised form of maintaining and applying the consequences of engagement with what is ultimately defining, totally other, and yet profoundly encountered within life" and these activities are done in an association or group (p.7).

Religion and spirituality, according to these definitions, appears to be considered as an organised set of rituals, which maintains an ideology that explains

how life functions according to the governing of an outside, usually cosmic, body. On the other hand they have defined spirituality as something that is more of a relationship that is very personal between oneself and a powerful spiritual being.

These definitions have attempted to construct a perception of religion and spirituality that is in accordance with Australia's diverse religious culture, which has been influenced by a history shaped predominantly by immigration (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011; Bouma, 1995; Bouma, 2006; Hughes, 2006; Tacey, 2000). Hughes (2006) argues that there were four waves of immigration in Australia after World War Two, which brought many different ethnicities and spiritualities.

The first wave of immigration brought "new expressions of the Christian faith" (Hughes, 2006, p. 4). Hughes (2006) explains that from both Southern and Eastern Europe, varieties of Eastern Orthodoxy arrived in Australia, which included both Greek and Russian Orthodoxies (p. 4). The second wave of immigration, in the late 1960s, brought many people from the Middle East, which included Christian and Muslim Lebanese. Hughes (2006) states:

This was the first time that large numbers of people who came from backgrounds other than Christianity and Judaism had immigrated to Australia, and the presence of these new groups of people raised many new questions about religion and multiculturalism (p. 4).

During the second wave of immigration, the 'White Australia policy' was abandoned by the Whitlam government, which allowed people to be accepted into Australia regardless of their skin colour or religion (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011; Bouma, 1995; Hughes, 2006). The third wave of immigration occurred during the late 1970s, which brought a predominantly Asian population including refugees from the Vietnam War. Bouma (1995) states: "During the 1970s and 1980s to this Christian plurality were added significant numbers of Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus" (p.286).

In the fourth wave, during the 1980s, immigration laws changed to allow people into Australia who were seeking asylum, as well as others who could offer their skills and experience to Australian society. Many people from China, mostly Hong Kong, and India arrived for business reasons (Hughes, 2006, p. 5). Bouma

(1995) states: “One of the unintended consequences of Australia’s massive program of migration has been the emergence of a very religiously plural society” (p. 286).

Bouma (2006) claims that “Australians identifying with religious groups categorised as ‘other’ in the census increased by 33.33 per cent between 1996 and 2001” (p. 58). Some of the most popular religions in Australia in the twenty first century include: Buddhism, Hinduism, Jewish, Islam, Aboriginal traditional, Scientology, Sikhism, Baha’i and Paganism, to name a few (Bouma, 2006, p. 59). The Australian Human Rights Commission (2011) claims that “Buddhism is now Australia’s second religion after Christianity” (p. 4).

There have been reports which claim that many people are leaving established churches for other religions (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011; Bouma, 2006; Tacey, 2000). Possamai (2008) claims, that the secularisation theories of the past may “describe the current state of mainstream religious churches, but fail to address Australia’s current religious diversification and religious revitalisation” (p. 26). Despite these claims Catholicism, in particular, is considered the “largest religious group in Australia” as it is “well organised at federal, state and local levels and has the wealth of many religious orders”, according to Bouma (2006, p. 67).

Both Bouma (2006) and Anderson (2004) argue that Pentecostalism is also an expanding Christian group with an estimated five hundred million practitioners worldwide (Anderson, 2004, p. 1). Allan Anderson (2004) in his book: *An introduction to Pentecostalism* states: “The Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in all their multifaceted variety constitute the fastest growing group of churches within Christianity today” (p. 1).

These two groups have made a great impact on Australia’s religious culture, but there are also non-Christian groups, which have significantly prospered in Australia as well, and include: Buddhism, Islam and Hinduism. In the 2006 census there was a recorded total of 419 000 Buddhists, 340 000 Muslims, and 148 000 Hindus, out of a total population of over 19 million (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011, p. 16).

These religions and many other minority faiths that have prospered have not always been able to practice their traditions so easily within Australian society (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011; Richardson, 2004). Religious freedom has also been examined by the Australian Human Rights Commission (2011), to determine the level of freedom that religious and spiritual groups have within society.

The Australian Constitution permits citizens to practice their preferred religion or spirituality as long as they abide by the law (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011). As this law is not managed by the federal government it is up to individual states to determine their own level of religious freedom. Richardson (2004) states:

Of the six Australian states, only one, Tasmania, has a guarantee of religious freedom in its state constitution. Two states (Victoria and Queensland) have statutes that afford some protection for minority faiths. New South Wales (Sydney) has explicitly rejected adding religious freedom to its anti-discrimination statutes, mainly because of opposition from traditional religious organisations, as well as gay and lesbian lobby groups (p. 205).

Richardson (2004) claims “some of the controversial NRMs that have gained notoriety in other societies have also been the target of efforts at social control by Australian officials” (p. 206). Minority religions such as Scientology have had difficulty integrating within Australian society as their practices have been critically examined within Australian courts as to their legitimacy (Richardson, 2004).

Richardson (2004) states:

Several states have, at one time or another, indirectly banned Scientology by declaring it ‘psychological’ and hence illegal because practitioners were not registered psychologists (p. 207).

The Australian Human Rights Commission (2011) examined how Australian citizens themselves perceive religious freedom in contemporary Australian society. The Australian Human Rights Commission (2011) quotes the FamilyVoice Australia Christian group who state:

Australia is a nation with a Christian heritage and Christianity remains the majority religion today. It is appropriate that the major Christian feasts-Christmas, Easter and the weekly Sunday- continue to be marked by society as a whole. There is no need to attempt to

treat the holy days of other minority religions on the same basis. To do so would be inappropriate (p. 23).

The responses from minority religions, recorded in the report, claimed they felt opposition from other religious and secular groups within their communities. The Australian Human Rights Commission (2011) states:

Voices from minority communities revealed that they were acutely aware of the difficulties they face in being heard and in practising their religion at times, particularly the difficulties in building schools and places of worship in the face of concerted local opposition, and reactions to the physical expression of their faith... (p. 24).

Secularist perspectives were also recorded by the Australian Commission to determine the perspective of those who are not in favour of religion and spirituality within society. The Australian Human Rights Commission (2011) states:

Secularists...would argue that secular views are more logical and rational, and feel that religion is for consenting adults in private. Their particular concern is the public teaching of Christianity and its presentation as normal and visible (p. 25).

These perspectives are diverse and when participants were asked about how the media contributed to these perceptions the responses were even more divided. The Australian Human Rights Commission explained that the media has changed and does “play a significant role in society” (p. 75). The Australian Human Rights Commission (2011) states: “Secularists argued ‘...in general the media tend to portray Christianity in a positive light...portrayal of other religions, sects or cults may be less positive” (pp. 75-76).

Religious groups openly expressed their dissatisfaction with media content on both television and the internet claiming that it was contributing to disharmony between religious and non-religious people. The Australian Human Rights Commission (2011) states:

The Church of Scientology raised the issue of anti-religious propaganda in media and advocated for a ‘...restriction on religious misinformation and misrepresentation known or reasonably known to be untruthful in the media’ (p. 76).

Religious profiling was another issue that was lamented by respondents who claimed that minority religions such as Islam were being identified in crime news reports. On the other hand if a person was Anglican or one of the more mainstream

religions their faith was not identified in news reports at all (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011, p. 76). These perspectives demonstrate a contradiction that secular groups, mainstream and minority religions are all dissatisfied with the way the media represents them.

Veronica Brady (2006) states: “AG Stevens may have been right when he wrote, in 1905, that “the Australian environment is unfavourable to the growth of religion” (p. 25). It appears that the history of religion in Australia, its diversity, and vague religious freedom laws have led to confusion about the significance of religion and spirituality in society, as well as its legitimacy. Bouma (2006) argues that in Australia there have been confusing perceptions of the practice of religion in Australia. Bouma (2006) states, that in Australia if you are “too religious” you will be frowned upon, but if you are against religion altogether you “may well be avoided” (p. 36).

The media appear to also play a role in confusing the significance of spirituality as well. Many people from different groups of faiths lamented that they were misrepresented by the Australian media, leaving an impression of discrimination. Religion and spirituality have still been able to flourish in Australia, but not without prejudice and a lack of government protection (Richardson, 2004).

Conclusion

Sociologists have been acknowledging the significance of religion and spirituality within contemporary Western society. Even though there were doubts of its survival during modernisation, it has remained important for many people (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011; Bouma, 2006; Garry, 2005; Richardson, 2004). In order to understand how religion and spirituality is practiced, theorists have attempted to define the two terms in order to critically discuss and identify them within diverse communities. As religious freedom has become an important regulation the way in which it has been exercised within Australia, in particular, has shown how vague laws have led to confusion about what can and cannot be practiced (Richardson, 2004).

The role of the media in framing news stories has shown that while some theorists (Altheide, 1997; Entman, 2007) still believe that audiences passively accept what they are shown, others (Gamson et al, 1992; Jenson, 1990) believe that viewers

actively engage with media discourse. Within the Australian context it has been reported that many religious and non-religious groups actively engage with media discourse and disapprove of its frame.

I argue that news media stories are framed to construct or reinforce ideologies about religion and spirituality. The use of methodologies such as content analysis and textual analysis can help uncover subliminal messages. I claim that if Australia's religious freedom laws are vague then media representations may also be vague. These media representations may be inconsistent and biased if there is no clear definition of what religion and spirituality are, and how significant they are to Australians and their Constitution.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methodology and Theoretical Framework

My methodology, for the newspaper analysis, will utilise Norman Fairclough's theory of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Fairclough (2010, February 18) states:

By 'critical' discourse analysis I mean discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes... (pp. 132-133).

Fairclough (1995) argues that the aim of CDA is to uncover how taken-for-granted ideologies have become naturalised discourse, and how this discourse fits into a broader socio-cultural context. Fairclough argues that discourse forms social practices, which informs social institutions, and influences social formations (p.37). Thereby, discourse directs how people speak and act within different contexts such as the school, home and the media.

As there are many methods for conducting a CDA, for my analysis I will use the three assumptions (Existential, Propositional and Value) Fairclough explains in his book: *Analysing discourse: textual analysis for social research* (2003). I will use this theory to examine the discourses and ideologies which are being constructed and reinforced within online newspaper articles. To examine the three assumptions it is important to first understand intertextuality, which influences how assumptions are produced within newspaper media.

According to Fairclough (2003) "intertextuality is the presence of actual elements of other texts within a text- quotations" (p. 39), but it also includes summarised text from other sources. Thereby, intertextuality involves both direct speech (quote) and indirect speech (a summary of what was said, or written about elsewhere). Fairclough (2003) states:

One important contrast in reporting is between reports which are relatively 'faithful' to what is reported, quoting it, claiming to reproduce what was actually said or written, and those which are not. (p. 49).

Fairclough (2003) argues that assumptions are produced from direct and indirect reporting because it is assumed that within a text, both types of speech are attributed to somebody, or are linked to another body of text, which has talked about the matter before (p. 49). Thus intertextuality and assumptions make claims: that what has been said by such a person was actually said; and is most likely correct, that what was written elsewhere was indeed written, and that readers have come across these news topics before (p. 40).

Fairclough (2003) argues that, even though dialogue allows different voices to be expressed, direct speech can be placed within a text to shape a particular impression of the reported issue. This shaping is known as framing. Fairclough (2003) states:

When the voice of another is incorporated into a text, there are always choices about how to 'frame' it, how to contextualise it in terms of other parts of the text-about relations between report and authorial account (p. 53).

Thereby it is through the examination of intertextuality (direct and indirect speech) that the three assumptions can be uncovered, to demonstrate how the media uses direct and indirect reporting to produce and promote certain ideologies and discourses.

The three assumptions Fairclough (2003) examines are: Existential, Propositional and Value assumptions. Existential assumptions make claims about what exists, with regards to the problem. It refers to a social phenomenon such as: globalisation or social cohesion or inequality, and is meant to be taken for granted as permanent and rationally placed within society (Fairclough, 2003, pp. 56-57). Propositional assumptions, according to Fairclough (2003, p. 55), are predictions about what is, can be, or will be. Propositional assumptions are usually made when someone wants a generalised claim to be taken for granted, particularly when there is no evidence to back it up (2003, p. 55). Value assumptions simply evaluate things as good or bad, needed or not needed to promote a particular viewpoint (Fairclough, 2003, p. 57). It is these three assumptions which help to identify how ideologies and discourses have been constructed and promoted within online newspaper articles.

Fairclough explains that “assumed meanings are of particular ideological significance” (p. 58). Thus it will be through the examination of the three assumptions that ideologies and discourses about the Chaplaincy Program will be uncovered. This approach is important to my analysis because Fairclough (1995) focuses on the micro practices in language, as well as the macro practices within society. He argues that it is through critique, of the media for instance, that we can make “visible the interconnectedness of things” (p. 36). This methodology is beneficial to my analysis as I am not only examining how assumptions are constructing ideologies about the Chaplaincy Program, but how these ideologies are creating a discourse about the role of the Program within Australia.

Sampling Rationale

The purpose of the research is to produce a critical discourse analysis of newspaper articles, which examines the development of the National School Chaplaincy Program in Australia between the years 2006 and 2011. Initially I chose to look at the Sydney Morning Herald and the Brisbane Courier Mail, but found that the amount of coverage was not substantial enough so I decided to examine all state newspapers, which gave me a total amount of 111 news articles from eleven newspapers. These newspapers include: *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *Brisbane Courier Mail*, *Sunday Times*, *Adelaide Advertiser*, *Melbourne Age*, *Northern Times*, *The Australian*, *The West Australian*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *Herald Sun* and *The Mercury*. This gave me a more comprehensive overview of how the Chaplaincy Program had been discussed across the nation. I collected all online newspapers I could find from their respective websites as well as from Factiva.

The dissemination of news articles between the eleven newspapers across the six years is represented in Figure 1. A total number of 111 articles were collected from over the six years. For some years, such as 2006-2009, there is only a small number of news articles for each newspaper this is because only national news articles were collected not opinion pieces, some news articles discussed religion in schools but did not specifically discuss the Chaplaincy Program and not many online newspaper websites contained many news articles about the Chaplaincy Program between 2006-2009.

In 2006 and 2007 eleven articles were collected from each year with the majority of news coming from the *Melbourne Age* and the *Sydney Morning Herald*. In 2008 only one article was collected, but again that does not mean that there was only one article written about the Chaplaincy Program. In 2009 there were seven news articles with the majority being printed in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. In 2010 there were seventeen news articles. The articles began to represent different opinions towards the Chaplaincy Program, for example in one article Kevin Rudd was portrayed as using the Chaplaincy Program to gain more votes and to promote religion (Packham, 2010, June 18). In 2011 a total of 64 news articles from the range of newspapers chosen were collected. The amount of online national news coverage greatly increased most notably because of the High Court Challenge taking place.

The High Court Challenge began in 2011, between Queensland father Ron Williams and the Commonwealth of Australia. Mr Williams argued that the way the Chaplaincy Program was funded was unconstitutional because according to Section 116 of the Australian Constitution it claims that the government is not supposed to promote or support religion (Wockner & Athika, 2011, February 10). Thus Mr Williams argued that the Commonwealth funding the Government's Chaplaincy Program in state schools was in breach of the separation of church and state boundaries.

This timeframe was chosen because of my interest in understanding how the Program was initially received and discussed within news media in 2006. I also wanted to examine how the Program was represented during its commencement in 2007 so I have analysed articles from this year as well. In 2011 the High Court Challenge took place so I have also collected and analysed news articles from 2011. I collected news articles from 2008, 2009 and 2010 to illustrate how much coverage there was for these years, but have not discussed these articles within the analysis because although there was some coverage I specifically wanted to examine the years when the Program began and when the High Court Challenge was in effect.

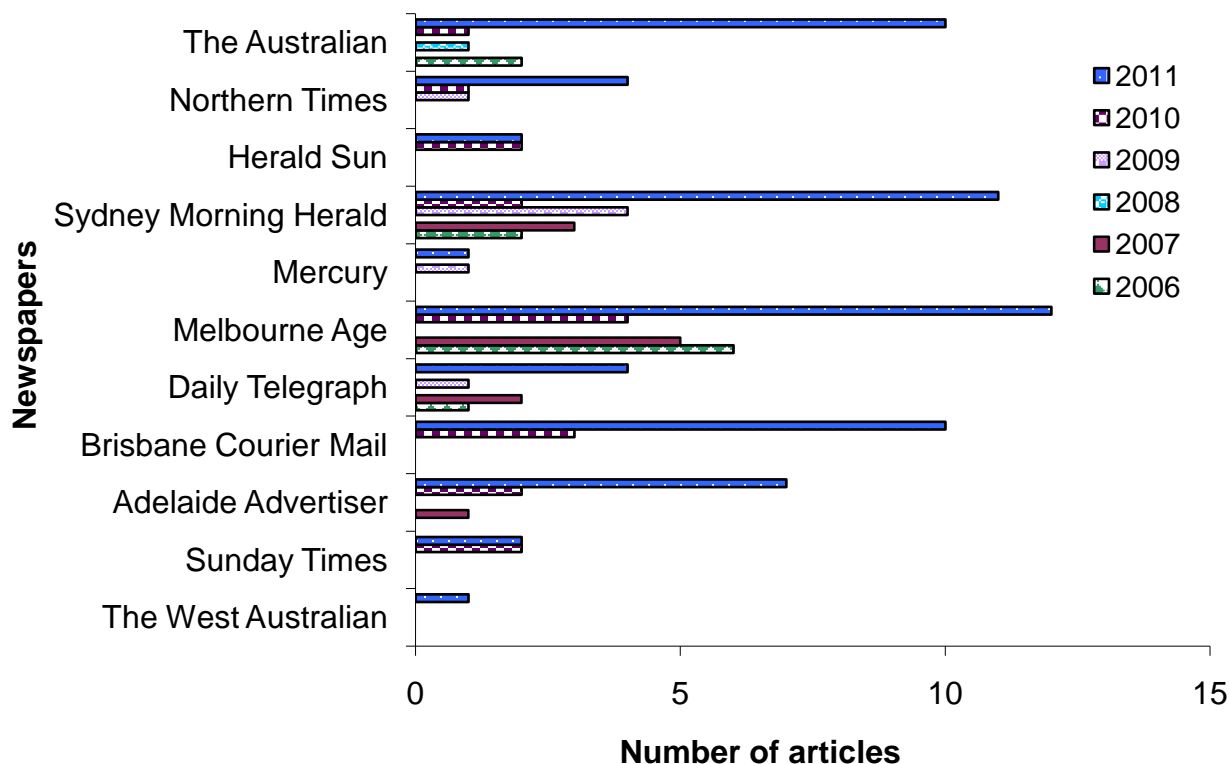


Figure 1: Categorization of 111 online state newspaper articles collected from the years 2006-2011

Analysis

The analysis of the Chaplaincy Program and its representation in newspaper articles can be broken into four key issues, which are: Role of the Chaplains, Funding, Church and State Boundaries and High Court Challenge.

The first issue: the ‘Role of the Chaplains’ was frequently discussed during 2006 and 2007 when the Program was first beginning. The role was then debated in 2011 during the High Court Challenge when the employment of religious chaplains in state schools was being contested not only by Mr Williams, but also by other political speakers.

The second key issue is ‘Funding’, which examines how the use of Commonwealth funding for the Program was portrayed in news articles. During 2006 and 2007 this issue was not as openly critiqued in online newspapers as it was in 2011. During 2011 the Funding, which was a key reason as to why the Program

was being contested in court, was explicitly criticised by opposing groups. These opposing opinions are analysed in the Funding section of the analysis.

The third key issue is 'Church and State boundaries', which in 2006 and 2007 was not examined in detail because the Chaplaincy Program was considered voluntary. The Program had also not been trialled yet; therefore it was not thought to be a problem as is shown in the news articles for 2006 and 2007. However in 2011 church and state boundaries became the focal point of the High Court Challenge. The issue was highly contested by opposing parties as is represented in the online news articles for 2011.

The fourth issue is the High Court Challenge and its representation in online newspapers. In 2011 many news articles were dedicated to discussing the issues of the High Court Challenge. These articles examined some of the potential consequences affecting Australian communities, if the Commonwealth was not permitted to fund chaplains anymore. These news articles from 2011 are examined in detail in the Findings.

In the following Findings section I have sampled news articles from the years 2006, 2007 and 2011, which best demonstrate the opposing opinions to the four key issues I have chosen. These news articles have not been chosen at random, they have been sampled for the very purpose of demonstrating how each of the four key issues has been represented within online newspapers. I have selected only the articles which clearly exemplify how each issue has been discussed by both journalists and the people they have chosen to represent in their news articles. I initially tried to include the range of eleven newspapers within the analysis, but this was not entirely possible as some newspapers did not portray some of the key issues.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Role of Chaplains

The Role of Chaplains is examined firstly for the year 2006/07 and then for the year 2011. There are two categories for both years, which examine news articles that portray a supportive role of the chaplain and articles which present an unsupportive role of the chaplain.

2006/07 Newspaper Coverage

Articles Supportive of the Role of Chaplains

A representation of the role of chaplains as supportive is promoted in the newspaper article “Big response to school chaplain push” written by Bridie Smith published in the *Melbourne Age* (2007, May 30). One of the dominant voices directly quoted in the article is that of (former) Education Minister Julie Bishop. Ms Bishop states:

This is an important program assisting schools in providing greater pastoral care and supporting student’s spiritual wellbeing.

Three assumptions are made in this statement. The first is a propositional assumption when Ms Bishop claims that schools are lacking ‘greater pastoral care’. There is no reference to any particular school, and thus the lack of pastoral care is an assumption and generalisation.

The second assumption is a value assumption about the role of the chaplains in schools. Ms Bishop claims that the Program is ‘important’ and provides ‘greater pastoral care’ and supports ‘student’s spiritual wellbeing’. The words: important, greater, care, support and wellbeing, all have positive connotations that represent chaplains as being of value to students’ development. By claiming that there is a lack of the chaplaincy service, it represents students as missing out on valuable support and resources.

The third assumption is an existential assumption, which claims that all students have a ‘spiritual wellbeing’. There may be many students who do not consider themselves spiritual and do not feel that this kind of support is appropriate

for them. Thus ‘student’s spiritual wellbeing’ is more of a social phenomenon that does not necessarily apply to every youth.

This article uses a discourse that promotes the Chaplaincy Program as valuable to students and reinforces an ideology that the Program is a necessary part of society, and without it communities are lacking spiritual wellbeing.

Another news article, which represents the role of chaplains as supportive is “Chaplain grant for all schools” published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* (2006, October 29) (Former) Prime Minister John Howard is predominantly quoted in this article. Mr Howard states:

It will, I believe, fill a very significant gap in the services available to school students. The chaplains will be expected to provide pastoral care and spiritual guidance and support, comfort, advice in family breakdown situations, support for students grief-stricken by the loss of friends in tragic accidents or the loss of family members.

Mr Howard makes a propositional assumption about the role of chaplains when he claims that it will ‘fill a very significant gap in the services available to school students’. This assumption has not been backed by any reference to any particular school community. Thereby Mr Howard’s generalisations about all school communities needing chaplains, is an assumption that is meant to be taken for granted.

Mr Howard also makes a value assumption about the role of the chaplains, claiming they ‘provide pastoral care and spiritual guidance’, ‘support’, ‘comfort’ and give ‘advice’. It is through the use of these words, which carry positive nurturing connotations, that an ideology of the role of chaplains as one that provides support, is dominantly represented and reinforced throughout the article by Mr Howard.

Articles Unsupportive of the Role of Chaplains

A news article which represents a negative portrayal of the role of chaplains is: “Teachers baulk at Howard’s chaplains” written by Jill Rowbotham published in *The Australian* (2006, October 30). Australian Education Union Federal president Pat Byrne is directly quoted in this article, she states:

Most schools would welcome the additional resource, the difficulty is that they have to be a chaplain representing an organised religious group.

Ms Byrne makes a propositional assumption that ‘most schools would welcome the additional resource’ (chaplains). This is a generalisation and a prediction, not based on fact, but rather her opinion. The second assumption she makes is a statement reflecting what can only be her own beliefs about spirituality. Ms Byrne states: ‘the difficulty is that they have to be a chaplain representing an organised religious group’. The word ‘difficulty’ signifies hardship and could perhaps be interpreted that it is hard to find a chaplain from an organised religious group. Ms Byrne’s interpretation though is explained in the indirect quote preceding this paragraph, which states:

Australian Education Union Federal president Pat Byrne said schools should be able to opt for a non religious counsellor.

If not for this explanation, her intention might have been misunderstood and interpreted in a completely different way. Ms Byrne is claiming that the difficulty or the ‘problem’ with having a chaplain is that they are religious. Thus her assumptions about ‘most schools’ wanting extra resources, but not someone who is religious, is to promote an ideology that there is a problem with religion and having a religious counsellor. This discourse supports the dominating representation and ideology promoted in this article that chaplains are unsuitable counsellors, which is further reinforced by former NSW premier Bob Carr who states:

Taxpayers’ money should not be asked to fund chaplaincies... Churches should continue to enjoy absolute freedom to raise money and spend it on proselytising, but not with taxpayers’ money. What if a poorly attended parent meeting chose a jihadist imam from a small Muslim prayer hall? How do you knock back that choice without offending the anti-discrimination laws?

Mr Carr makes an existential assumption about the role of churches within the community, claiming they are groups who raise money to proselytise when this may not be the truth. No church groups have been directly quoted in this article, and thus it is meant to be taken for granted that this is what churches do. Mr Carr makes an assumption that a ‘poorly attended parent meeting’ might result in parents misguidedly deciding on a poor choice of chaplain for their school. By claiming that a ‘jihadist imam from a small Muslim prayer hall’ might be chosen for a school

chaplain constructs a view that there are jihadist imams in small Muslim prayer halls. This is an assumption and is not backed with any reference to any particular Muslim or Islamic group in this article.

Mr Carr uses discourse which aims to incite moral panic by claiming that parents might choose inappropriately and put school children in danger. Thus religion is promoted as dangerous whereby unknowing parents and school children may fall victim to a violent chaplain. Mr Carr's last statement claims that it would be only normal to want to "knock back that choice" of 'dangerous' chaplain. He claims, though, that it would probably be against anti-discrimination laws to do so, but it would not be against people's best interests.

These news articles have used discourse which constructs existential, propositional and value assumptions to promote an ideology that the role of the chaplain is either to support students or to promote religion. In "Big response to school chaplain push" and "Chaplain grant for all schools" the authors have chosen to use both Ms Bishop's and Mr Howard's voices to argue that pastoral care is important for children's wellbeing and in supporting youth during difficult times. On the other hand, in "Teachers baulk at Howard's chaplains" Rowbotham has used both Ms Byrne's and Mr Carr's voices to portray counselling as beneficial for children, but not if it comes from a religious practitioner. Rowbotham promotes a negative perception of the role of chaplains through the utilisation of existential, propositional and value assumptions to construct a discourse, and ideology, that the aim of the Chaplaincy Program is to promote religion in secular education.

For 2006/07 the role of the chaplain was predominantly represented as supportive within online news articles (fig. 2). There were only four online newspapers which discussed the role of chaplains, but out of those newspapers a total of 21 positive portrayals were recorded. There were only ten representations that were unsupportive and portrayed the role of chaplains in a negative way.

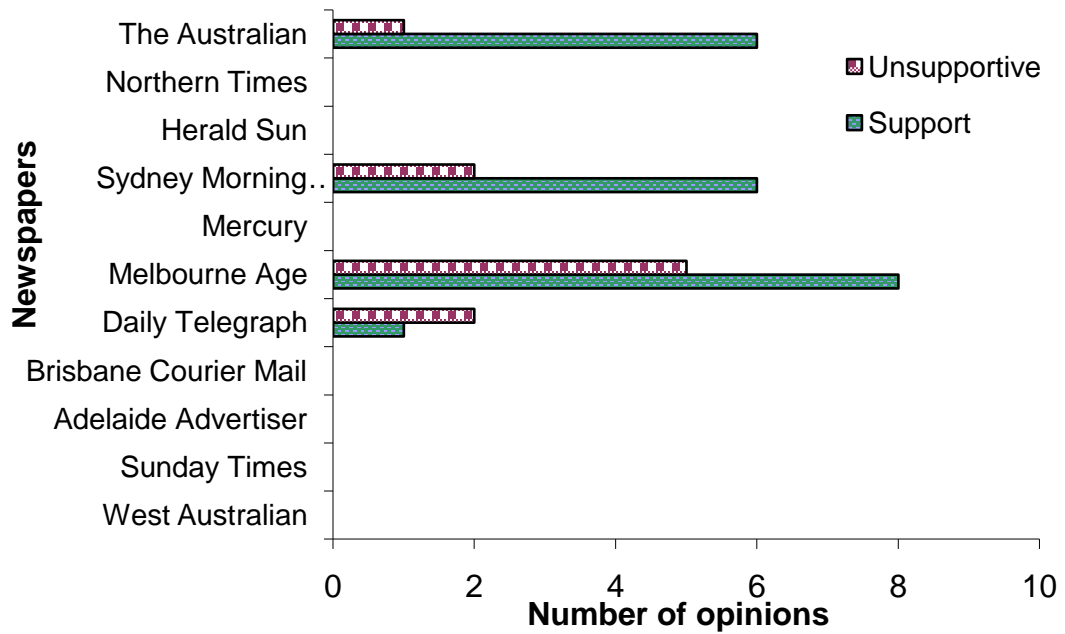


Figure 2: Categorization of portrayals of the role of the chaplain in online news articles from the 11 state newspapers in 2006/07

2011 Newspaper Coverage

Articles Supportive of the Role of Chaplains

In the news article “Extra chaplains approved for state schoolchildren” written by Ellen Lutton published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (2011, February 13), the role of chaplains is portrayed as supportive. The article explains that extra chaplains have been granted to Queensland state schools, which were affected by a cyclone and flooding. This positive representation is supported throughout the article, particularly by Queensland Education and Training Minister Geoff Wilson who states: “Chaplains have been working positively with students in our state schools for two decades and, after the floods and cyclone, they are needed more than ever”.

Mr Wilson makes an existential assumption claiming that “chaplains have been working positively with students...for two decades”. This assumption is presented as a fact, but is not referenced by actual experiences. It is meant to be taken for granted that for the past two decades students and chaplains have only had positive experiences when working together. Mr Wilson also makes a value assumption in this statement that all encounters with students have been positive

when this may not necessarily be true. A propositional assumption is made when he claims that due to the cyclone and floods chaplains are “needed more than ever”. This is a prediction that is reinforced in the second paragraph of the article, where it is asserted that principals asked for more chaplains in schools. Thus Mr Wilson’s statement maintains the role of chaplains as necessary and supportive.

Mr Wilson is quoted four more times in the article, continuing to make value assumptions about the role of the chaplains as supportive. He compares them to the Salvation Army and claims that chaplains also “provide a vital and valuable service within our schools”. Mr Wilson also adds that chaplains are a “friend” and “touch the lives of thousands of students every year”. He makes a propositional assumption that thousands of school students are influenced positively by chaplains every year, but this is not demonstrated with examples of student’s experiences. The use of discourse, which contains positive connotations such as: ‘vital’, ‘valuable’, and ‘friend’ are all used to construct an ideology that chaplains provide a positive and necessary service to school students.

Throughout this article existential, propositional and value assumptions are made to promote an ideology, which represents the role of chaplains as supportive during difficult times and that school communities value chaplaincy services.

Articles Unsupportive of the Role of Chaplains

In the news article “School chaplain service ‘scary” written by Dan Harrison and published in the *Melbourne Age* (2011, June 3), chaplains are represented negatively. The article begins by directly and indirectly quoting Labor Senate Education Committee Chairman Gavin Marshall. The article indirectly quotes Mr Marshall’s concerns by claiming that “the idea of a chaplain sharing conservative views with a child struggling with their sexuality ‘scares’ him”. In this first paragraph a value assumption is made about the role of the chaplain. It is associated with being conservative and that this conservative attitude is something to be afraid of. In the second paragraph of the article this assumption is reinforced.

Mr Marshall is again indirectly quoted supposedly telling an estimates hearing, on a previous day, that the “chaplain service provider Scripture Union held a “fairly harsh view” on homosexuality, which was “homosexuals will burn in hell”.

The senator makes a propositional assumption that Scripture Union is against homosexuality. Whether Scripture Union is against homosexuality or not is unknown because the author has not directly quoted the Union on this propositional assumption. Thus it is meant to be taken for granted that Scripture Union is homophobic. A negative value assumption is also made, which claims that Scripture Union believes “homosexuals will burn in hell”. Thus an ideology that Scripture Union vilifies homosexuality is constructed.

A conversation between Mr Marshall and Education Department Secretary Lisa Paul is referenced in this article. Mr Marshall asks Ms Paul why Scripture Union “was allowed to participate if the program held such views”. Ms Paul is indirectly quoted claiming “what was important was not a chaplain’s beliefs, but what views they expressed in the course of their work”. The word ‘views’ is used in two ways in this article. Firstly, according to Ms Paul, ‘views’ refers to the opinions which chaplains express to students, and are meant to be in accordance with chaplaincy guidelines. According to Mr Marshall though, ‘views’ refers to a chaplain’s “conservative views”. Despite the two different definitions, they are placed in the article to represent the same meaning. Thus the claim by Ms Paul that chaplains will express their views reinforces Mr Marshall’s fears that chaplains from Scripture Union will express homophobic opinions. Therefore an ideology that chaplains are homophobic and unsuitable to help a child who is “struggling with their sexuality” is reinforced.

The news articles examined above demonstrate two different ideologies about the role of chaplains. The first ideology presented the role of chaplains as supportive in the article “Extra school chaplains approved for state schoolchildren”. The author promoted chaplains as a valuable and necessary resource for schools especially during difficult times. On the other hand Dan Harrison who wrote the news article “School chaplain service ‘scary’” used discourse which represented chaplains as homophobic and unable to appropriately counsel children going through complex emotional development. The ideology that all chaplains from Scripture Union are homophobic is reinforced and unchallenged throughout the article.

There was an increase in the negative portrayals of the role of the chaplain in 2011 across many of the eleven online newspapers (fig. 3). There were 55 unsupportive representations and 29 supportive representations of the role of the chaplain in 2011.

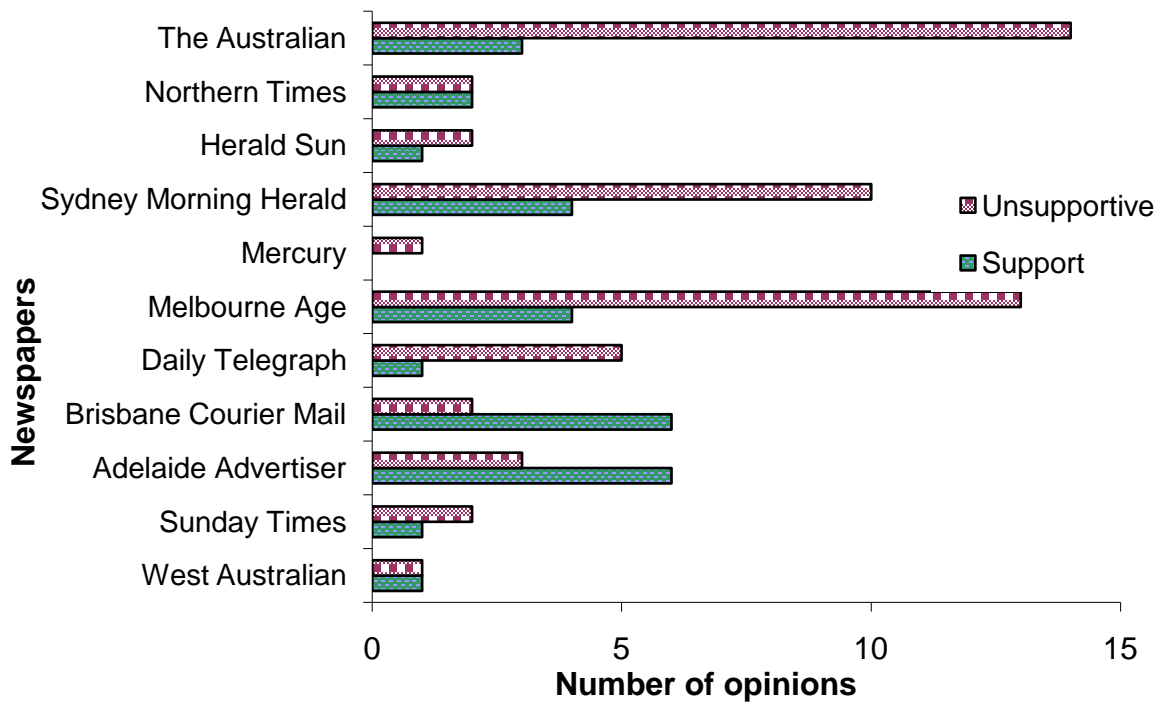


Figure 3: Categorization of portrayals of the role of the chaplain in online news articles from the 11 state newspapers in 2011

Funding

In 2011 a High Court Challenge between Queensland father Ron Williams and The Commonwealth of Australia began. Mr Williams argued that the way the Chaplaincy Program was funded was unconstitutional because according to Section 116 of the Australian Constitution the government is not supposed to promote religion (Parliament of Australia, n.d.). Thus Mr Williams argued that funding religious chaplains in state schools was in breach of the separation of church and state. The following section examines Funding as well as Church and State boundaries to analyse how these issues were represented in both 2006/07 and 2011. The High Court Challenge is then analysed to examine how it was represented in 2011.

2006/07 Newspaper Coverage

Articles supportive of Program funding

The article “Grassroots idea grows into \$90 million scheme” written by Jill Rowbotham and published in *The Australian* (2006, October 31), portrays the government funding positively. The article begins by claiming that John Howard is spending \$90 million on the Chaplaincy Program, which was devised by “treasurer of the local chaplaincies committee, financial planner and religious education teacher Peter Rawlings”. According to the article, Mr Rawlings presented his plan to federal MP Greg Hunt. The article states: “The Liberal MP for Flinders encouraged him to write to the Prime Minister, who agreed it was an idea worthy of a multi-million-dollar budget”.

A value assumption is made in the first three paragraphs of the article, which is that the Program is worthy of a lot of money. The assumed significant value of the Program is represented as commensurate with the monetary value of the Program, which makes the funding seem appropriate. This valuation is further reinforced in paragraphs four and five. Mr Rawlings directly states:

I feel enormously privileged to have written a submission to the Prime Minister that, less than six months later, is a national program with \$90 million attached to it...But most of all I'm very passionate about the chaplains- I have seen the results in young families and families that work- the potential for that to be replicated around this nation.

A propositional assumption is made by Mr Rawlings when he claims that the Program could potentially help other families “around the nation”. Mr Rawlings claims he has “seen the results in young families and families that work”, and this is meant to be taken for granted as true because his predictive assumption is not backed by the personal experiences from these families. The ideologies presented in this article portray the funding for the Program as appropriate, needed and valued.

Articles Unsupportive of Program Funding

The article “Parents, principals turn down chaplains” written by Hannah Edwards and published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* (2007, March 25), negatively represents government funding for the Chaplaincy Program. The article promotes an ideology that the funding is a waste of money. Deputy chairman Brian Chudleigh of

the Public School Principals Forum is directly quoted in this article. Mr Chudleigh states:

It's totally inappropriate...It's a gross misdirection and waste of funds. It's a classic example of Federal Government out of touch with what state schools nationwide and their communities want and need.

Mr Chudleigh makes a value assumption about the use of the money claiming that it is 'inappropriate'. He makes a generalisation that all schools throughout the nation and all communities do not want the funding. Mr Chudleigh's status as the Deputy Chairman of the Public School Principals Forum makes it appear as though he would have some insight into what principals want for their schools and communities. Despite this appearance, his statement is not backed with references to any particular school or community. Therefore it is only an assumption that what he says is correct.

The ideology that the government should not fund the Program is again reinforced in paragraph nine when Dianne Giblin a spokeswoman from the Federation of Parents & Citizens Associations NSW is directly quoted. Ms Giblin states: "We are not supporting chaplains in schools. It is not the Government's responsibility to fund religion. That is the role of the church."

What Ms Giblin means by 'We' is not specified, it is only assumed that parents and citizens in NSW do not support the Program or its funding. This is a generalisation whereby she is giving the impression of consensus by speaking for a group of people who not all may feel the same way.

Ms Giblin also makes an existential assumption about what the government's responsibilities are claiming that they are not "to fund religion" and that this is the "role of the church". These claims are not supported with reference to any laws from the government or the church. Thus it is meant to be assumed that the government is taking on responsibilities that are not its own. Even though these opinions are represented they do not portray all principals' and parents' views, especially as only one state (NSW) is mentioned.

These articles, for 2006/07, use existential propositional and value assumptions to promote the funding for the chaplains either positively or negatively. In the article "Grassroots idea grows into \$90 million scheme", Jill Rowbotham portrays the perceived moral value and monetary value of the Program as being

equal promoting an ideology that chaplains in schools is a positive investment. In the article “Parents, principals turn down chaplains”, Hannah Edwards promotes a negative ideology of the funding using generalisations and consensus assumptions by principal and parent group representatives, to promote an ideology that there are many people who are against the funding.

The funding for the Program in 2006/07 had 16 positive representations of the use of the government funding and only 9 negative portrayals (fig.4).

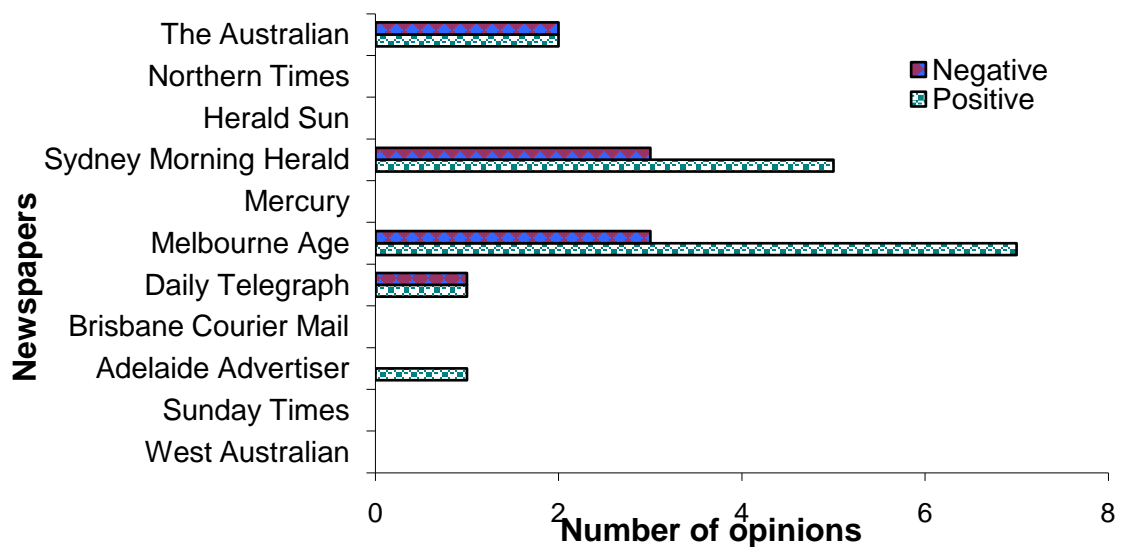


Figure 4: Categorization of funding representations in online news articles from the 11 state newspapers in 2006/07

2011 Newspaper Coverage

Articles supportive of Program funding

A positive representation of the chaplaincy funding is present in the news article “Chaplain funds face high court challenge” written by Miranda Forster published in *The Australian* (2011, August 3). The article explains that a High Court Challenge may rule against the government funding the Program. Scripture Union Queensland’s chief executive Tim Mander is both directly and indirectly quoted throughout this article, expressing his concern about the possibility of losing government funding. Mr Mander states:

I would say we'd lose probably half the chaplains overnight, because many of them do rely on the federal funding, especially those communities that are in remote localities and regional areas and lower socio economic areas. It's areas where this care is needed the most that are under threat.

Mr Mander makes a propositional assumption that chaplains would have to leave their jobs if the funding is cut. He does not specify which communities will be affected, only that they are "remote localities", "regional areas" and "lower socio economic areas". These communities have not been directly quoted in this article, thus it is meant to be taken for granted that Mr Mander's assumptions are correct. He also makes a propositional assumption that it is these remote areas that need chaplains the most, which has also not been backed with any references. A value assumption is made when he claims that without chaplains these areas "are under threat". Mr Mander uses emotive language to promote an ideology that the funding is vital to the survival of these regions.

In paragraph nine Mr Mander is indirectly quoted claiming that "the high court will focus less on the value of chaplaincy and more on where the federal government is allowed to spend its budget". Mr Mander directly states:

The major issue that the High Court will be hearing next week is to determine really the scope of Commonwealth executive power.

Mr Mander makes a propositional and value assumption about how the High Court will rule and on what grounds. Mr Mander indirectly claims that the High Court will "focus less on the value of chaplaincy and more on...budget". Thus he assumes that the High Court is going to be more concerned with how the money is being spent rather than the role of the Program within Australian schools. This assumption is his own opinion as he states in the final paragraph of the article "I'm not a High Court judge..."

When this article was written, the High Court had not decided about the future funding of the Program. The use of Mr Mander's voice to express his own concern for the Chaplaincy Program, and to represent it as under threat, promotes a positive construction of the funding for chaplains. The ideology that the funding for chaplains is a positive scheme, which provides much needed services is reinforced through the dichotomy of us and them; the High Court against the misunderstood Chaplaincy Program.

Articles unsupportive of Program funding

The article “Man 1, God 0 in school chaplains case” written by Jenny Dillon and published in the *Adelaide Advertiser* (2011, January 28), represents a negative portrayal of the government funding the Chaplaincy Program. The article explains that Ron Williams, a Queensland father who is suing the government for funding the Chaplaincy Program, has “won the first round to have chaplains thrown out of public schools”. The article directly quotes Mr Williams who states: “This is not about getting chaplains out of schools, it’s about the government funding them, which I believe is against the Constitution”. Immediately the article misinterprets Ron Williams’ intentions, but the indirect and direct quotes are both used to convey Mr Williams’ dislike of the Program.

In the final paragraph of this article, NSW Greens MP John Kaye is indirectly quoted stating that the “decision was good news for those who believed in separation of church and state”. Mr Kaye directly states:

The anger felt by many of us at the use of public money will now at least be tested in the court. There will now be an opportunity to hear in court why this program so deeply contradicts the integrity of the Australian Constitution.

Mr Kaye makes a negative value assumption when he claims that people are angry that public money is being spent on the Program. He also gives the impression of consensus when he states that “many of us” (are angry), when it is unclear in this article who he is referring to. These people are not directly quoted or referenced by Mr Kaye. Thereby it is meant to be taken for granted that he knows people who are angry about this issue. Mr Kaye’s second statement claims that people will be able to hear why the “program so deeply contradicts the integrity of the Australian Constitution”. He makes an existential assumption that the Program is against the Australian Constitution, but this has not been decided in court yet, and therefore is only an interpretation based on Mr Kaye’s personal beliefs.

An article which also promotes a negative representation of the funding is “WA joins chaplaincy challenge” written by Dan Harrison and published in the *Melbourne Age* (2011, July 12). The article explains how the Commonwealth is being sued by Ron Williams for supposedly breaching the Australian Constitution by funding chaplains in schools. The article does not quote Ron Williams, but does

directly quote George Williams, a professor of law at the University of NSW, who is not related to Ron. Mr Williams states:

The chaplaincy case isn't just about religious funding in state schools, it's also about federalism and the ability of the Commonwealth to use its financial muscle to intervene in the state education system and that's something that it's not surprising the West Australian government would like to prevent.

George Williams makes an existential assumption claiming that the Commonwealth does have “financial muscle” and is intervening in the state education system. This is Mr Williams’ opinion being represented as there may be states who believe the Commonwealth is helping their schools by funding chaplains. He also makes a propositional assumption claiming that the Western Australian government would not want the Commonwealth to interfere in its education system. No spokesperson from the Western Australian government is quoted in this article and thus it is meant to be taken for granted, especially because Mr Williams is considered a ‘constitutional expert’ and an authority to make these observations, that these assumptions are correct. Thus an ideology that the government funding chaplains is unconstitutional and unwanted by Western Australia is promoted in this article.

These articles, from 2011, use existential propositional and value assumptions to represent a predominantly negative portrayal of the funding for the Chaplaincy Program. In the article “Chaplain funds face high court challenge”, Miranda Forster directly quoted only Tim Mander from Scripture Union portraying the Program as a victim of the High Court Challenge. Forster promoted the funding as necessary arguing, through Tim Mander, that if the funding was cut then remote communities would be “under threat”. On the other hand Jenny Dillon and Dan Harrison presented a negative ideology of the funding. They both claimed that it was against the Constitution, and thus it would be legally wrong for the government to continue its funding. Overall for the year 2011, the predominant portrayal of the Program’s funding was represented as inconsistent with the Australian Constitution.

The High Court Challenge in 2011 most notably had an effect on the way the Program was portrayed with 38 negative representations and only 17 positive portrayals recorded (fig.5).

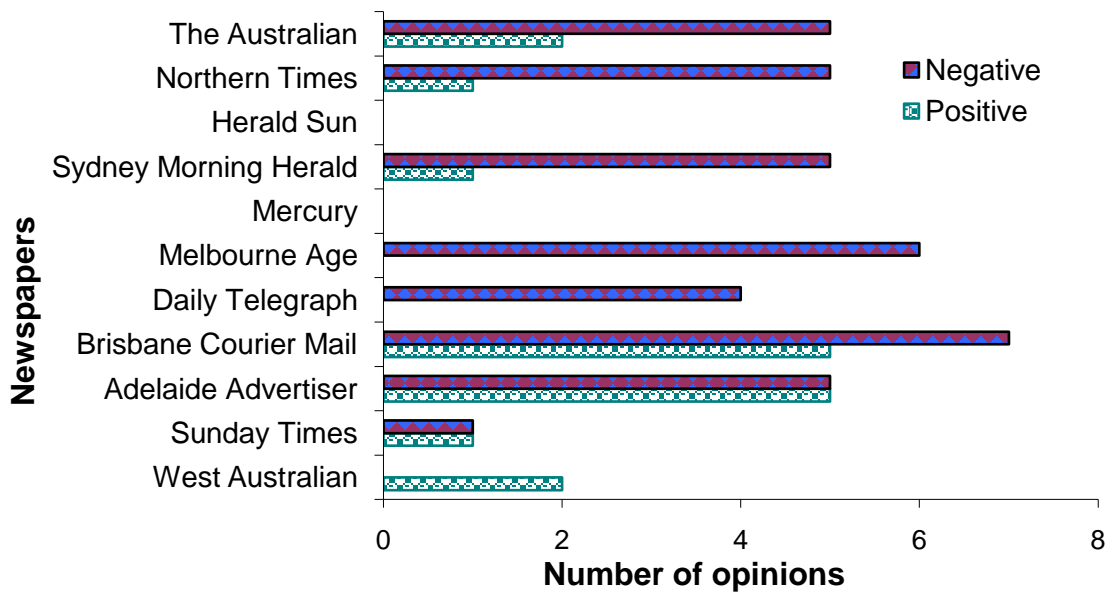


Figure 5: Categorization of funding representations in online news articles from the 11 state newspapers in 2011

Church and State boundaries

The issue of church and state boundaries will be analysed next. For 2006/07 the issue of church and state blurring was not discussed in great detail until 2011 when Mr Williams challenged the Program’s operation within state schools.

2006/07 Newspaper Coverage

Articles portraying boundaries as distinct

A newspaper article, which represents church and state boundaries as not being blurred is “Chaplain program is no crusade: PM” written by Stephanie Peatling and Anna Patty and published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* (2006, October 31). The article both directly and indirectly quotes (former) Prime Minister John Howard claiming that he “was not on some crusade”, and he did not want to “ram my personal beliefs down people’s throats”. This quote precedes a direct statement by Mr Howard who does explain his own opinion about the church and state boundaries. Mr Howard states:

Those who say this is blurring the distinction [between church and state] are therefore saying that paying assistance to independent schools is blurring the distinction. Plainly neither is...I think we are a secular society in the sense that we don’t have an established religion.

In the first sentence, Mr Howard makes a propositional assumption claiming that there are people who think that church and state boundaries are being blurred. These people though are not referenced in this article, and it is meant to be assumed that it has been said elsewhere that church and state are being blurred.

In order to refute this argument Mr Howard makes a connection between the funding of independent schools and the funding of chaplains. The main similarity between these two programs is that they are funded by the government. The difference is that some independent schools may be religious and some may not be, whereas all chaplains are religious, but Mr Howard uses the funding as a comparison to detract from the religious nature of the Chaplaincy Program. The opinion that church and state boundaries for either Program are being blurred is meant to be negated when Mr Howard claims that “plainly neither is”. In the last sentence he makes an existential assumption that Australia is secular, which again reinforces his opinion that the government is not trying to promote religion. The use of propositional and existential assumptions, are used by Mr Howard to promote an ideology that the Chaplaincy Program does not blur the distinction between church and state.

In the article “State-school chaplains push” written by Jason Koutsoukis and published in the *Melbourne Age* (2006, June 11), a representation that church and state boundaries are clearly defined is promoted. In this article the Parliamentary Secretary for Environment and Heritage, Greg Hunt, is indirectly quoted. The article states:

Mr Hunt said the issue of the separation of church and state would be avoided because it would apply only to those schools that applied for the funding and would be voluntary for those students who wanted to consult a chaplain.

Mr Hunt makes a propositional assumption when he claims that church and state boundaries will remain separate because the Program is voluntary. The statement ends by asserting that only the schools who applied for funding, and the students who volunteered to see the chaplain, would be affected by the Program. Mr Hunt tries to promote an ideology that church and state boundaries will remain separate because only those people who want the Program will have it within their school community. Despite this claim there may be many people who disagree with

the Program and the way it is funded, and believe that it should not operate within their school or community. Mr Hunt’s representation promotes an assumption that within a school community everyone will hold the same values and opinions when this may not be true.

Both of these news articles for 2006/07, use existential and propositional assumptions to construct a representation that the Chaplaincy Program, and its funding, would not blur church and state boundaries. Peatling and Patty used John Howard’s voice to promote an ideology that the Program is in accordance with other projects the government pays for. Greg Hunt was chosen to help promote an ideology that the Program will only affect the people who chose to apply for it in their school community. These articles were printed in 2006 before schools realised the effect that the Program had on their communities.

In 2006/07 only 6 representations of church and state boundaries were recorded as separate and only 6 representations to say that the boundaries were blurred (fig.6).

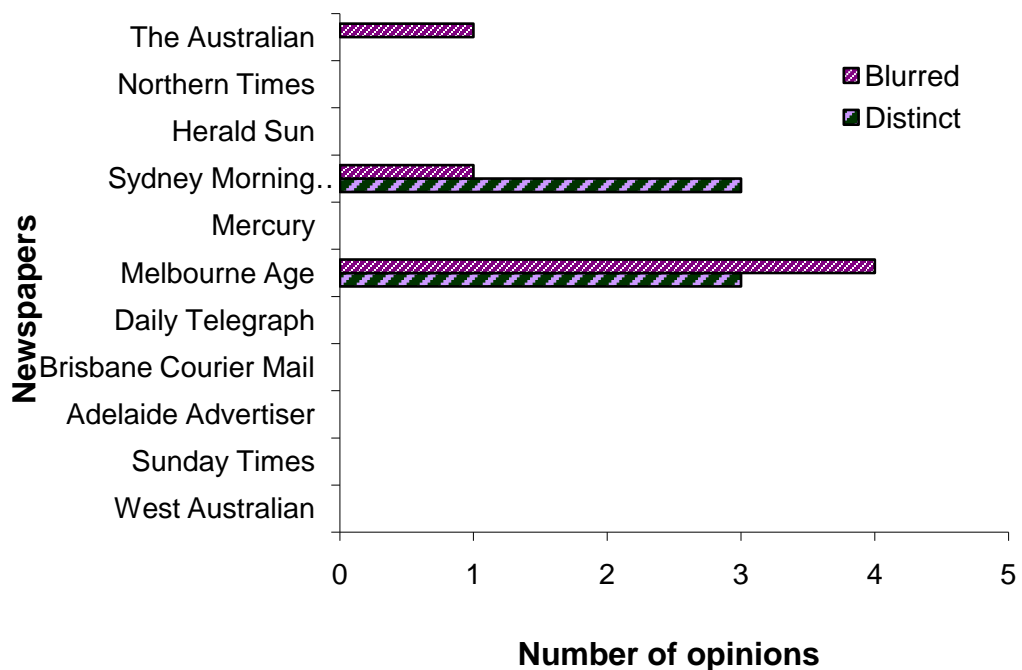


Figure 6: Categorization of representations of church and state boundaries in online news articles from the 11 state newspapers in 2006/07

2011 Newspaper Coverage

Articles portraying boundaries as blurred

In the article “Chaplains ‘are taking over’” written by Ellen Lutton and published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* (2011, January 30), Ron Williams is indirectly quoted, explaining why the Chaplaincy Program supposedly blurs the distinction between church and state boundaries. The article states:

The High Court heard a statement of claim filed by Toowoomba father Ron Williams and his supporters that argued the National School Chaplaincy Program (NSCP) contravened the constitutional separation between church and state.

Mr Williams makes an existential assumption claiming that there is a ‘constitutional separation between church and state’. Mr Williams does not reference any government policy, which claims that the separation of church and state is constitutional; it is just meant to be assumed that it is. The ideology being promoted in this statement is that Mr Williams has a legitimate case for arguing against the Chaplaincy Program because it is supposedly unconstitutional. The article then states:

Mr Williams took legal action against the Commonwealth because he was concerned the Christian chaplains at his children's school and other public schools were giving religious counsel instead of impartial advice.

A propositional assumption is made when the article claims that chaplains “were giving religious counsel instead of impartial advice”. The school that Mr Williams’ children go to, Darling Heights State School, and other schools with Christian chaplains are not directly or indirectly referenced in this article. Therefore it is meant to be taken for granted, according to Mr Williams’ opinions, that there are chaplains giving “religious counsel instead of impartial advice”. The statement also only makes reference to Christian chaplains and could be interpreted that Mr Williams is only concerned with these chaplains, when there are in fact chaplains from many different faiths. This article continues to use discourse, which represents an ideology that chaplains, and Christian chaplains, in particular, are giving religious counsel in schools.

Another article which represents the Chaplaincy Program as blurring church and state boundaries is: “Former NSW Premier Bob Carr calls for scrapping of

school chaplaincy program” written by David Penberthy and published in the *Adelaide Advertiser* (2011, May 13). In this article Bob Carr is both indirectly and directly quoted. The article states:

Mr Carr attacked the Gillard Government for extending the scheme, saying it compromised the separation between church and state.

A value assumption is made when the article states that Mr Carr ‘attacked’ the government for extending the Program. The negative choice of discourse represents Mr Carr’s dislike of the Program, and this is further reinforced when he is indirectly quoted claiming that church and state boundaries are being ‘compromised’. Thus an ideology that the Program jeopardises the separation of church and state is promoted in this statement. This argument is also reinforced in the last few paragraphs of the article.

Mr Carr argues in the second last paragraph that “There is enough feedback now to show that quite understandably chaplains cannot confine their activism”. He claims that the chaplain’s role is to “evangelise” and that it is “their lifeblood”, and they are that way ‘because of their training’. In the last paragraph he states:

As a result we have got breaches of what should be a very thick wall between church and state.

Mr Carr makes a propositional assumption claiming that church and state are meant to be separate. He makes a value assumption claiming that the role of the chaplain is to evangelise, and that they cannot be trusted to keep their religious views separate from offering support to students. He argues that this evangelical behaviour breaches the distinction between religion and secular education. This article promotes an ideology that the role of chaplains jeopardises the separation of church and state and this is reinforced through Mr Carr’s assumptions.

These news articles for 2011 use existential, propositional and value assumptions to construct a representation that the Chaplaincy Program, and its role in schools, blurs church and state boundaries. Ellen Lutton chose to use indirect quotes from Ron Williams to promote an ideology that chaplains give religious counsel rather than impartial advice. David Penberthy represents Bob Carr’s views to help promote a similar ideology that chaplains evangelise, and that this compromises the boundaries of church and state. Both of these authors argue that the Chaplaincy

Program is unconstitutional and therefore should not be allowed to operate in state schools.

There was only one representation recorded that claimed that church and state boundaries were distinct in 2011. On the other hand there were 11 representations that claimed that the Program did indeed blur the boundaries of church and state (fig.7).

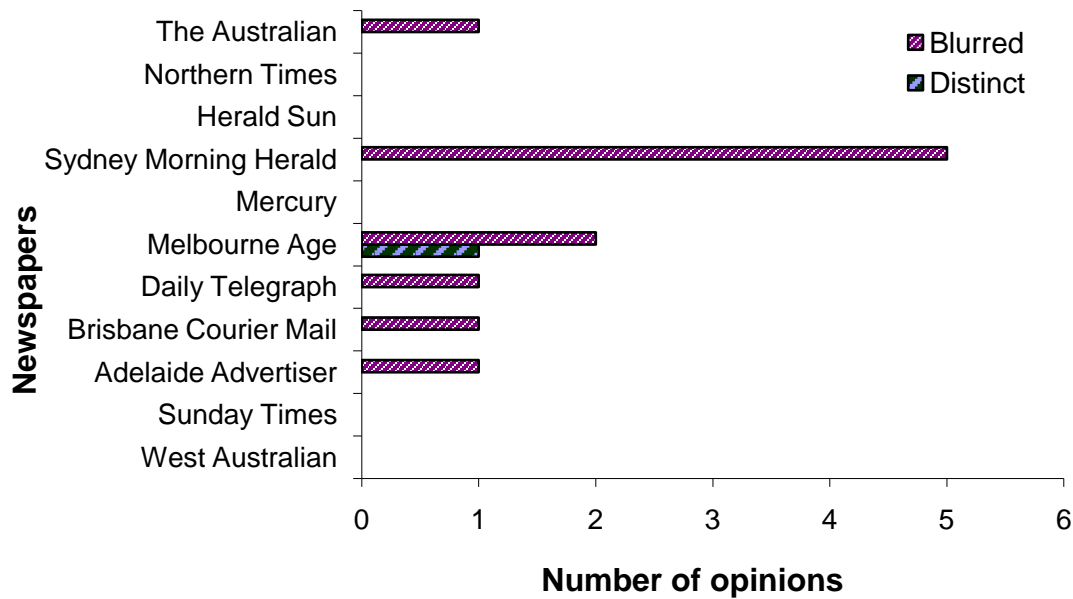


Figure 7: Categorization of representations of church and state boundaries in online news articles from the 11 state newspapers in 2011

High Court Challenge

The High Court Challenge that began in 2011 will be analysed in this section. The news articles portray two different points of view regarding the interpretation and representation of the High Court Challenge: the articles that promoted the Challenge, and the articles which opposed the Challenge.

2011 Newspaper Coverage

Articles promoting the Challenge

The article “High Court Challenge for school chaplains” published in the *Brisbane Courier Mail* (AAP, 2011, August 9), represents a positive portrayal of the High Court Challenge. This article explains two of Mr Williams’ arguments against the Chaplaincy Program. The first argument is that “the school chaplaincy program

is unconstitutional because it imposes a religious test on officers funded by the Commonwealth". The article states:

Mr Williams' lawyer, Bret Walker, SC, today told the court the requirement for chaplains funded by the commonwealth to be recognised "through formal ordination ... or endorsement by a recognised or accepted religious institution" was a religious test. Under section 116 of the constitution, the federal government is not allowed to impose a religious test as a requirement for any commonwealth office.

The ideology that the Program is unconstitutional is reinforced through the reference to Section 116 of the Australian Constitution, which claims that people should not have to be tested on their religion or conform to particular religious beliefs to work for the Commonwealth of Australia (Parliament of Australia, n.d.). This argument is not refuted in this article, and thus it is meant to be accepted that this is the correct and only interpretation of the Constitution.

The second argument is that the government funding the Chaplaincy Program is also unconstitutional. Mr Walker is indirectly quoted in the article, which states "He also argued the appropriation of funds for the school chaplaincy program was not legal". The article then claims that both Scripture Union Queensland and the Queensland Attorney-General stated that, in regards to Mr Williams' children's school, Darling Heights State School, that "Mr William's does not have standing to challenge the program because its funding arrangements had been concluded". The propositional assumption that the funding of the Program in this school had been finished is refuted by Mr Walker who is indirectly quoted declaring that "the fact the program had been in place since 2007 indicated it was not intended as a one-off".

Thus the indirect simulated dialogue between Mr Walker, Scripture Union Queensland and the Queensland Attorney General portrays an ideology that Mr Williams' case against the Program is valid. Mr Walker's claim that the Program had been going on in Darling Heights School since 2007 meant it was probably going to continue, thereby making Scripture Union appear as though they are lying about concluding the funding. Thus Scripture Union appears untrustworthy, and Mr Walker's arguments against the Program seem legitimate. Therefore an ideology that the High Court Challenge is valid, and that religious testing and the funding for the Program is illegal, is represented and promoted throughout this article.

Articles against the Challenge

In the article “Battle to save school chaplains” written by Daryl Passmore and published in the *Brisbane Courier Mail* (2011, April 23), the High Court Challenge is represented as a threat to the Chaplaincy Program. The article claims that Scripture Union, which employs chaplains in Queensland, had an online petition running to ask the government to continue to support the Program despite the High Court Challenge. The use of government money to pay for the Chaplaincy Program, and the role of chaplains in schools are represented in this article as the main reasons why the Challenge is going ahead. The use of government money is portrayed as necessary and without it chaplains would not be able to work in schools. The article directly quotes Scripture Union’s chief executive Tim Mander who states:

We want people to understand the potential impact of this (High Court) challenge if it is upheld...We would lose half of our 510 chaplains overnight.

Mr Mander makes a propositional assumption that chaplains would have to leave schools if the government could not support them. No schools are directly or indirectly quoted in this article explaining what they would do if the government could not support their chaplain anymore. Thus it is assumed that government funding is the only way that chaplains could be supported in schools

The second argument against the High Court Challenge is in regards to the role of chaplains. The article claims that Education Minister Peter Garrett had “released a discussion paper on the future of chaplaincy services”. One of the main reported issues against the Program was that it was religious, and that this was breaching the Australian Constitution. The article states: “It says a ‘key criticism of the program is the religious nature of the chaplaincy position’”. Thus the Chaplaincy Program is portrayed in this statement as not conforming to government policy.

In paragraph eleven Tim Mander refutes this claim when he states that the Program “is not a religious education program but an emotional, spiritual and pastoral role”. Mr Mander makes a value assumption that the role is not to promote religion, but to provide support services to those who need it. An ideology that promotes the High Court Challenge as a threat to the Program, and the role of the chaplains as a valued service is represented and reinforced in this article.

In the article “High Court Challenge for school chaplains” Mr Williams’ lawyer, Mr Walker is represented to argue that the Australian Constitution is being breached because the government is not, by law, supposed to support religion. In the second article “Battle to save school chaplains” Daryl Passmore represents Mr Mander’s argument that the role of the chaplain is to provide emotional support, and is not about imposing religious beliefs. Despite the two opposing views the High Court Challenge is represented as questioning and testing the legitimacy of the Chaplaincy Program in state schools.

In 2011 there were 20 representations for the High Court Challenge and only 9 representations which were against the Challenge (fig. 8).

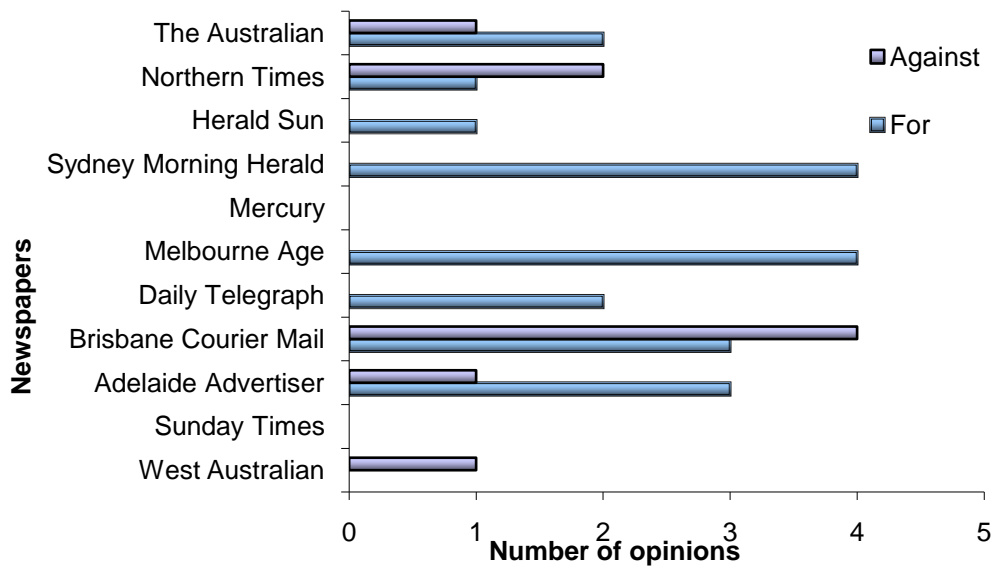


Figure 8: Categorization of representations of the High Court Challenge in online news articles from 11 state newspapers in 2011

GENERAL DISCUSSION

This study analysed eleven Australian online newspapers examining how the National School Chaplaincy Program was represented in 2006/07 and 2011. Not all news articles about the Chaplaincy Program are included in this study such as opinion pieces, for the purpose of examining news articles that were considered factual rather than opinionated. Only the years 2006/07 and 2011 were examined to gauge the difference between the first year of the Program and the most recent whole year the Program was operating. Thus news articles between 2008 and 2010 have not been examined.

The analysis was conducted utilising Norman Fairclough's theory of Critical Discourse Analysis to uncover how assumptions were used to construct ideologies and a discourse, or way of speaking, about the Chaplaincy Program. Analysis of the Program was divided into four key issues: Role of the Chaplain, Funding, Church and State boundaries, and the High Court Challenge. With regards to research question one, the findings demonstrate that the representation of the Chaplaincy Program, in online newspapers, was positive at the time it was first established and implemented in 2006/07. By 2011, portrayals of the Program had become quite negative across the majority of the eleven online newspapers.

Initially the scheme was represented positively in 2006/07 when John Howard's Liberal Government developed the Program, which they thought would fulfil a valuable role within school communities (Koutsoukis, 2006, 18 June). Even though the federal government changed to Labor both leaders, Kevin Rudd in 2009 and Julia Gillard from 2010, continued to expand the Chaplaincy Program. In particular, Julia Gillard not only provided additional funding, but extended the Program to include secular workers (Holderhead, 2011, September 8). The positive representations of the Program within newspaper articles, by these leaders, became overshadowed by negative representations over the time period, particularly in 2011. These shifting representations were influenced by the 2011 High Court Challenge against the Program and its funding, as well as negative portrayals within newspapers by opposition leaders, psychologists and parent groups. Some of the negative representations included portraying the role of the chaplains as to proselytise and that the funding for the Program was a waste of money (AAP, 2011,

August 9; Dillon, 2011, January 28; D. Harrison, 2011, June 3; Lutton, 2011, January 30; Rowbotham, 2006, October 30).

In response to research question two, there were two opposing discourses in the news media representations of the Program. The first was that the Chaplaincy Program was a valuable support service for school communities, and that there was a place for spirituality within state schools. The second discourse was that chaplains were there to proselytise their own beliefs and were unqualified to counsel children with complex emotional problems.

Other factors which could have potentially impacted upon the negative representation of religion and spirituality during this time were the Bali bombing trials as well as the Iraq war portraying the Middle East as a threat (Allard & Doherty, 2008, November 9; Gartrell, 2010, February 18; Maley & Alford, 2011, April 27; Wockner & Athika, 2011, February 10). Thus a discourse of religion as threatening became a common representation during the time period of reportage covered in this study (2006-2011).

In his book *Australian Soul* Gary Bouma (2006) claimed that within Australia if you are perceived as “too religious” you will be frowned upon, but being anti-religious means you “may well be avoided” (p. 36). The findings from this study suggest that this is only partly true. Representations of being “too religious” were portrayed negatively, but being anti-religious was generally portrayed as rational. A comment by Bob Carr in *The Australian* encapsulates this view:

Taxpayers’ money should not be asked to fund chaplaincies... Churches should continue to enjoy absolute freedom to raise money and spend it on proselytising, but not with taxpayers’ money. What if a poorly attended parent meeting chose a jihadist imam from a small Muslim prayer hall? How do you knock back that choice without offending the anti-discrimination laws? (Rowbotham, 2006, October 30).

This representation links the Chaplaincy Program with religious extremism and suggests it is something to be feared. It encourages panic implying that Australians should be cautious of Islam. Aly (2007) examined popular media representations of Muslims and found that:

In much of the literature on the representation of Muslims in the popular Australian media, whether in relation to asylum seekers, youth gangs and crime, Middle Eastern affairs or the ‘war on terror’,

the point is often made that Muslims have been characterized as non-members of the Australian community-relegating them to the space of the 'other', alien, foreign and incompatible with Australian cultural values (p. 29).

Writing about religious freedom, Lucas (2004) examined how many minority religious cultures have "an uphill battle for survival" within any nation because they "often challenge or reject the normative order of society" (p. 341). Thus religious freedom can be difficult to attain when it contradicts local socio-cultural norms.

Religious freedom became a major issue in 2011 during the High Court Challenge. This was mostly due to religion and spirituality being portrayed as out of place, behind the times, anti-secular, and that chaplains were only there to force their beliefs onto school children (AAP, 2011, August 9; Dillon, 2011, January 28; Harrison, 2011, June 3; Lutton, 2011, January 30; Rowbotham, 2006, October 30). Some online news articles even portrayed the Program as already breaching the religious freedom laws of Australia, whilst the High Court was still deliberating Ron Williams' allegations against the Program (Dillon, 2011, January 28; D. Harrison, 2011, August 6b; Lutton, 2011, January 30). In the *Adelaide Advertiser* NSW Greens MP John Kaye is directly quoted stating:

The anger felt by many of us at the use of public money will now at least be tested in the court. There will now be an opportunity to hear in court why this program so deeply contradicts the integrity of the Australian Constitution (Dillon, 2011, January 28).

Thus regarding research question three, the Chaplaincy Program was not portrayed as aligning with the religious freedom laws of Australia. News articles used the High Court Challenge as a reason for arguing that the Program was against the Constitution (Dillon, 2011, January 28; Harrison, 2011, August 6a, 2011, July 12; Lutton, 2011, January 30).

The online news articles were not confined to representing the opinions of politicians and community leaders. The journalist's views became most apparent through the assumptions they made in their indirect quotes as well as the people they chose to directly quote in their articles. In fact it could be argued that it was predominantly the journalist's views which were being presented with only quotes by those who supported their claims.

If journalists are able to express their own viewpoints, even in national news articles how are citizens supposed to differentiate between fact and opinion? Granato in his (2003) book *Newspaper feature writing* states:

When dealing with a journalist, a source presents his or her case in the best possible light. Since you can't expect anyone to point out weaknesses and fallacies in his or her own arguments, the journalist draws out as much information from the source as possible, then seeks contrary views from people with different biases who oppose that source's point of view. This is how a journalist achieves fairness and balance in his or her stories (p. 16).

The analysis in this study shows that many journalists did not show fairness or balance within their news articles. Dan Harrison, for example, is a journalist for the *Melbourne Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald* who wrote many articles in 2011 about the Chaplaincy Program. Harrison used Ron Williams, psychologists, parents and politicians who disagreed with the Program to argue it was unconstitutional and should not be funded by the government (D. Harrison, 2011, August 6a, 2011, August 6b, 2011, June 3).

Through the analysis of the assumptions that were made in the articles, the ideologies were clarified to reveal how discourses were being formed about the Chaplaincy Program. For this reason Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis has been useful in the examination of news articles.

The discourses which have come out of this research have been surprising. Coming from a media studies background I initially came to this project expecting the media to be biased, but the extent of bias was much greater than I imagined. Examining how spirituality is perceived in Australia from the perspective of sociologists (Bouma, 2006; Richardson, 2006; Tacey, 2000), and then analysing how it is represented in the media has been very enlightening for me. I think it is important to be aware of new movements within society to understand them and how they function.

Within the Australian Constitution, Section 116 states that people are allowed to practice whatever religion they like as long as they are not breaking the law. The Commonwealth must not support or promote religion, but it is up to individual states to determine their level of religious freedom and I think that this has caused confusion over what the Commonwealth can and cannot fund. I found that many

news articles generally neglected to reinforce that schools voluntarily applied for funding.

I believe Ron Williams highlighted a contradiction in the Program being funded by a government which claims to be secular or neutral; a government that cannot promote or support religion. I would argue though, that secularity in Australia has become conflated with atheism and that critics such as Ron Williams expect the government to be atheist or anti-religion and, therefore the support of religious chaplains is interpreted as unlawful.

As Bouma (2006) and Aly (2007) have both explained, religious and spiritual groups can have a difficult time being accepted into Australian society. This is reflected within the findings of this study, whereby spirituality itself was predominantly rejected. However, as discussed in the literature review, Australia has always been a multi-cultural and multi-faith society. In the 2011 Census 72.5% of people answered the optional religious affiliation question (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011a). Between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses the number of people categorising themselves as having “no religion” increased from 18.7% to 22.3% (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011a). Nevertheless this is a relatively small proportion of Australians who are willing to declare they are of no religion. There are more than 30 religious and spiritual groups used in the Australian census classifications (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011b). Despite the evidence that many Australians identify themselves as religious or spiritual, the discourse analysis used in this research demonstrates that the media portrays religion negatively and sometimes as a threat to Australian society.

The role of the Chaplaincy Program within Australia was predominantly reported in eleven major newspapers as inappropriate, unwanted and even unconstitutional. These representations not only opposed the government funding of chaplains, but also opposed religion and spirituality within Australian society. While State schools were portrayed as secular places, they are populated by staff and children who are known to have a variety of religious and spiritual affiliations. While criticism of the Chaplaincy Program has focussed on the Constitutional imperative not to impose religion, the same section of the constitution protects the free exercise of religion. I have argued that news media articles about the Chaplaincy program have been framed to construct or reinforce negative ideologies. These may

ultimately restrict the choices Australians can make with regard to their own religious and spiritual practices. For this reason the media needs to be held accountable for portraying biased representations against religion and spirituality within Australian society.

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