

Out of Africa: Sudanese refugees and the construction of difference in political and lay talk

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

December 2011

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Abstract

Over the last ten years, more than 20, 000 Sudanese refugees have resettled in Australia and have been granted permanent residency. This new cohort of refugees has entered Australia via the federal government's offshore component of the Refugee and Humanitarian Programme, sanctioned by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Although there exists a cluster of discourse analytic work that examines debates surrounding asylum seekers that arrive by boat (often labelled as 'illegal immigrants'), there is a dearth of discursive psychological work that analyses how humanitarian refugees are constructed in political and everyday talk. This thesis addresses that gap by examining how humanitarian refugees, entering Australia under the auspices of the government, are represented and accounted for in public discourse and conversation. Employing a critical discursive psychological approach, this thesis analyses political interviews and lay talkback radio calls, to examine in close detail some of the manifold rhetorical practices that speakers deploy when constructing and advancing arguments that represent Sudanese refugees as ostensibly 'different'.

The first Chapter of this thesis introduces previous critical discursive research on refugees and asylum seekers in Australia, The United Kingdom, Spain and Canada. This literature suggests that refugees and asylum seekers are accounted for as 'illegal'; as constituting a 'threat' to the nations they seek refuge in, and as 'deviant'. These representations are argued to question the legitimacy of refugees' claims for asylum, and thereby justifying punitive policies of exclusion. I also discuss how preconceptions of the nation-state underpin

much of the discourse of delegitimation and threat instantiated in the reviewed research.

Chapter 2 provides an overview¹ of the methodology employed in this thesis. Employing a ‘synthetic’ (Wetherell, 1998) critical social psychological approach, I delineate how I came to chose this epistemology and discuss some of the assumptions it holds in relations to language. I also discuss the institutional settings and data that the four analytic Chapters give attention to.

Chapter 3, the first analytic Chapter, analyses political interviews with the former minister for Immigration and Citizenship of Australia, Kevin Andrews. Specifically, I examine how *causal attributions* function to build arguments that justify a reduction in the humanitarian quota for Sudanese refugees. This Chapter reformulates the traditional social-cognitive approach to causal attributions, and treats causality as a discursive resource: as a matter for speakers and hearers to orientate to and deploy for rhetorical purposes, functioning to attribute blame for ‘integration problems’ squarely on Sudanese refugees themselves. The close links between language, and its role in constructing justifications for punitive immigration policy, is well illustrated here.

In Chapter 4, the second analytic Chapter, I examine how speakers on talkback radio orientate to what I have coined, ‘sympathetic’ formulations, when complaining about *and* defending Sudanese refugees. I argue that *sympathy talk* constitutes a rhetorical resource that both assists speakers in the management of their identity (i.e. as reasonable, and ‘not racist’) when they are advancing pejorative representations of Sudanese refugees and as a device that

¹ As each analytic Chapter stands alone as individual manuscripts, they each carry with them their own methodology section. Therefore, this Chapter comprises an overview of the rationale for the methodological approach.

can be invoked to critique arguments deemed prejudicial. I also advance the argument that ‘sympathy’ talk signals a wider ideological practice that has implications for Sudanese refugees in relation to their social identity and positioning. By analysing at the interactional and ideological level, this Chapter highlights how linguistic resources can be subtly shaped, serving the rhetorical aims of the speaker.

Chapter 5 examines the structure and function of *narrative devices* in callers’ accounts of Sudanese refugees. This Chapter shows how the production of first-hand ‘witnessed’ events regularly use devices that present a speaker’s account as a compelling, veridical report, and not motivated by some pre-existing grudge against Sudanese refugees. Furthermore, I show how such narratives are imbued with various normative evaluations that do important work in legitimating punitive action against Sudanese refugees. I discuss the role of ‘contrast devices’ when building arguments that impute how Sudanese refugees are, in essence, different to previous immigrants and other long-settled Australians.

In Chapter 6, the final analytical Chapter, I provide a review of the literature pertaining to *‘psychological essentialism’* and its role in prejudiced and racist beliefs. Much of the existing work on psychological essentialism has attempted to attribute essentialism to an internalised, cognitive phenomenon. I provide discursive examples from the corpus that illustrate the contextually contingent nature of essentialist rhetoric, and its highly nuanced nature in rationalising why Sudanese refugees are problematic.

Chapter 7 charts an overview of the core empirical findings, and discusses implications of the four research Chapters. I also comment on how future research could elaborate and build upon these findings, integrate and

augment socio-cognitive accounts of prejudice and racism, and provide further insights into the way everyday talk constructs accounts and representations that legitimate stratification and inequality in society.

Declaration

I, Scott Hanson-Easey, certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institute of higher learning, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

All work contained in the submission was initiated, undertaken, and prepared within the period of candidature.

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Scott Hanson-Easey

Date.

Publications

Work contained in this thesis had been published elsewhere:

Hanson-Easey, S., & Augoustinos, M. (2010). Out of Africa: Refugee policy and the language of Causal attribution. *Discourse and Society* 21(3), 1–29.

Hanson-Easey, S., & Augoustinos, M. (2011). Complaining about humanitarian refugees: The role of sympathy talk in the design of complaints on talkback radio. *Discourse and Communication*, 5(3), 247-271.

Hanson-Easey, S., & Augoustinos, M. (In Press). Narratives from the neighbourhood: The discursive construction of integration problems on talkback radio. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*.

Acknowledgments

Firstly, to Martha. Without your insights and inspirational scholarship, I would not have followed the ‘discursive turn’ in social psychology. You have modelled to me how psychology can meaningfully engage with social practices to combat prejudice. Thank you for your invaluable humour, support and encouragement over the years. I will always cherish it.

Thank you to Gail for sharing your passion for social psychology, and your deep concern for refugees that started me on this path. Your supervision has always been wise and considered.

To my university friends: Shona, Brooke, Katherine, Clemmi, Victoria, Stuart and Katie. Thanks for normalising the PhD experience and accepting a foreigner from NSW into the qualitative fold at Adelaide. I cherish your friendship and intellect.

I would not have been able to this thesis without the integral work of Michael Billig, Margaret Wetherell, Tuen van Dijk, Jonathan Potter, Kenneth Gergen, Michael Foucault, Edward Said, Stuart Hall and Robert Miles. My debt to these thinkers will never be paid, but I thank them for opening my eyes.

Finally, to my family. Mum. I suspect you would have felt some pride to see me get to this point in my academic career: I miss you, and thank you for being so loving. Melissa, thank you for your acceptance and love. Louis, Audrey, Xavier and Julia, I love you very much and cherish your own distinct talents and identities. On a daily basis you all remind me of what’s important in life, and this, in turn, has kept me reasonably sane. I look forward to buying you some new clothes soon, now I am not reliant on a scholarship. To my dearest Kathy. So much has happened over the last three or so PhD years. When I think about these years, I reflect warmly on how we met and made a life together. In so many ways, these PhD years have been *our* PhD years. Thank you for correcting my less than perfect grammar and syntax, listening to my annoying moaning, counselling me in times of self-doubt, and propping me up when I was convinced that I had an intellectual delay. This PhD is dedicated to you.

Exegesis

Glimpsing back to the inception of a research project provides some important insights into the research itself, its rationale and the social contexts that it attempts to study. Hence, I begin here by providing some background into how I became interested in refugees from Sudan.

Whilst studying for an undergraduate degree on the mid-north coast of New South Wales, Australia, I became more aware that I only tended to hear about minority groups in the media when they were associated with some type of social problem or disturbance. Born out of a social naïveté, perhaps, this insight nevertheless instigated a train of questions that ultimately led me to investigate my own precepts about Africa, and how this knowledge may have been *socially* - not just individually - generated. In particular, I asked myself why is it, as a person who had the luxury of doing a reasonable amount of travel in the past, had I not seriously considered travelling to the array of countries that populate the continent of Africa.

Insights of this type are not only helpful in generating rationales for research; they also locate the researcher within the phenomenon that he/she is studying. Indeed, George Orwell (1945) writing during the Second World War, speaks to the need for people interested in prejudice to examine their own irrationalities before moving onto other peoples' prejudices:

What vitiates nearly all that is written about antisemitism is the assumption in the writer's mind that HE HIMSELF is immune to it. "Since I know that antisemitism is irrational," he argues, "it follows that I do not share it." Thus he fails to start his investigation in the one place where he could get hold of some reliable evidence – that is, in his own mind (p. 11).

Thus, what I found upon inspection of my ‘own mind’ on the subject of Africa, was not (well, at least, not from my potentially suspect perspective) a blind antipathy, but, what could be described as a feeling of trepidation, some indistinct fear about the concept of travelling there. Why did I harbour such a disinterest, aligned with ambivalent feelings, in travelling to a diverse continent that I ‘rationally’ understood to be of great interest? In my Honours year, my thesis research question attempted to address my question. That is, how does ‘country of origin’ engender differential representations and evaluations of refugees from various countries?(See Hanson-Easey & Moloney, 2009).

What began as a slightly awkward question about my own prejudices, grew into an interest about how some communities in regional Australia were explicitly rejecting relatively small numbers of Sudanese refugees² from resettling in their town. In Late 2006, local councillors from the city of Tamworth in New South Wales, after pressure from their local constituents, rejected a Federal Government offer to re-settle five Sudanese families (see Tamworth tainted by small minds, 2006). This rejection was based on representations of the handful of Sudanese refugees already in town as ‘lawbreakers’ (Tamworth tainted by small minds, 2006, p 1). Subsequently (as I discuss in the third Chapter of this thesis), in 2007, the Federal Immigration Minister, Kevin Andrews, justified a large reduction of the Sudanese refugee quota by pronouncing that due to their particular background, they were experiencing greater difficulty ‘integrating’ than other refugee cohorts.

What these socio-political controversies led me to consider in more depth was the centrality of discourse in legitimating punitive and exclusionary

² I use the gross social category ‘Sudanese refugees’ throughout this thesis. However, ‘the Sudanese’ are a heterogeneous group, consisting of at least 600 ethnic groups, with various languages, religious affiliations and cultural orientations (see Levinson, 1998).

political policies. Language, and its role in representing a refugee group as somehow deserving of these policies, seemed to me, central to the process of building a case for exclusion against Sudanese refugees.

Examining social events and attempting to discern the discursive pragmatics of how groups are categorised *as* a group on ethnic or racial grounds, also led me to consider an ideological approach to understanding prejudice and ‘racism’. That is, I began to align myself with a position that construed prejudice as not emerging from the socially detached individual, conjured up in isolation in their own irrational minds (Wertsch, 2001). Rather, I began to endorse a view that when speakers talk of problems with Sudanese culture or complain of Sudanese ‘integration’ issues, they are speaking with the borrowed language of their member culture. Thus, I gleaned after reading about the controversies in Tamworth, and hearing the Minister for Immigration explain why he was reducing the humanitarian refugee quota for *this* particular group, how essential shared assumptions of ‘difference’ were to building accounts that legitimated prejudice.

Thus, I do not consider myself, or anyone else, immune from talking or writing, or being implicitly co-opted in the practice of prejudice. I take the view in this thesis that the problem of prejudice is not only the problem of the irrational, atomistic individual, political hardliner or Nazi goon. Rather, it is a problem of our time and our culture (which we have inherited from previous epochs). Our social world is infused with taken for granted assumptions that legitimate the stratification of groups, and this thesis aims to reveal some of the discursive forms that make this possible.

Another admission I wish to make at this juncture alludes to some of the assumptions that I have already outlined above. That is, this research is driven

not purely by a politically neutral, dispassionate, or empiricist motivation to augment human knowledge. My approach to this research is guided by a moral and political concern for illustrating how social groups can be marginalised and excluded from engaging in a meaningful fashion in a new community. Thus, I do not purport to take an ‘uninterested’ stance when it comes to the analysis of discourse in this thesis. I make this admission so as to anchor my argument in a political and social context. My inquiries into the language of group differentiation are aimed at both the theoretical, deconstructing the contents and structure of talk, and, more generally, as a means of illustrating the nature of intergroup relations in a particular time and place. Indeed, as van Dijk (1996) has challenged us to do, we are all implicated in prejudice if we leave un-critiqued the various modes of discourse that reproduce and sustain inequality in society.

Sudanese refugees are one of the most vulnerable groups in Australian society. On the most part, they have spent years in refugee camps awaiting their claims to be processed by the UNHCR, with many having experienced torture, intractable poverty, and severe psychological distress (Bolea, Grant, Burgess & Plasa, 2003). However, it is not only this traumatic background that leaves this group open to socio-economic disadvantage; Australian society, where ‘regimes of representation’ (Hall, 1997) are regularly worked up with great verve and speed in the media, also have the potential to marginalise. Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2006) have clearly demonstrated how refugees are discriminated against in the labour market. Refugees from Africa and elsewhere regularly struggle to have their qualifications recognised and are relegated to low status jobs. The discourse that makes this institutional discrimination possible is the language that this thesis examines.

The structure of this thesis

This thesis is formatted as a ‘thesis by publication’ allowed for under the guidelines set down by University of Adelaide Graduate Centre. I have chosen this style of thesis for a number of reasons. First, I wished to share my work in relevant journals with peers as soon as I practically could. Second, I believed that the publishing process, and in particular the peer review process, would assist me in garnering valuable feedback from experienced academics in the field of discursive psychology. As such, this thesis is comprised of four analytical Chapters, reflecting the chronological order that these Chapters were authored (and three of them, at this time, published/accepted). Furthermore, each Chapter defines its own methodology and analytic frame; although I do provide an overarching methodology Chapter.

Aims of this thesis

The aim of this thesis is to delineate some of the manifold rhetorical strategies and contents that speakers deploy in their descriptions and accounts for how and why Sudanese refugees are perceived as ostensibly ‘different’ to other social groups in Australia. Through the four empirical Chapters that comprise this thesis, employing a mix of discursive psychology (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996) and a critical discursive psychological approach (Edley, 2001; Tuffin 2005; van Dijk, 1993; Wetherell, 1998; Wetherell & Potter, 1992), I examine how individuals categorise, describe, and provide explanations that engender Sudanese refugees as pervasively problematic, but also accountable for punitive action taken towards them.

A second analytical aim for this thesis is to demonstrate how speakers manage the complex interaction issues inherent in building persuasive versions of events and social relations that are resistant to discounting. Specifically, I focus on how speakers bulwark their complaints against a humanitarian refugee group from accusation that their talk is motivated by a callous disregard for their background. Current social norms provide a strong opprobrium against voicing crude complaints against ethnic minorities. Thus, I aim to examine how speakers manage the imperative to present as fair, rational and importantly, ‘not racist’, especially in light of this group’s humanitarian refugee background. The inherent dilemma of speaking pejoratively about Sudanese refugees is an area of discursive work that has received little analytical attention.

A third aim of this thesis is to analyse and discuss the ideological, or commonsense, linguistic resources that speakers draw upon in their arguments. Billig’s (1991) conceptions of ‘lived ideology’ – characterised as a set of contradictory, historically provided, discursive resources that speakers orientate

to in argument – is employed here as a means by which talk can be appraised in its wider social and political context. The analysis of ideology in talk helps this thesis make the connection between an individual's utterances, and talk's pivotal role in legitimating social and political practices that have the potential to negatively affect the lives of refugees.

In sum, this thesis is analytically bound by a focus on how speakers - either political, or lay speakers on talkback radio - structure and deliver their talk about Sudanese/African refugees. In particular, I pay specific attention to the rhetorical devices and resources that impute - implicitly, or explicitly - that the causes of the 'problems' with refugees from Sudan solely reside with the Sudanese themselves.

Chapter 1: Previous discursive research on refugees and asylum seekers

There exists a body of analytical work that views language - text or talk - as an important site for the production and reproduction of discourses that support socio-political practices of intergroup inequality. Broadly categorised as ‘critical discursive social psychological’ (henceforth CDSP), this Chapter reviews literature on how refugees and asylum seekers are represented in various discursive sites: focus groups, newspapers, interviews and political talk. More broadly, these studies give attention to how out-groups are represented, whilst drawing on social psychological concepts such as ‘racism’, culture-difference, national identity, ‘abnormalisation’ and associated concepts of ‘threat’. On the whole, what these studies contend is that refugees and asylum seekers are pervasively represented as ‘Other’, problematic, deviant and criminal, and that these pernicious constructions work to legitimate power relations that position refugees in dominated social positions. I also discuss how the academic literature that attends to nationalism, and its interactions with notions of cultural essentialism, integration, multiculturalism, and social cohesion, is an important element in analysing how humanitarian refugees are socially positioned.

Not surprisingly, CDSP’s interest in discourses cohering around asylum seeker and refugee issues has been motivated by increasingly punitive and exclusionary policies. In providing accounts of how language is used in a reflexive relationship to political aims, these studies are explicitly backgrounded by the socio-political contexts that they are embedded in. Thus, this Chapter is organised to reflect how refugee and asylum seeker representations are constituted in reference to their respective time and place. But before I review the international literature on refugees and asylum seekers, I will first provide an

overview of Australia's humanitarian refugee history, and a brief introduction to how Sudanese refugees now constitute one of the most recent cultural groups to settle in Australia.

Australia's humanitarian refugee history

Australia has a long history of accepting humanitarian refugees escaping the cataclysm of war and political persecution. From the very beginning of Australia's experience in offering humanitarian support to displaced peoples, to contemporary concerns over 'integration' of African refugees, the fear of 'difference' has been a recurrent and clear echo reverberating in Australia (Gale, 2004). Australia first offered refugee assistance in 1938, when the Lyons government offered 15,000 Jews fleeing Nazi Germany safe haven. Even though only 6475 Jewish refugees eventually made it to Australia before Hitler's Germany blocked their escape, the anti-Semitic outcry over the resettlement of this modest number was intense and protracted (Lack & Templeton, 1995). Even after the war in 1946, when Australia and the world was beginning to fully digest the atrocities of the Nazi concentration camps, the Australian press promulgated myths and racist stereotypes of Jews that resonated with public fears of being 'flooded' with 'rich refugees' (Lack & Templeton, 1995).

It was not until 1981, in accordance with the United Nations Convention of Refugees of 1951, that Australia formalised an ongoing humanitarian resettlement programme (Hugo, 2001). Previous refugee intakes had been in direct response to geo-political upheavals and, prior to 1975, these had focused on the resettling of refugees from central Europe. The end of the Vietnam (American) war in 1975 and the refugee crisis resulting from the war in Lebanon (1982) radically altered the composition of the refugee intake. Consequently, old

historical imaginings of an ‘Asian invasion’ resurfaced as the Vietnamese, who mostly entered Australia via the ordered and selective ‘clearing’ of refugee camps in Indochina, and not as publicly imagined via boat, grew in population. The Fraser government, in the lead up to the 1977 federal election, was becoming sensitive to the saturated reportage, which focused on the porous nature of Australia’s borders and the erosion of Australia’s ‘right’ to select migrants (Marr & Wilkinson, 2003). To combat this potential loss in constituency in the lead up to the election, the government stemmed the ‘wave’ of boat people by instituting a policy of ‘forward selection’; that is, choosing refugees from the camps in Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand to pre-empt the boats from leaving these ports (Betts, 2001; Marr & Wilkinson, 2003). The strategy worked, and for nearly a decade no more boats made the journey across the Indian Ocean.

In all, Australia took 95,000 Vietnamese refugees, with only 5000 of these arriving via boat. According to a number of Morgan Gallop Polls from December 1977–March 1979, attitudes towards the ‘boat people’ were ambivalent at best. Thirty percent of Australians wanted to ‘stop them from staying here’, and 59 percent of respondents stated that they wanted to ‘limit their numbers’ (Betts, 2001).

From this brief reading of Australia’s humanitarian refugee history (and I acknowledge that it is only one way of viewing such a history), offering refuge to vulnerable and often destitute peoples in Australia has often been met with social, political and media vexation. The constant variables here are the ideological notions of ‘race’, essentialised cultural difference and the potential threat this poses to a purportedly culturally homogeneous Australia.

Sudanese refugees

Sudanese refugees entering Australia through the ‘offshore’ humanitarian stream are one of the newest cultural groups to permanently settle in Australia. Most of this Sudanese Diaspora has settled since the humanitarian intake from Sudan was rapidly increased from 2002 onwards in response to the humanitarian atrocities arising from Sudan’s second civil war between the northern (Arab–Muslim) and southern (African–Christian) regions (Commonwealth of Australia, 2007b). To date, over 20,000 Sudanese have resettled in Australia and, according to The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), Sudan became the humanitarian programme’s top ‘source country’ in the 2002–3 financial year (Commonwealth of Australia, 2007b).

The shift in the programme’s focus to Africa has been brought about by a number of interweaving factors. Since its inception and independence from the British–Egyptian administration in 1956, Sudan has experienced protracted civil war and associated famine, generating large numbers of refugees and internally displaced peoples (Browne, 2006; Commonwealth of Australia, 2007b). It is estimated that over two million people have been killed during the second civil war and associated famines, and over four million people have been displaced (Commonwealth of Australia, 2007b). In 2004, the Sudanese refugee population in Egypt and North-Eastern Africa was 730,000, constituting the second largest refugee population in the world behind Afghan refugees, and Australia’s humanitarian programme had come to reflect these statistics and the associated humanitarian disaster that they represent (Browne, 2006).

Discursive research on refugees and asylum seekers in Australia, the United Kingdom and Spain.

The discursive mechanisms that link language to power in legitimating policies of exclusion were dramatically played out on the political stage in the lead-up to the Australian Federal election in 2001. On August 23rd, 2001, the MV Tampa, a Norwegian registered freighter carrying 438 rescued Afghan asylum seekers sought to enter Australian waters. The Australian government directed the Captain of the Tampa to track directly to Indonesia, or face large fines and jail if he entered Australian waters (Marr & Wilkinson, 2003). Australian SAS troops ultimately boarded the ship and the asylum seekers were transferred to either New Zealand, or detained on the Island of Nauru, while their refugee status was ascertained. A number of highly restrictive amendments to the Migration Act were subsequently passed in the Australian parliament with bi-partisan support from both major parties. The Liberal government throughout the 'crisis' received widespread support for their actions and went on to win the forthcoming Federal election.

Throughout the Tampa crisis, much of the political discourse was dedicated to the work of justifying and defending the policies of exclusion. Asylum-seekers were pervasively constructed as 'Other': deviant, abnormal and as threats to Australia and its sovereign right to protect its borders from 'unauthorised arrivals'. Saxton (2003) analysed print media and identified representations of asylum seekers as non-genuine, illegal and threatening, with these representations drawing on a nationalist discourse that privileged 'national rights'. Saxton (2003) argues that Australia's national identity as a humanitarian nation was inoculated through the representation of such policies as rational and fair responses to 'non-genuine' refugees. Asylum seekers were denoted in

category terms that worked to delegitimise their potential status as ‘genuine refugees’. Thus, the use of category terms such as ‘human cargo’, argues Saxton (2003), attends to their dehumanised status as ‘objects requiring management in relation to the national space’ (p.115). Furthermore, describing asylum seekers as ‘illegal passenger(s)’, constructs this group as having made choices about their journey, like any other ‘passenger’, but in direct contravention of sovereign law. In the Australian context, describing asylum seekers as ‘illegal’ is argued to provide warrant for the State to reconfigure their treatment of asylum seekers. Once discursively constructed as ‘illegal’, punitive action is sanctioned as deserving, and the provision of asylum seeker rights under international law can be relegated (Gale, 2004; O’Doherty & Lecouteur, 2007; Pickering, 2001; Saxton, 2003). Rendered ‘illegal’, asylum seekers are open to a ‘border protection’ response, where the ‘national interest’ is prioritised.

Asylum seekers were also delegitimised through their construction as threatening (Pickering, 2001; Saxton, 2003). Firstly, threat was constituted through the deployment of ‘disease’ in relation to asylum seekers (Pickering, 2001). The threat of disease is illustrated in the media focus on health screening for refugees, and as threats to Australia’s quarantine regime. In elision with war metaphors (see also Saxton, 2003), asylum seekers, along with the boats that they arrive in, are represented as ‘disease ridden’, and Australia as ‘losing a war against the introduction of many of the world’s worst pests and diseases’ (Pickering, 2001 p.182). The threat of disease to the Australian population, and the wider agriculture sector, is argued to work, in part, at least, analogically, where asylum seekers are represented as akin to a biological menace, threatening the body of the society in which they ‘invade’ (Pickering, 2001).

Asylum seekers in Australia were also found to be normatively evaluated on moral dimensions. As previously noted, the act of seeking asylum 'illegally' by boat is in and of itself, constituted as morally aberrant. Moral behaviour is also discursively 'abnormalised' (Verkuyten, 2001) by evaluations of what is discerned as 'humane' and 'responsible' in the allegation (later found to be false) of asylum seekers throwing their children overboard in order to manipulate Navy personnel into rescuing them (O'Doherty & Lecouteur, 2007; Saxton, 2003).

Taking a different tack, Every and Augoustinos (2007) demonstrate how refugee advocates, opposing punitive asylum seeker laws, defined and challenged this legislation as 'racist'. Every and Augoustinos (2007) found four constructions of racism challenged by refugee advocates: 1) categorical generalisations, using both racial and non-racial categories; 2) racism as the unfair differential treatment of asylum seekers arriving by boat in contrast to other immigrant groups; 3) racism as talk-about-national-sovereignty and, 4) racism as cultural-difference-talk. What constitutes 'racism' is argued to be resourced from social psychology, lay talk, and contemporary research into racism found in the social sciences (Figgou, 2002; Figgou & Condor, 2006). Every and Augoustinos (2007) contend that refugee advocates recognise new racist discourses and condemn such talk.

However, somewhat dilemmatically, advocates also orientate to the delicate nature of outing racist talk as 'racist', potentially undermining their political credibility. In sum, what Every and Augoustinos (2007) conclude in their analysis of pro-asylum seeker discourse is that what counts as racism is not attributable to one particular construction i.e. antipathy towards an out-group, but is best understood as a highly flexible and contestable social construction. Importantly, the notion of 'new racism' (Barker, 1981; Reeves, 1983), and its

move from crude biological arguments to notions of cultural incompatibility, is argued here to be highly resilient to challenge, and continually necessitates the reformulation of new anti-racist strategies in order to counter its oppressive functions.

Much of the discursive work carried out in Australia, as I have shown, has focused on what can be generally classified as ‘border protection’ debates, which regularly imbricate asylum seekers and refugees. In contrast, limited attention has been paid to other refugees who have entered via the Department of Immigration and Citizenship’s (DIC) ‘offshore humanitarian’ refugee stream. The process by which this cohort of refugees enter Australia, in contrast to those who arrive by boat, and thus represented in the first instance as ‘illegal’, is not shrouded in the delegitimised language of illegality and threat. This process is fully sanctioned by The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and fulfils Australia’s obligations under the Refugee Convention (see Commonwealth of Australia, 2009). However, discourses that problematise Sudanese refugees have been observed in the media in relation to violence in the Australian city of Melbourne.

Windle (2008) analysed newspaper articles over a two-month period, during which ‘African’ or ‘Sudanese’ groups were featured heavily in the media as participating - as perpetrators, or victims - in violence. Windle’s analysis reveals that Sudanese refugees were ‘racialised’ (a process by which race or ethnicity used to explain events) and represented in the media, as possessing a ‘culture of violence’. The police themselves are shown to develop causal theories, explicating that the ‘Sudanese’ are problematic due to their experiences in Sudan’s civil war as ‘boy soldiers’ (Windle, 2008 p. 558). Furthermore, Sudanese refugees are, according to Windle, represented in the media as prone to

'integration' problems due to their cultural background. Conversely, Australia is represented as a civilised, 'peaceful' society, unaccustomed to the types of violence that are argued to be part-and-parcel of the Sudanese culture. In sum, these discursive patterns in newspaper media function to allocate culpability on Sudanese refugees themselves, leaving the Australian political and cultural milieu free from blame and responsibility.

Windle's (2008) findings resonate with a study by Marlowe (2010), in which he argues that the 'extra-ordinary' narratives often attributed to Sudanese refugees; stories of violent conflict, of miraculous journeys of survival and escape (e.g. Bixler, 2005), along with underlying assumptions of 'trauma', have reinforced the immutable status of 'refugee'³. In other words, what these narrow, 'exotic' representations do is essentialise refugees *as* refugees, as a scarred and pathologised people, limiting their ability to move beyond this portrayal. Marlowe (2010) found in his interviews with Sudanese-Australians, a clear articulation of the 'lived' consequences of such representations for Sudanese refugees. One interviewee cogently commented:

We need to get rid of that thinking that our people are traumatised. We are traumatised, yes this is true and that is fine. But that does not mean that we are. We are something different and we can provide. We can offer. We can contribute (p.189).

As Marlowe (2010) observes, this participant clearly recognises the problem with reducing the 'refugee' identity to that of the 'passive victim'.

³ This argument made by Marlowe (2010) is consonant with part of the argument I will present in the second analytic paper of this thesis. And, although this paper was written before Marlowe's paper was published, I think it helps to ground my argument in a 'lived' experience.

Moreover, access to full membership to, and parity in, a new community is arguably retarded by such a discourse.

What this small body of work on Sudanese refugees in Australia suggests, is that refugees from Africa are, akin to 'illegal' refugees arriving by boat, ostensibly framed as threats to the nation. They are discursively rationalised, made sense of, with ideological, historical representations that function to criminalise them, rendering them different (the Other). Thus, as these studies suggest, once represented as problematic and different, Sudanese refugees are not only left open to social and political exclusion, but also vulnerable to a process of subjectification (internalisation) by which they come to see themselves as being imbued with similar features (see Foucault, 1980).

The negative construction and differentiation (othering) of refugee and asylum seeker identities has also been a central discursive theme in CDSP work conducted in the United Kingdom. Debates over asylum seekers, like in Australia, have also been a feature of political campaigns. In the 2005 and 2010 British General elections, asylum seeker issues - regularly subsumed within broader immigration debates⁴- (Lynn, & Lea, 2003) constituted a salient concern for both conservative and Labor parties (Goodman & Burke, 2010; Goodman & Speer, 2007). Discourses of delegitimation in the UK have been observed to deploy category terms that dichotomously label asylum seekers as either 'genuine' or 'bogus' (Goodman & Speer, 2007; Lynn & Lea, 2003). The 'bogus' asylum seeker, or 'economic refugee' in this context resonates with Australian findings.

⁴ See <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/election/article-1264333/GENERAL-ELECTION-2010-Under-Labour-nearly-UK-jobs-taken-foreigners.html>

The rhetorical utility of the 'bogus refugee' construction is made apparent in a 'letter to the editor' (Daily Express):

Bad feeling occurs when refugees are housed ahead of our homeless British citizens. No-one begrudges genuine refugees a home, but when bogus ones are housed within weeks and UK citizens, black and white, are left to rot in hostels, it does seem unfair? (Lynn & Lea, 2003, p.433).

The commonsense distinction between legitimate and illegitimate refugees is argued by Lynn and Lea (2003) to function as an inoculation (see Potter, 1996) against accusations that the writer is being 'unreasonable' or callous (Billig, 1991). That is, this formulation, deploying a 'good'/'bad' binary, connotes that it is only 'bogus' refugees that instigate a 'bad feeling'. The differential categorisation of 'bogus and 'genuine' asylum seekers is considered to function in various ways in defending anti-asylum seeker arguments. The ideological dilemma (Billig, Condor, Edwards, Gane, Middleton, & Radley, 1988) inherent in grossly constructing all those fleeing oppression in their homelands as problematic is thus alleviated by differentiating 'good' and 'bad' asylum seekers. Complaining about 'bogus' asylum seekers, but accepting that some legitimate asylum seekers do in fact exist (but are connoted as rare), constitutes a strategic category distinction; a humane response to those deemed 'genuine' can be retained in theory, whilst punitive responses can be rationally sustained for the majority of 'bogus' asylum seekers.

According to Lynn and Lea (2003), another common sense device, coined 'differentiating the self', is used to categorise and contrast a British 'handicapped' group (visually disabled) against asylum seekers who are constructed as accepting, 'every freebee that comes their way...' (p. 438). Asylum

seekers are thus played off against a marginalised group to intimate that accepting asylum seekers is having a serious social impact on a vulnerable group. Once again, this construction promotes a caring identity for the speaker as someone who is essentially concerned about the implications of accepting asylum seekers, not for herself, but on behalf of a stigmatised group (Lynn & Lea, 2003).

Although the contexts may differ, the categorising practices of speakers in relation to asylum seekers are a recurrent theme in research both in the UK and Australia. Goodman and Speer (2007) have found that speakers who distinguish between categories of ‘refugee’ and ‘migrant’, conflate the categories ‘refugees’ and ‘economic migrant’, and the terms ‘illegal immigrant’ and ‘refugee’ were regularly deployed simultaneously and were also conflated. Contingent on the interactional setting speakers are in, category classifications were used politically to delegitimize all asylum seekers, justifying punitive measures against them, no matter what their circumstances were. For example, in a televised debate on the BBC, pro- and anti-asylum seeker advocates were observed to contest whether category terms used in the media to denote ‘asylum seekers’ had been ‘inflammatory’. Indeed, Peter Hitchens, a writer for the Daily Mail, propounded that the term ‘asylum seekers’ constituted an inflammatory term, and asylum seekers should be reclassified as ‘illegal immigrants’ instead. Goodman and Speer argue that classifying asylum seekers into those who are ‘genuine’ and those who are ‘economic migrants’ valorises the debate around legitimate and illegitimate asylum seeker claims. What is more, this type of debate is argued to have implications for all asylum seekers, who are broadly represented as potential ‘cheats’.

However, not all British newspapers, including conservative tabloid and broadsheets, negatively represented all asylum seekers as deviant, different and 'illegal'. Khosravini (2009) contrasted representations of Kosovar Albanian asylum seekers fleeing from the Serbian ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and other "refugees, asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants" (henceforth, RASIM) in British newspapers during the 2005 British general election. Notwithstanding the analytical problems inherent in homogenising 'asylum seekers' and 'immigrants', something that is left unproblematised by the author, this research attends to the differential discursive treatment and 'macro-structures' (ideologies) that 'background' and make sense of these contrastive styles of reportage. According to Khosravini (2009), Kosovar refugees were positively represented by drawing on humanising and victim narratives, and that these narratives were rendered with vivid, sympathetic details about their plight. Accounts often supplied individual and personalising details. The following illustration is from the Daily Mail:

He was doing his homework when the tanks stormed the village, a five-year-old boy sitting quietly at the table with his mother (Khosravini, 2009, p. 484).

Notably, accounts of Kosovar asylum seekers were frequently referenced with quantification metaphors such as 'influx' and 'flood' and 'tide of refugees'. However, these quantification devices (Potter, 1996) were not considered to be constitutive of a negative construction. Alternatively, they formed part of an argument for humanitarian help. Quantitative metaphors are deemed to not, in and of themselves, be devices for the construction of pejorative accounts - but tied to the overall context, or 'macro-structure' (ideology) of the crisis.

In Khosravinič's (2009) analysis, newspaper representations of (RASIM) were found to be broadly negative in their presentations. However, analysed extracts were, on the whole, related to what could be fairly described as 'immigrant' matters, not asylum seeker or refugee issues. Immigrants were, in contrast to Kosovar asylum seekers, referred to as nominal groups of numbers, that is, 'number of immigrants'. Further, immigrants were argued to be 'de-humanised' through their reference to categories such as 'numbers' and aggregated to 'people' (Khosravinič, 2009). In general, RASIM are represented in terms of threat to the host countries' culture and values, and have come to constitute a danger to these social norms.

In explaining these findings, Khosravinič (2009) contends that the differential representation of these two groups is contingent upon the proximity of these groups to the UK. One group is fleeing genocide, but are not (yet) physically present in the home country of the media and its readership. Conversely, RASIM are, and have been, a physical presence in British society for many years, and debates surrounding RASIM are 'backgrounded' in significant ways by this history (Khosravinič, 2009). Taking this insight further, I speculate that this 'distance' may partially explain why a positive, humanising representation of Kosovar refugees was discerned in this study, and why a similar representation for RASIM, was not. The research already reviewed here suggests that negative constructions of refugees and asylum seekers, often conflated with immigration issues, are functionally conditional on legitimating political action that restricts asylum seekers' access to freedoms and rights. That is, asylum seeker constructions are designed to garner support and legitimise punitive legislation that works against a present threat. In this context, it is not necessary to represent Kosovar refugees as 'bogus' or 'deviant', as there is no

punitive legislation or social action to legitimate. Moreover, this refugee cohort is not considered to constitute a threat to cultural and community values (yet), and are thus accounted for only in ways that legitimate their theoretical motivations for seeking to escape persecution.

In continental Europe, discursive work on asylum seekers has further highlighted the importance of legitimating arguments in the political process. Rojo and van Dijk (1997) studied a parliamentary speech by the Spanish Secretary of the Interior, Mr Mayor Oreja. The Secretary was responsible for the expulsion of 103 undocumented migrants from sub-Saharan Africa that sparked a national and international debate, and garnered much criticism of the Secretary and his government. According to Rojo and van Dijk, political legitimation can be defined thus:

...a powerful group or institution (often the State, the government, the rulers, the elite) seeks normative approval for its policies or action. It does so through strategies that aim to show that such actions are consistent with the moral order of society, that is, within the system of laws, norms, agreements or aims agreed upon by (the majority of) citizens (Rojo & van Dijk, 1997, p. 528).

Within the struggle to legitimate his actions, the Secretary not only negatively represented 'illegal' immigrants, but sought to characterise his actions as legal; as executed by professional agencies with diligence and care; and as a special response to a situation that threatened the country (Rojo & van Dijk, 1997). Legitimating rhetoric is therefore understood to constitute a complex mix of discursive strategies that both warrant controversial actions as just and normatively acceptable, whilst concomitantly representing asylum seekers as

deserving of such actions, that is, illegal and deviant. Social approval of the 'expulsion' is sought through representing the immigrants as violent, and in accord with previous research, as a de-humanised amalgam of individuals.

Rojo and van Dijk (1997) further argue that legitimation is contingent on the power invested in the speaker, vis-à-vis being a privileged member of that institution. The power that political speakers evoke in authorising their versions of reality, enjoying privileged access to the media in setting their own modes of representation, undermining alternative representations, is understood to be 'self-legitimizing'. That is to say, political discourse, through its privileged position and access to the media affects a monopolization of social legitimacy that asylum seekers certainly cannot. For example, as Rojo and van Dijk (1997) argue, the Secretary operationalises this power by referencing himself not as an individual, but in terms of his position as a representative of the government. These terms include, 'This government' and 'this secretary', making salient his function as an instrument of government power. Emphasising differences in status between his role and the 'migrants', constructs a hierarchy wherein the Secretary is positioned hierarchically at the very top, with the 'migrants' occupying the bottom echelons.

This insight arguably resonates with much of the research reviewed here. The political and journalist 'elite' are fundamentally privileged in their ability to self-legitimate their own versions of reality. Importantly, alternative voices - asylum seekers and their advocates - have their accounts and arguments undermined and suppressed. Clearly, politicians and the press are vested with the power to articulate various discourses, mobilising their listeners and readership to participate in supporting socio-political action that negatively impinge on asylum seekers and refugees. This has important implications for how we discern

the ability of powerful groups in society to sustain and reproduce dominant discourses, and entrench their own positions in relation to other groups.

As I have argued thus far, the news media play a central role in (re)producing pernicious narratives of asylum seekers, framing subsequent debates which attend to wider issues such as 'border protection' and immigration, and the differentiation of the Other. I now turn to discursive work from North America that further evinces how asylum seeker and refugee issues precipitate wider concerns about national identity and socio-cultural threat from a racialised outgroup.

Asylum seekers in Canada

During 1999, four boats carrying 599 asylum seekers from the Fujian Province of China arrived off the coast of Canada. Reminiscent of the aforementioned 'Tampa affair', Hier and Greenburg (2002) observe that asylum seekers were represented in newspaper media as a racialised collective. Drawing on Miles' (1989) explanation of racialisation, asylum seekers were collectivised as a racial outgroup with inherent, often biologically derived identities being deployed to explain differences between them and the ingroup. Consequently, asylum seekers were referenced as 'illegal Chinese' or 'Asian', with these racial tags being used to construct distinctions between 'us' and 'them'. Like much of the research already discussed, a discourse of 'illegality' presupposed that the asylum seekers and their actions transgressed legal norms. Further detaching any sort of humanising or individuating content from asylum seeker representations, asylum seekers were objectified through codified newspaper rhetoric, such as 'human cargo' and natural disaster metaphors of 'waves of migrants'. As Hier and Greenburg (2002)

postulate, this language functions to magnify the event, and legitimize the internment of asylum seekers in a detention centre.

Also of note here is how Hier and Greenburg (2002) theorise the process in which media assertions of asylum seeker illegality were extended to constitute a broader 'crisis' for the nature of Canada's immigration and refugee policy. Asylum seekers were portrayed as threats, and were assumed to bring with them infectious diseases (e.g. AIDS), presenting a security risk to the Canadian populace. According to these researchers, the immigration and refugee system was constituted as weak and ineffective in defending the nation, easily circumvented by criminalised 'people smugglers'.

Ultimately, the government, under pressure from two months of public debate, stimulated by the media, forcibly returned 90 asylum seekers. A large proportion of the remaining asylum seekers had their claims rejected, or were abandoned (Hier & Greenburg, 2002). The discourses of threat and illegality had ultimately found their mark - effecting the exclusion of the asylum seekers, providing leverage for political action.

What we can take from the studies reviewed here is a confluence of discursive themes that embody and interact with a range of wider ideologies. Asylum seeker representations have been shown to be imbricated with immigration concerns, with complaints that welfare is being unfairly distributed from 'Us' to 'Them', with fears over terrorism and criminality, and with concerns that social cohesion and national identity were being eroded because of the presence of asylum seekers in society. In the next section of this Chapter I want to advance the concept of interdependence between the practice of exclusion that these representations of difference allow for, and the belief in a distinct, culturally identifiable population that constitutes 'the nation'.

Nationalism: the external and internal threat

Running under most of the asylum seeker representations reviewed in the studies noted here, and setting the parameters around how these debates manifest, is, I argue, the concept of the nation state, and the related discourses of nationalism in premising ‘natural’ differences between who belongs to the nation and who is foreign to it. Pickering (2001) has shown in her study of Australian news media, a pervasive discursive theme of the ‘integrity of the nation state’. Asylum seekers and refugees were often represented with war metaphors such as ‘massing in Indonesia’, ‘gathering to our north’ and ‘invading’ the ‘land of hope’ (p. 174). Clearly, discursive formulations that invoke metaphors of threat to some bounded space and its population would not stand if there were not an ideological, and thus taken-for-granted notion of a nation state to be maintained and defended in the first instance. Derogatory representations of refugees and asylum seekers depend on the taken for granted status of the bordered and differentiated nation, confronting normative values that ‘our’ nation stands for, ‘our’ health, ‘our’ laws and incursion into ‘our’ sovereign territory.

In this section I elaborate on how nationalism subsumes ideological notions of a ‘natural’ world constituted by distinct, spatially bounded communities, with their own, distinctive cultural attributes. I will also argue that nationalism, or better put, nationalistic rhetoric, not only functions to control and justify policies of exclusion and the incarceration of asylum seekers, but it also extends its reach to those who have already been accepted as refugees, and those who have previously immigrated, but do not possess the dominant cultural criteria that many nations valorise, and equate with full national belonging.

Benedict Anderson (1983) has argued that the rise of the nation state has engendered a shared representational system that has come to constitute an ‘imagined community’ for its members. Anderson (1983) has stressed that the nation is ‘imagined’ in that its members will never know or even hear from most of their fellow citizens, but will still share an affinity, premised on a shared sense of collective interest and distinct cultural profile. Communities are thus ‘imagined’ to exist within finite national boundaries, beyond which other ‘imagined’ nations and their peoples reside. Anderson’s formulation of national belonging highlights the potential for nationalism to constitute a platform ideology from which exclusionist rhetoric can spring from to mobilise collective support for policies that are construed as a threat to the nation. To further explain this somewhat abstract notion of the ‘imagined community’, I will illustrate how such a concept may be articulated in political rhetoric. The following speech is by John Howard, former Australian Prime Minister, launching his 2001 Federal election campaign,

National security is therefore about a proper response to terrorism. It’s also about having a farsighted, strong, well thought out defence policy. It is also about having an uncompromising view about the fundamental right of this country to protect its borders, it’s about this nation saying to the world we are a generous open hearted people taking more refugees on a per capita basis than any nation except Canada, we have a proud record of welcoming people from 140 different nations. But we will decide who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come.

Howard here is appealing to the common sense notion of the Australian homeland, invoking the naturalised precepts of a nation’s sovereign right to protect its borders from ‘terrorists’, and arguably, ‘refugees’ who come by boat (the conflation of these two groups is instructive). Without going into an analysis

here, what this extract helps us see is how ideological expressions of nationhood overlap and underpin arguments that promote restrictive and punitive refugee policies (Howard went on to win the election and installed an ‘offshore’ asylum seeker system that detained asylum seekers on small Pacific Islands). This argument does not necessitate further justification or explanation, the nation’s borders, and the imputed need to protect them from external threats, are just assumed.

Moreover, Howard’s speech hints at what Hage (1998) has argued is part of a ‘managerial discourse’, designed to protect the nation from ‘otherness’.

Nationalist practices are defined by Hage to be constituted by the ‘national will’, and its role in protecting the ‘national body’ (p. 108). The national will is likened to an immune system, dedicated to protecting the ‘national body’ from threats, and to the reproduction of itself (i.e. cultural hegemony). According to Hage, ‘National others’ are tolerated within the parameters of what is deemed to constitute a threat to the nation ‘will’. That is, according to Hage, national practices function to control who may enter the country in the first instance, and what may be legitimately tolerated from the Other in normative relation to the dominant image of the ‘White Australian’.

To ground this conceptualisation in the literature reviewed here, Hier and Greenburg (2002) argue that asylum seekers vis-à-vis their ‘self-selection’, contravene a nation’s right to ‘select’ its own citizens. The right to choose who enters, how they enter, and in what numbers, constitutes a clear and present danger to the national will, as these asylum seekers contravene a basic tenant of the national will: executing a will of their own (Hage, 1998).

The rhetoric of nationalism provides the ideological grist for everyday talk about who ‘really belongs’ to the nation, who sits on the margins, and who is positioned outside of the national ‘we’. It is the historically derived and ongoing ‘flagging’ of national identity that sustains and reproduces the common sense of nationalism which Billig (1995) coins ‘banal nationalism’. Arguing against the notion that nationalism belongs purely to the slaving fascist, or members of separatist guerrilla movements; Billig (1995) argues that everyday nationalism is less remarkable than this, and is reproduced in subtle and unnamed habits of everyday life. These banal (but not benign) ‘ideological habits’ routinely remind a populace of nationhood vis-à-vis language. Thus, banal nationalism can also be viewed as constituting and regenerating this imaginary community, as it constantly reminds its populations what it means to belong to the nation (think of national flags), and in a dialectical relationship, signifying what is foreign. In this way, nationalism undergirds a sensitivity to threats from cultural others, whether it be from ‘illegal’ or ‘bogus’ asylum seekers, or from the ethnic other who forms part of a ‘multicultural’ society.

So, then, it is no surprise then that Goodman and Speer (2007) found that asylum seekers and immigrant categories were conflated, treated as if they were the same, in British newspapers and by the anti-immigration British National Party (BNP). As these researchers argue, for many people, asylum seeking *is* immigration. Asylum seekers and immigrants often come to a country for very different reasons, but arguably, present the very same threat to the nation. That is, they both threaten what it means to be a coherent nation, culturally, religiously, ‘racially’ or otherwise. Martin Barker (1981) speaks to this cultural pluralism in ‘The New Racism’. Barker’s (1981) central thesis posits that a common sense theory of ‘natural’ cultural (not explicitly racial) differences,

predicated on a national consciousness, works to legitimate exclusionist policies. Resonating with Hage's (1998) concept of the 'national will', functioning to protect the homogeneity of the dominant national consciousness, we can now begin to see a commonsense theory of nationalism that views the world as cleaved by bounded communities. These nations come with their own set of distinct, cultural characteristics that engender and justify an emotional response to national belonging (Barker, 1981). Importantly, this nationalist theory explicates that cultural differences are a natural feature of belonging to a community, and it is this cultural identity that differentiates peoples from different nations.

In a similar vein, Verkuyten (1998, 2003, 2005), and Verkuyten and Martinovic (2006) have examined how ingroup and out-group members employ ethnic (national) and cultural categories when talking about cultural diversity in the Netherlands. Participants in these studies routinely employed discrete cultural differences to mark and categorise people into ethnic (national) groups, for example, Turkish, English, Dutch. In short, some participants reified culture as immutable and distinct: there was 'our' culture, and 'their' culture, and neither the two may meet (Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2006). The nationality-culture link was essentialised, leaving a deep cultural mark on people. Cultural essentialism was used by some ethnic Dutch to argue for 'new racist' (Barker, 1981) segregation, predicated on the notion that majority and minority groups held incompatible and intrinsically different cultural values.

Interestingly, some ethnic Dutch advocated for assimilation, arguing that ethnic minorities should 'adapt to Dutch culture' (Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2006, p. 383). This argument assumes that culture is not indelibly impressed on people, but can be made to disappear, so as new cultural (national) identities can

be taken up in their place. Culture is ‘de-essentialised’ (Verkuyten, 2003) in arguing for assimilation, rendering it as a ‘choice’ that minorities make in adapting, or not, to the dominant culture, or as Hage (1998) puts it ‘the national will’. These studies highlight the importance of examining the flexible and situated interplay between ethnicity, nationality and culture in talk, as linked categorisation resources in formulating arguments and evaluations of people, especially when they are advancing arguments that advocate for the exclusion or cultural assimilation of ethnic others.

For my examination of how members construct accounts of Sudanese refugees, the aforementioned studies are particularly instructive in critically analysing nationalist-cultural discourses. How do politicians and talkback radio interactants deploy culture repertoires in constructing representations of Sudanese refugees? In what ways do they deduce that these behaviours constitute a ‘natural’, essentialised element of this groups’ national/ethnic identity? As I noted earlier, nationalist discourses have been portrayed as maintaining and reproducing a monolithic national identity, distinguishing it from ‘ethnic’, counter-identities (Hage, 1998). In these terms we can also ask, how do these discourses of othering manifest in specific local contexts?

New directions in research on refugees

There are a number of opportunities for the current research to extend our understandings of how minority groups are constructed in talk, and more specifically, how refugees from Sudan are discursively finessed as ‘different’. Firstly, and most obviously, there is a dearth of discursive analytic work that specifically focuses on *refugees from Sudan*, who have entered Australia through the offshore humanitarian refugee stream. Refugees from Sudan constitute one of

the fastest growing communities in Australia, and since 1996, more than 20,000 of this Diaspora have permanently settled in Australia (Commonwealth of Australia, 2007b)⁵. This group, as noted earlier, make up a considerable proportion of the refugee population now living in Australia. Their journey to this country as part of the government sanctioned ‘offshore program’ is normatively contrasted to ‘illegal immigrants’ or ‘asylum seekers’, who have entered Australia via boat. Refugees from Sudan and other nations in Africa may not carry with them the sorts of stigmatised associations that have been identified in the studies presented here. But clearly, as explicated in the study by Windle (2008), African refugees are problematised, and this accounting for their behaviour along racialised lines, appears to be drawing on a pattern of representations that legitimate restrictive policies and justify social exclusion. This thesis can further map out the discursive construction of refugees from Sudan in the context of current social events in Adelaide, Australia. Discourse is highly contingent on context, and further situated examinations of talk in the here-and-now may be advantageous.

The situated accounting of this group and their attendant behaviours in talk-in-interaction, as opposed to one-sided media representations, also provides opportunities for this thesis to examine how representations and accounts function in argumentation. According to Billig (1987), the dialogic or rhetorical context, where speakers formulate their utterances in opposition to counter-claims, is a highly apposite discursive site for analysing the dilemmatic and contested nature of interaction. The research presented thus far appears to only capture one side of the argument, and omits potential counter-arguments that an interlocutor could provide. Moreover, arguments built in dialogue need to be

⁵ South Australia has settled 9% of the total intake of refugees from Sudan, with 90% of this population living in capital cities (Commonwealth of Australia, 2007b)

sensitive, or reflexive, to previous utterances in order to remain intelligible and persuasive in conversation.

Analysing dialogue, as opposed to ‘representations’ in the print media, provides a glimpse into how speakers manage this complex interactive challenge. This is especially advantageous when speakers are working up accounts that could be accounted for as ‘racist’ or callous, and enables this analysis to posit some further questions about how prejudice functions when people interact in naturalistic contexts. How do they manoeuvre around these threats to their identity? What is identified as constituting ‘racism’ in this context?

Conclusion

In this Chapter, I have reviewed some of the discursive work on asylum seeker and refugee debates. This research provides insights into the omnipresent representations of asylum seekers and refugees as deserving of exclusionary practices. Similar discursive patterns make their appearance time and time again in studies across the world: the delegitimation of asylum seekers as ‘illegal’, ‘criminal’, as threats to a nation’s sovereign right to protect its borders and as biological and cultural threats. I have also argued that these representations and arguments share another common theme, that they are predicated on the ideological precept of an imagined community. It is within this notion of the bounded nation that many exclusionary discourses take their particular shape, moulded to combat and defend the nation against the foreign ‘floods’ of ‘illegal asylum seekers’. Nationalist practices do not stop at sovereign state borders, but arguably, tail refugees once inside the nations who have accepted them, providing a template for speakers to delineate what is proper behaviour, and what constitutes a breach. However, another constant of discourse is its

diachronic, or, evolving nature. The mutable quality of discursive practice necessitates the identification and analysis of new iterations of talk as they emerge to contend with social and political imperatives. 'positive' . This thesis aims to carry on this work, critically exploring the many facets of language practices, in constructing the social world, stratifying social groups and legitimating social inequality.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Theoretical orientation

I chose my methodology for this thesis before I decided on my research question. That is, I had what Silverman (2005) calls ‘considerable prior instrumentation’ (p. 110). At the beginning of my research, I had recently moved away from a Social Representations (Moscovici, 1984) orientation to understanding social knowledge and its connection to social context, and migrated to a broadly (at first) discursive psychological (Wetherell & Potter, 1992) and rhetorical (Billig, 1987) epistemology. As my research progressed, I came to appreciate the employ what is called a ‘synthetic’ discursive approach (Wetherell, 1998). The synthetic approach attempts to marry some aspects of both conversation analysis (CA)/discourse analysis (DA), with more post-structuralist, Foucauldian analysis. Edley and Wetherell (1997) describe this perspective as constituting a corrective to the unhelpful distinction commonly made, and robustly contested, between CA/DA inspired analysis and more ‘critical’ lines of post-structuralist inquiry into topics such as ‘racism’ and gender. The methodological and epistemic divide between CA/DA and critical discursive analysis was most clearly explicated through the debate between the conversation-analyst, Emanuel Schegloff (1997, 1998), and critical researchers such as Billig (1999), Edley and Wetherell (1997) and Wetherell (1998). In short, Schegloff (1997) has argued that critical discourse analysts impose their own pre-conceived frames of reference and understandings about the world into their analysis. Schegloff (1997) labels this discursive prefiguring as ‘analytic imperialism’, and he reiterates and commends the CA maxim that analysis should chiefly concern itself with participants’ orientations that are

‘demonstratively relevant to the participants in the event being examined, not necessarily relevant to the inquirer doing the analysis’ (p.165). Schegloff (1997) criticises critical analysts for transposing their own preoccupations with politically driven ‘contexts’ that are not explicitly orientated to by participants themselves. For Schegloff, any analysis of talk or text that presupposes ‘contexts’ such as power, inequality, matters of prejudice, or any other historically provided pattern of discourse, is unsustainable if it cannot be shown to be of import for participants, and as such, demonstrably orientated to (Schegloff, 1998).

Arguing against Schegloff’s strict adherence to privileging members’ orientations as the *only* starting point for analysis, discursive investigators (Billig, 1991; Edley & Wetherell, 1997; van Dijk, 1991; Wetherell & Potter, 1992) have been blending analysis of the interactional practices of talk, *with* a focus on how talk is constructed with reconstituted and historically available resources. This synthetic discursive methodology maintains that elements of a CA/DP approach to inspecting the structure of talk in interaction is complementary with a methodology that examinations talk for ideological patterns (Edley & Wetherell, 1997).

The synthetic approach employed in this thesis argues that a singular focus on either participant’s methods of talk in interaction, or post-structural (ideological) analysis, is not the most effective way to study talk about social groups and their construed ‘difference’. Rather, the founding epistemology and methodological position I take here analytically privileges both the interactional and the ideological, and thus both are viewed as imbricated in the studies that constitute this thesis.

As Barthes (1982) has noted, people are simultaneously the master and slave of language; that is, speakers both produce new forms of discourse in

interaction ('occasioned') upon the foundations of older, historically provided words and meanings. Moreover, Billig (1987, 1991) argues that critical discursive analysis should pay attention to the rhetorical features of members' talk as they shape and deploy commonsense in often-dilemmatic forms, within the fluid flow of argumentation. Arguments endorsing one version of reality, implicitly opposing alternate versions of events, are argued to be constructed with historically provided common sense (Billig, 1991).

Thus, following Billig, I argue that arguments can be characterised as being constructed upon older sedimentary layers of discourse, and analysis that incorporates these insights can potentially link talk to its role in sustaining and reproducing structural disadvantage. Indeed, I have chosen the synthetic (or 'eclectic') iteration of discourse analysis precisely because I want to critically examine how talk in interaction builds social realities that may have negative ramifications for Sudanese refugees in Australia. As Tuffin (2005) notes, for the critical social psychologist, language is the privileged domain for analysing social practices. Thus, in this thesis, I investigate the language practices of speakers as they are brought to bear in their interactional contexts, with a view to situating these practices within the wider, social world they are embedded in and made sense by.

The Data

The data analysed in this thesis comprises of news-radio interviews, ‘doorstop’ interviews and talkback radio ‘call-ins’. Although the data selection methodology is explicated in each of the self-contained, analytic Chapters, in this section, I will provide an overview of how the data was collected, and what criteria I employed to sample the interviews for analysis.

The data corpus can be categorised into two sections. Section 1 relates to the data analysed in Chapter 3. Section 2 relates to the analyses in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. In the first analytic Chapter (Chapter 3), my research interest grew from a controversy over the reduction in the humanitarian refugee quota for people from Sudan made by the then Minister for Immigration, Kevin Andrews. Initial internet-based searches led me to Kevin Andrews’ ministerial web site, which contained transcripts of news-radio interviews he had conducted over the past year (2007). Further inspection of these transcripts led me to identify interviews that discussed the topic of the quota reduction. Although these interviews were basically transcribed (verbatim), I re-transcribed the data utilising a simplified version of Jeffersonian transcription conventions (Jefferson, 2004. See appendix 1 for a key to symbols). This notation included the measurements of pauses, intonations, in-breaths and overlapping speech. So as I could transcribe in this degree of detail, I requested audio recordings of the five news-radio interviews from *Media Monitors*⁶, a news and media monitoring agency that collects and collates print news, internet, radio, television and social media data. Two ‘doorstop’ interview recordings were not able to be sourced, and were hence not

⁶ See <http://www.mediamonitors.com.au/>

transcribed with Jeffersonian conventions. They appear in their original transcription form.

The second collection of data concerns the (analytical) Chapters 4, 5 and 6. This corpus is comprised of 16 calls to *The Bob Francis Show* on *FIVEaa*, an Adelaide radio station. My interest in ‘lay’ interactions on talkback radio was instigated by the death a young Sudanese refugee in the business district of Adelaide in November, 2008, after he was stabbed by another Sudanese refugee during a fight. After the inevitable media attention, some of it sensationalist and divisive, I became interested in how such events were being made sense of by some members of the community in Adelaide. Moreover, I speculated on how other representations and common sense theories about Sudanese refugees might be weaved into members’ accounts for the event, and how Sudanese refugees might be being perceived as ‘different’.

To examine these questions, I turned to commercial talkback radio, a rendition of the radio genre that provides access to (notionally) anyone with a phone and the inclination to share their opinions on live radio. In the next sections, I provide a rationale why I chose the news-radio/talkback radio setting, but here I will continue to describe the data collection process for the *Bob Francis Show*, talkback corpus.

The sampling process for this second phase of data collection began with a search on the *Media Monitors* database for the category term ‘Sudanese’ in talkback calls on *The Bob Francis Show*, between 12th November 2008 (the date of stabbing of the young Sudanese refugee, Daniel Awak) and 21st May 2010. Twenty-three ‘call summaries’ met these criteria. The summaries were further analysed to determine whether they (a) provided adequate detail and content for analysis, or (b) portrayed Sudanese refugees in a pejorative fashion. Fifteen calls

met these criteria. I made a decision to omit ‘positive’ calls⁷ because I wanted to focus my analysis on how members construct accounts that problematise Sudanese refugees, legitimate their complaints and represents them as ostensibly different from other groups in the Australian community. These 15 calls were transcribed in accordance with simplified Jeffersonian conventions as employed in the first phase of data collection.

Institutional settings

Radio interviews and talkback calls allow for the sorts of argumentative contexts where detailed analysis of talk’s forms, structure and ideological patterning can be investigated in close detail for what they are doing in interaction; that is, the action orientation of talk (Heritage, 1984). This is particularly important when interlocutors are working to present their accounts as veridical and persuasive versions of how the world is, as renditions of reality free from bias and, importantly, racist and pejorative motivations. Analysing talk as it is finessed reflexively to the argumentative context allows for an examination of how particular discursive orientations function in the construction of accounts in the rhetorical context.

Moreover, talkback radio is a forum for the diffusion of political and public opinion, and both these forms of discourses have potentially serious consequences for minorities like Sudanese refugees. Talkback radio wields influence, and this has been well known to Australian politicians who favour the talkback radio platform to communicate their messages to the public (Turner, 2009; Ward, 2002). The role of talkback in the political process is explicated in

⁷ There is one call included in the corpus that was intended as positive’(Chapter 5), but I argue that it deploys a problematic essentialist formulation.

Chapter 3 of this thesis, where I analyse talkback interviews with the former federal minister for immigration, Kevin Andrews. Andrews is utilising an array of talkback interview opportunities with various AM radio stations to explain his reasoning for radically reducing the Sudanese refugee quota. As Turner (2009) has argued, Australian politicians prefer the talkback radio medium to current affairs television and ‘doorstop’ interviews, largely because they are believed to provide a ‘softer option’.

For this analysis then, talkback radio, although not always presenting Andrews with the most benign interview experience he might have hoped for, does allow for an inspection of contemporary political praxis. Politics and talkback radio have long held an interwoven, and sometimes intimate relationship. For example, well known radio broadcasters like John Laws and Alan Jones in the Sydney market⁸ have been courted by Prime Ministers and opposition leaders in the quest to influence and garner approval from their loyal and large audiences (Turner, 2009; Ward, 2002). In this thesis I consider talkback radio as having the ability to exert social influence by either: justifying controversial policy; communicating implicit messages on issues such as ‘race’, that is, ‘dog whistling’ (see Poynting, 2006); or by directly promulgating untruths about asylum seekers and minorities.

Talkback radio has also been examined for its role in inciting what are now known as ‘the Cronulla Riots’. On December 2005, in the Southern Sydney beachside suburb of Cronulla, over 5000 ‘Anglo’ (Australians who identify as possessing British heritage) Australians, many under the influence of alcohol, physically attacked anyone who appeared ‘Middle Eastern’. The mob violence

⁸ Although based in Sydney, these presenters are widely syndicated across Australia (Ward, 2002).

was predicated on a fight between a group of lifesavers⁹ and Lebanese youths on North Cronulla beach the week before. Although, Poynting (2006) argues the fight also fed into a long-held belief (mythical) that immigrant youths from Sydney's Western suburbs had been coming to 'The Shire' (as it is affectionately called by locals) to behave in disrespectful, 'un-Australian' and misogynistic ways. As Poynting (2006) chronicles, Alan Jones, Sydney's most listened-to radio pundit, read aloud to his audience one of the many inflammatory text messages that were widely circulated after the fight, beseeching them to 'come to Cronulla to take revenge' (p. 87). Clearly, there were numerous causal factors at play in that lead to the pogrom-like events at Cronulla, and talkback radio can only be partially implicated (SMS technology had a significant effect in speeding up moral outrage and coordinating the 'rally'). However, there is evidence that when news media and talkback radio engages in what Perry (2001) has called 'permission to hate' talk, this sends a condoning message to those who wish to perpetrate racial violence (Poynting, Noble, Tabar, & Collins, 2004). Indeed, there is evidence for symmetry between the forms of racial mythologies that the popular media in Britain and Canada broadcast, and those that are used by perpetrators of hate crimes (Gade, Dixon & Jefferson, 2005; Khan, Saloojee and Al-Shalchi, 2004).

What the Cronulla riots speak to for this thesis is the potential for talkback radio (along with other forms of media) to magnify, crystallise and transform what are often inchoate events, into significant 'moral panics' (see Cohen, 1972). My focus on news/talkback radio attends to the inherent threat that this form of media possess to congeal pre-existing social anxieties,

⁹ Lifesavers in Australia provide surf rescue services to swimmers and other users on popular beaches, primarily on the weekend and public holidays. They are emblematic of the Australian identity, and are often perceived to embody valorised values, such as self-sacrifice and bravery.

stereotypes and power relations into new representations of Sudanese refugees that further work to problematise them as aberrant.

To be clear, I am not arguing that talkback radio itself generates forms of discourse that marginalise, thus setting the groundwork for punitive policy making. What I am arguing is that news/talkback radio is a medium that, due to its popularity (and, at times, proclivity for sensationalism and political agitation), is one analytical site that is rich in naturally occurring data that references social events as they are understood by society members.

Chapter 3: Out of Africa: Refugee policy and the language of causal attribution (Published).

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Discourse and Society 21(3), 1–29.

Statement of Contributions:

Mr Scott Hanson-Easey (*Candidate*)

I was responsible for the conception and primary authorship of the paper. I conducted the literature searches and analysed the data, and I was corresponding author and primarily responsible for responses to reviewers and revisions to the paper.

Signed:

Date 15/12/2011

Professor Martha Augoustinos (*Co-author*)

The realisation of the idea, collection of data, and analysis of data were the work of Mr. Hanson-Easey. Mr. Hanson-Easey was responsible for writing this paper; my role was to comment on drafts, make suggestions on the presentation of material in the paper, and to provide editorial input. I also provided advice on responding to comments by the journal reviewers and editor. I hereby give our permission for this paper to be incorporated in Mr. Hanson-Easey's submission for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Adelaide.

Signed: Martha Augoustinos

Date 15/12/2011

Abstract

The words of political elites have the potential to play a significant role in the constitution and proliferation of racist discourse, especially when this discourse has the nuanced linguistic characteristics of ‘new racism’. This article examines the political rhetoric deployed in the articulation and defence of contentious government policy on Sudanese humanitarian refugee quotas in media interviews. Utilising critical discourse analysis, I analyse a corpus of seven political interviews and identify a number of pervasive discursive features. These include descriptions, categories and multidimensional causal narratives that characterise the Sudanese as young, violent (gang members) and uneducated; the construction of ‘culture as cause’ narrative; and the differential orientation to the term race. Through this analysis, I show how causal inference and category description function multifariously in political discourse, contending with situated issues of policy justification, accusations of racism and the allocation of blame that exclusively rests with African refugees. The role of causal formulations in racist discourse is discussed.

Introduction

‘Australia is a country of immigrants’ – so goes the maxim proposing that, as a nation, Australia has idiomatically naturalised an ideal of non-discriminatory acceptance of newcomers at the centre of our social psyche. Juxtaposed against this notion, Australia has experienced renewed debate over asylum seekers and refugees, who have been represented in the media and by politicians as threats, both to cultural norms and Australia’s territorial control of its borders. Refugee and asylum seeker issues became highly politicised during the lead up to the 2001 election, where the Liberal Party enjoyed great support for former Prime Minister John Howard’s treatment of the Tampa Crisis¹⁰ (Gale, 2004).

In a more recent instalment of such a controversy, refugees from Sudan¹¹, resettled in Australia after being granted permanent humanitarian visas, were at the centre of community and media attention in late 2007. Then Minister for Immigration, Kevin Andrews, announced that the ‘composition’ of the Offshore Resettlement Programme for the 2007–8 intake would have a significantly reduced visa allocation for refugees from Sudan. This announcement by itself stimulated little media attention. However, what did ignite the controversy over Sudanese refugees was Andrews’ partial rationale for the reduction, which was based on perceived ‘problems’ with their rate of integration into Australian society.

¹⁰ In August 2001, the MV Tampa, a Norwegian-owned container ship, rescued 438 mainly Afghan asylum seekers in international waters and proceeded to Christmas Island. The Australian government denied the ship access to Australian waters and a standoff between the ship’s captain and the Australian government ensued over where the ship should disembark the asylum seekers, many of whom were seriously ill. Many have argued that the Tampa crisis was ostensibly a vehicle for the Liberal government, in the lead up to a federal election, to mark out its ‘border protection’ policies and garner electoral support for its handling of the episode (Marr & Wilkinson, 2003).

¹¹ Sudan is the primary source country of humanitarian refugees from Africa, but refugees from the Congo (DRC), Liberia, Burundi and Sierra Leone also contribute to African refugee numbers (Commonwealth of Australia, 2008). We refer to refugees from Africa and Sudanese refugees interchangeably, dependant on the categorization deployed in the particular extract being discussed.

The politics of ‘reality construction’ is of central concern to the success of how political policy, such as the reduction of the refugee quota, is accepted by the Australian constituency. As such, this article aims to examine how political language weaves various descriptive patterns that achieve the situated demands of policy justification and legitimation in media interviews. Towards this aim, I give particular attention to how descriptions are imbued with implicit and explicit explanations of ‘why’ some groups of refugees may be problematic: the language of causality.

Previous discursive research on refugees and asylum seekers.

A corpus of discursive analytic studies focused on refugee and asylum seeker issues have been accumulating both in Australia and internationally over the last 15 years. These studies have been well placed to give analytical attention to discursive resources, which construct, justify and excuse exclusionary refugee and asylum-seeker legislation. Australian studies (Every & Augoustinos, 2007; Gale, 2004; O’Doherty & Lecouteur, 2007; Pickering, 2001; Saxton, 2003) have further explicated how the ‘refugee crisis’ clearly involves the confluence of a number of factors pulling together in the social and political moment. Notions of nationalism, illegality, cultural difference and (ab)normality come to play a part in the discursive drama that has typically characterised refugee issues in Australia, including the onshore humanitarian programme. Discursive work on refugees in the Netherlands (Verkuyten, 2001, 2003, 2005), Canada (Hier & Greenberg, 2002), United Kingdom (Capdevila & Callaghan, 2008; Lynn & Lea, 2003) and Spain (Rojo & Van Dijk, 1997) provide further insight into the widespread nature of the discourses identified in the Australian context.

There are a number of opportunities for this research to extend the current understanding of how minority groups like refugees are discursively constructed in different mediums. Most obviously, there seems to be little discursive analytic work that specifically focuses on *refugees from Africa* who have entered Australia through the offshore humanitarian refugee stream. This group, as noted earlier, makes up a considerable proportion of the refugees now living in Australia. Their journey to this country and social positioning are notionally different to ‘onshore refugees’ or ‘asylum seekers’ who have entered Australia via boat. African refugees have not broken any immigration laws, and have not jumped the euphemistic ‘queue’ so central to much of the political and lay discourse surrounding asylum seekers who arrive via boat, who have been invariably categorised as ‘illegal immigrants’ or ‘illegal’s’. Despite their legitimate and government-sanctioned status as refugees, African refugees nonetheless *are* constituted as problematic in public discourse. This article is largely devoted to examining how this problematising is discursively accomplished in a way that also appears oriented to heading off accusations of racism.

Analytic procedure and aims

This study employs a ‘synthetic’ (see Wetherell, 1998) discursive psychological approach, engaging both a post-structuralist–critical approach (Billig, 1987, 1991; Fairclough, 1989, 1995; Van Dijk, 1993) and a discursive psychological approach (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996). This eclectic discursive frame aims to investigate how social practices such as justification, legitimation and blame function in media interviews when a controversial policy decision is being defended. It also attends to how various narratives are constructed out of these linguistic resources, devices and structures, embedded within the broader socio-

political mechanisms of power. Making the crucial rhetorical link between descriptions of a political issue, and the political response to such an event, is often a highly complex and delicate social accomplishment for the political speaker. For instance, how is a policy to be constructed as analogous with the social issue, and how is it to be accomplished without presenting as punitive, reactionary and, least of all, ‘racist’? Policies need to be disseminated to a constituency in ways that justify a policy, but the acceptance of such a message often hinges on using language that appeals to notions of ‘commonsense’ (Reeves, 1983).

These challenges are the ‘bread and butter’ of political praxis, and the words of the politician are fundamental to the success of policy legitimation and the broader maintenance of power structures, social relations and racism (Van Dijk, 1995). This study examines how a social ‘problem’ is something to be constructed and finessed, to be made ‘real’ and linked to a political measure that seems valid and holds logical appeal. The linguistic devices and strategies that formulate a problem as ‘real’ are functionally occasioned; that is, they have an ‘action orientation’ (Edwards & Potter, 1992). This is highly salient in political discourse, as the construction of events in ways that make certain policy measures seem sensible and obvious can easily be understood as imbued with self-interest and party-political prejudices.

Enmeshed with the rhetorical devices that provide an epistemological basis to an account are historically and culturally derived images, terms and metaphors that combine together to develop an argument. Put another way, the words that are invoked in representing and evaluating Sudanese refugees share a genealogy with previous ways of talking about such groups, and these discourses hold within them the power to constitute the ‘reality’ of social relations at any

one time. Thus, a thorough analysis of such discourse cannot be achieved without taking in a wider vista of the discursive landscape (Wetherell, 1998). From this perspective, this examination of situated political talk benefits by treating this discursive data as an inextricable component of the ‘argumentative thread’ – embedded within any intelligible exchange (Laclau, 1993; Wetherell, 1998). Any segment of discourse is part of (and inseparable from) a wider system of meaning-making in which people construct their world. Construing political discourse firstly within its immediate interactional context, and then as part of this broader fabric of intelligibility and social patterning, broadens this examination of political talk to gain insights into the role of discourse in social relations.

In sum, the chief reason for employing a synthetic discursive analytic framework is my functional interest in the construction, delivery, replication and evolution of prejudiced talk in society, and the concomitant legitimization of social inequality. This approach is sensitive to the echoes of past discourses deployed in contemporary contexts (see Foucault, 1980), but is simultaneously open to the propagation of new discursive devices and resources, which are inevitably invoked as new rhetorical challenges are confronted in the ever-changing flux of day-to-day interactional life.

Background to the analytic material: Kevin Andrews’ interviews and ‘doorstop’

Every year, the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship determines the composition and size of the humanitarian refugee intake. In 2007–8, 13,014 humanitarian visas were granted. A majority of these visas, which grant permanent residency to successful applicants, were granted under the offshore component of the programme which resettles displaced and at-risk

refugees living in countries outside their country of origin (Commonwealth of Australia, 2008). The 2007–8 quota was announced via media release in August 2007, and it reduced the intake of African refugees from 70 percent to 30 percent. The government attributed the significant reduction in the quota to improved conditions in some African countries such as Sudan and the Congo, and an increased intake from the Middle East due to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) advice that Iraqi refugees were in dire need of resettlement. The quota also substantially increased the quota from South East Asia to 30 percent from Burma and Bhutan.

The humanitarian refugee intake media release stimulated very little media attention, quickly fading into the background of current affairs reportage. This abruptly changed on 2 October 2007, when Kevin Andrews was asked in an interview about better resettlement programmes for refugees and, in particular, about the murder of the Sudanese refugee, Liep Goney. He replied that the African refugee quota had been reduced due to fears that 'some groups don't seem to be settling and adjusting into the Australian way of life as quickly as we would hope' (More dogwhistling, 2007; Topsfield & Rood, 2007). Whilst his initial announcement made no mention of 'integration problems' in this account, Andrews made explicit for the first time that integration was another reason for the cut to the African refugee quota. Integration rhetoric has been argued to contain within its cache of implicit meanings, assimilative messages; pushing a normative, hegemonic culture in which minorities are inherently positioned as needing to assimilate (see Blommaert & Verhshueren, 1998; Bowskill, Lyons & Coyle, 2007; Lewis & Neal, 2005). Integration, hence, is conceptualised as part of a wider liberal, discursive configuration of 'tolerance' and 'social cohesion' (Lewis & Neal, 2005).

Over the subsequent days, articles in all the Australian broadsheet papers carried stories that challenged the integrity of the integration argument and the facticity of Andrews' claims. With the spectre of the imminent federal election, the media was arguably sensitive to the appearance of the 'race card'¹² (see Farouque & Cooke, 2007; More dogwhistling, 2007; Topsfield & Rood, 2007). *The Australian*, the national broadsheet (generally not known for its leftist leanings), made this cynicism apparent when it challenged Andrews in its editorial: 'If Mr Andrews does not have the empirical data to support his comments, he would be well advised not to make them. It is all too easy to inflame hatred by trying to play the race card' (2007). In this context, in the controversy that ensued, Andrews was broadly painted in the news media as dishonestly and cynically profiling Sudanese refugees. Allegations of 'ugly race politics' (Topsfield & Rood, 2007, p1) effectively imply that race was being utilised for political gain – and that this strategy was borne out of electoral expediency. Thus, the pragmatics of the subsequent media interviews and 'doorstop' opportunities afforded Andrews an opportunity to give his account for his policy decision, and importantly, quell notions that the policy was racist.

Institutional setting

The cut and thrust of the news interview provides an important arena for politicians to present arguments not only for the delineation and justification of government policy but, concomitantly, the construction of defences against present and future criticisms. However, news interviews are not simply a platform from which politicians propound their messages to the listening audience, but are bounded within the conventions of the interactional setting.

¹² 'The 'race card' is an idiomatic phrase which, in Australia, generally refers to a political strategy which deploys racial discourses for political and usually electoral advantage.

News interviewers (IR) and political interviewees (IE) come together as combatants into the interview arena with competing strategic goals: IRs with the aim of challenging (undermining) and unpacking the political message, and politicians as answering IRs' questions in ways that present as genuine and convincing (Clayman & Heritage, 2002). Within the question–answer format, resources can be invoked asymmetrically by the main protagonists (IR and IE). That is, each role brings with it a differentiated set of tools for achieving their set goals (Clayman & Heritage, 2002).

My analytic interest here lies in how these resources are mobilised in interaction to construct accounts. More specifically, I focus on how different styles of questions are orientated to by Minister Andrews. Do interrogative, racially accusatory questions invoke different answer structures compared to IR questions which utilise a more implicit, empirical 'fact construction' basis for determining if Andrews is basing his policy on 'race'? Are particular elements of questions orientated to and extended by Andrews to forward his point, and are some rebuffed?

Data corpus

Initial internet-based searches with key-words "Sudanese" and "quota reduction" led me to Kevin Andrews' ministerial web-site, that contained transcripts of five news-radio interviews, and links to two 'doorstop' interviews he had carried out over the past year (2007). Upon further inspection of these transcripts, all interviews pertaining to the Sudanese quota reduction were selected, and recordings for these interviews requested from *Media Monitors*. Five radio interviews were sourced and were subsequently transcribed according to Jeffersonian transcription conventions (Jefferson, 2004). No audio recordings

were available for the doorstep interviews, but transcriptions were obtained through the PANDORA¹³archival web site.

This study analysed five radio interviews between Minister Andrews and: Neil Mitchell (2 October 2007. 3AW, Melbourne), Phillip Clarke (3 October 2007. 2GB, Sydney), John Laws (5 October 2007. 2UE, Sydney), Madonna King (5 October 2007. ABC, Brisbane) and Fran Kelly (5 October 2007. ABC National). Two ‘doorstop’ interviews (Melbourne, 3–4 October) were also analysed.

Analysis and discussion

A number of rhetorical strategies, devices and discursive resources were observed in the corpus, but this analysis will examine three primary areas of interest:

1. descriptions, categories and multidimensional causal narratives that characterise the Sudanese as young, violent (gang members) and uneducated;
2. the construction of a ‘culture as cause’ narrative;
3. the differential orientation to the term race.

Descriptions, categories and multidimensional causal narratives

The communication and justification of government policy is an essential element of political praxis, and here I give attention to how Andrews develops descriptive accounts of the social phenomenon that the quota reduction is intended to deal with. Central to the construction of this account is the description and delineation of ‘Sudanese refugees’ as a unique group that *warrants*

¹³ The Preserving and Accessing Networked Documentary Resources of Australia (PANDORA) is a web archival website run by The National Library of Australia: <http://pandora.nla.gov.au>

the reduction of the refugee quota. Moreover, an important feature of this discourse is the construction of descriptive categories that infer and direct blame. My focus here is to investigate how various categories are deployed, and how inferences from these categories, or category collections, provide subtle messages about the causes of these category member activities and behaviours. The descriptive work achieved here can be viewed as attending to the direct challenges to Andrews and his government about the empirical veracity of his claims that the refugee quota policy shift is not about ‘race’.

A patterned feature observed throughout the corpus is the orientation by Andrews to the membership category, ‘the Sudanese’, and the subsequent listing of categorical, descriptive attributes and activities of the group. In Extract 1 below, Andrews is being questioned in a radio interview by Philip Clarke from 2GB Sydney about ‘African refugee resettlement’ (a process) and then ‘young men from Sudan’ in particular, as being influential in the decision to reduce the quota.

Extract 1.

22 Clarke: ok↓ay .h now () there has been some controversy
23 in the past about (.) African (.2)refugee
24 resettlement (.) and the ability of .hh some
25 particularly ah () young men from the Sud::an
26 (.4) and their ability to-to ah to settle easily
27 into Australian society=was that a fact↑or in
28 this decision?
29 (.3)
30 Andrews: ye=yes it was a factor (.) Philip ah (.5) one of
31 the things which we've been (1.1) ah mindf↓ul of
32 over the ah (.)last ye↓ar (.7) i:s the additional
33 challenges with some (.5) people from ah Africa
34 .h(.5)that we know for example if we're talking
35 about the(.)Sudane↑se (.)and this is not=to
36 demonise them (.2) it's just to .hh face the
37 reality that we've got (.5) they have ah very
38 (.9) low levels of education (.) ah on average
39 we're looking at about grade three lev↑el (.3)
40 that's a lot lower than any other group of
41 refug↑ees (1.0) you've got people ah particularly
42 young men in their teens and early twenti↑es (.3)
43 ahh (.) difficult therefore for many of them to
44 (.) get a job=they (.3) tend to drop out of
45 scholol (.3) a lot earli↑er and then there's a
46 whole lot of other (.3) cultural
47 issu↑es
48 Clarke: hmm
49 Andrews: coming from Africa (.3) compared to
50 modern Australia.

In response to Clarke's question, Andrews picks up on the membership category 'some people from ah Africa', but then shifts onto the more specific category 'the Sudanese' (35), to which he subsequently attaches 'low levels of education' and 'particularly young'(in comparison to 'any other group of refugees') as category traits typical of the group. There are a number of interesting categorical features in this extract but, particularly, the category choice that signifies the collective by their nationality, Sudanese, can be viewed as an important descriptive and inferential tool in the interview setting.

As with all descriptions, they include certain entities and phenomena, whilst excluding other equally appropriate descriptive terms (Potter, 1996). The core business of constructing descriptions is to arrange a number of entities as

fundamental to the constitution of a phenomenon, individuals or group, whilst strategically ignoring other descriptive options (Potter, 1996; Woolgar & Pawluch, 1985). For example, ‘Sudanese refugees’ could be described using a number of available categories in recent popular discourse, such as humanitarian refugees seeking safety, refugees, immigrants or even Australians. They could potentially be described as a young group of individuals who, because of the dire situation in Sudan, consequentially are highly motivated to take any opportunity offered to them in Australia. Category descriptive combinations are inexhaustible, but my point here is that the descriptive deployment of ‘the Sudanese’ and the contrastive work that describes the collective as having ‘very low levels of education’ or as being ‘particularly young’ is drawing a tight and strategically descriptive boundary around the group.

The selective sketching of description boundaries is what Woolgar and Pawluch (1985) call *ontological gerrymandering*. Employed in a more general sense, I use this conceptualisation of how descriptive category selections constitute a group with a small, but highly meaningful set of distinctive qualities. The categories deployed here, from the numerous category collections available, accomplish a descriptive orientation away from alternative, potentially problematic versions (for Andrews) that could be produced to represent this group. ‘Refugees’ (as opposed to asylum seekers) are often represented in the media and lay discourse as vulnerable groups in need of protection (see Moloney, 2007). In fact, in many places in the corpus, refugees are described as such. It can be postulated that the descriptive focus on the group’s nationality, and attendant deficits, removes descriptive connotations of this group as requiring humanitarian consideration.

Ironically, in this extract, the consequences of their refugee status, for example, low education, is turned around and attributed as a *reason* for their exclusion. In other words, weakening the category link that highlights the group's refugee status, and reconstituting them as 'the Sudanese', fashions a new causal link between nationality and problematic deficits and behaviours. What is conventionally understood as part and parcel of *being* a refugee – pre-arrival deprivation – becomes, through this description, something less to do with seeking refuge in a safe country, and more a reified characteristic of a collective from Sudan.

The descriptive work achieved through categorising Sudanese refugees as 'the Sudanese', and the inferential implications that this could have, can be understood as a delicate interactional manoeuvre, which highlights the co-production of descriptions in news interviews (see also Clayman & Heritage, 2002). Andrews' orientation to, and broadening of, the interviewer's categories - and subsequent selective attachment of deficit traits constructed as typical of the category - illustrates how accounts are highly contingent on the categories contained within the interviewer's question. In this way, categories introduced by interviewers can be instrumental in the production of descriptive accounts by the interviewee.

The foregrounding of this collective as a *national* group, as opposed to an *African* group, may also do some important work in cushioning Andrews against allegations of 'playing the race card'. By orientating to the national (Sudanese) category initiated by Clarke, as opposed to a continental (Africa) category, Andrews potentially removes more overt 'racial' connotations inherent in deploying the category 'Africa' against a more culturally centric 'Sudanese' category. The particularisation of the group as a national group provides the

account with a gloss that this group *in particular* is problematic; rather than being part of a broader, more race-based and systematic prejudice against Africans.

This position is notionally far more defensible against claims that this policy is highly selective and racist in its focus.

We may also understand the discursive categorisation accomplished here in terms of Harvey Sacks' (1974) (see also Baker, 2002) work on membership categorisation. According to Sacks (1974), the categorisation of people into groups is an 'occasioned' achievement. That is, categories, and the features that bind categories together, are not pre-formed entities - statically linked to a particular category - but worked up in the cut-and-thrust of interaction for the work of constructing an account (Baker, 2002). Membership categorisation work is interested in the identification of what Baker calls 'cultural logic' in its situated use.

In particular, Sacks illustrates how some categories contain a feature he calls 'duplicative organisation'. Boundaries around the category are not what define the group but, instead, the category is constructed around a 'sharedness' on some dimension or another that constitutes a cohesive thread through which individual members are tied to each other.

In Extract 1, the membership category, 'the Sudanese', is thus constructed as a collection of individuals with 'duplicative organisation', or 'interpersonal organisation' (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). This national category, imbued with the central categorical feature of 'low education', is thus constituted as being collectively organised by this feature - low education is the determining glue that binds this group together, setting them apart from other refugee groups (Jayyusi, 1984). Consequently, heterogeneity within the group is erased, and the

common denominator within the collective is now normatively evaluated and underpinned by educational deficits.

My point here is further developed as Andrews constructs ‘young men’ as a category characteristic typical of ‘the Sudanese’. The demographic finessing of this group as ‘young’ formulates a descriptive narrative in which ‘the Sudanese’ are positioned as facing extreme challenges, and are thus doubly vulnerable (and morally blameworthy) to the social scourges of unemployment and other social woes, which can threaten the young. Ending his turn in Extract 1, lines 45–7, Andrews employs the vague formulation, ‘and then there’s a whole lot of other cultural issues’. Without further elaboration, this vague reference to culture infers that more ‘issues’ could be invoked to provide further ‘evidence’, but this is not particularly necessary to advance the point. We may read this reference as effectively raising the issue of culture as a differentiating dimension, without having to go into any explanatory depth. This is an efficient way to infer that there are numerous causal mechanisms tied to the membership category ‘Sudanese’, which explain this group’s (in)ability to resettle in Australia. I will discuss culture as a causal resource later in this article.

Extract 1 also contains a rhetorical device that is now believed to be a central feature of modern racism: a *direct denial of racism* (Van Dijk, 1992). Denials of group denigration and racism, through pre-emptive strategies, work to manage the sorts of challenges that a politician could expect from interlocutors when grossly characterising a group (Van Dijk, 1992). In the face of being labelled ‘racist’, Andrews deploys a pre-emptive defence (disclaimer) as seen here:

34 Andrews: ..that we know for example if we're talking about
35 the(.)Sudane↑se (.)and this is not=to demonise
36 them (.2) it's just to .hh face the reality that
37 we've got..

There are a number of other defence formulations identified in the corpus, but it becomes observable that these disclaimers serve to avoid a problematic identity for Andrews, while simultaneously directing responsibility for the policy changes, mitigating against claims of unfair treatment and racism against a refugee group.

In Extract 1, lines 36–7, the objective ‘reality’ of the problem is juxtaposed against the extrematised ‘demonization’ of ‘them’. The formulation ‘it’s just to face the reality that we’ve got’ constructs polarity between ‘the reality’ of the situation as Andrews constructs it, and how it has been interpreted by some as ‘demonizing’ this particular group of refugees. There are similarities between this style of disclaimer and others found in the corpus, for example: ‘but this has got nothing to do with racism. People who say this is racist really are bereft of an argument about the real problem and the challenge we’ve got’ (Interview with King, ABC Brisbane); ‘there have been some remarks this morning made that the composition of the Humanitarian and Refugee program is racist’ (Doorstop, 3 October 2007); ‘Now this is not to denigrate or to suggest that there is something wrong with particular cultures, it’s just being realistic enough to say that if we’ve got some challenges.’ (Extract 4, lines 103–6).

The claims of ‘racism’ and ‘denigration’ here are subtly discredited through their comparison with the euphemistically coined ‘challenges’ (interview with King) that face Andrews and his government. This response, thus, positions Andrews’ policy as responsible, measured, and, most importantly, necessitated by the behaviour of the refugees. Allegations of racism are hence glossed over as

irrational and unrealistic: lacking any real insight into the ‘real problem’. Central to these denial and defence formulations is the notion of bureaucratic pragmatism. That is, for the political executives that articulate and defend government policy in news interviews, such defences can act as a subsuming device. Similar to what Dickerson (1998) calls the ‘I did it for the nation’ repertoire, this ideological resource functions to combat other arguments perceived as less important than ‘managerial’ matters of state. As such, accusations of racism and the social marginalisation of minorities take on a less salient tenor in comparison to the ‘real challenges’ that affront the government. Repertoires of ‘doing government’ appeal to the supposition of complexity inherent in governing a nation in order to head off potential censure and to exonerate: complex ‘realities’ need to be dealt with and governments need to be pragmatic above everything else!

In Extract 2, Andrews is being interviewed by Fran Kelly from ABC Radio National. Kelly is asking Andrews to provide ‘evidence’ and ‘data’ for his decision to cut the Sudanese refugee numbers. This question cuts to the core of the issue, and Andrews is pressed to outline his reasoning for the quota decision in the face of it being labelled as ‘harsh’.

Extract 2.

3 Kelly: Minister (.) the Courier Mail today had a photo
4 of a Sudanese family on the front page with a
5 splash headline .h (.3) blacklist (.4) government
6 says Sudanese don't fit .hh its pretty harsh
7 stuff .h what evidence (.) what data do you base
8 your decision (.7) to li to limit the Sudanese
9 refugee numbers on (.6) the facts and figures
10 that the last man was asking for.
11 Andrews: [11 lines removed] now .h coming to:0 the matter
12 you asked about
13 Kelly: mmhm
14 Andrews: I get .h ah regular reports
15 from my department (.) ahhh provide:d information
16 through .hh various community groups and ethnic
17 organisations from other sources (.) police and
18 oth-otherwise .hh (.) and there's been .h a-a
19 number of matters which have (.) continually
20 being brought to my attention about .h things
21 like the establishment of race based ga:ngs
22 ah .hh altercations between various gro:ups .h
23 disagreement between ah .h various ah c-community
24 organisa+ions (.) tensions between families .h
25 ah and a range of other things (.) then on top
26 of that .hh we know when we look at the data .h
27 that .h this is a group that have .h ah (.)
28 special or unique challenges beyond those of
29 other groups of refugees (.) for example the
30 average .hh schooling age is .h about four
31 compared to .h seven .h just three or four years
32 ago .h a lot more (.) forty percent have spent
33 time in refugee camps compared to .h just fifteen
34 percent .h in two thousand and two-th:ree .h ah
35 the reading ability is quite low

As I have noted, the strategic deployment of membership categories constitutes, divides and distinguishes between collectivities in order to accomplish the construction of a group defined by a cluster of features and practices. In Extract 2, the activities described as characteristic of the category ‘Sudanese refugees’ are further elaborated on, constructing a highly problematic representation of the group.

What is particularly interesting in this extract, and pervasive throughout the interviews analysed here, is the invocation of ‘race-based gangs’ as a central descriptive category feature of the collective. The invocation of ‘race’ in descriptions of how gangs are ‘established’ can be understood to infer a number of related things. First, these gangs are not ad hoc gangs, organised around a

shared project, be that violence or crime; these gangs cohere around 'race'. The spectre of gangs that are categorised and described as having organisation around 'race' are notionally extrematised through this description. Gangs like these are construed as racially separatist, and are thus particularly problematic for nations who adhere to a multicultural value system. Furthermore, these gangs are being 'established'. The word *established* infers that 'race-based gangs' are coming together in an organised way, with some sort of systemic order and intent. Constituted in this way, these gangs present an extrematised, contrastive threat.

The sequential ordering of the descriptive listing of categories here has important inferential effects. Evoking 'race' as a modulating term in how gangs are organised in the first instance, also primes the subsequent narrative to be seen as *concerted* behaviours arranged around similar properties. Thus, 'disagreements between community organisations' and 'tensions between families' not only constructs the collective as dysfunctional and vexatious, because they are problematic in *groups*. Even when divided and quarrelling between themselves, these refugees work in aggregates. Constructing refugees in this way resonates with and gains strength through its ideological connections with metaphoric discourses which have branded 'onshore refugees', or 'asylum seekers' and migrants, as groups arriving in 'waves' or in numbers that can 'flood' a nation (Mares, 2002). The genealogy of such fears has a long discursive history in Australia; such fears were prevalent over a century ago when Chinese migrants were constructed as having the potential to 'swamp' a nation in metaphoric 'tides of humanity' (Walker, 1999).

In Extract 1, Sudanese refugees were assigned low education as a feature that provided 'interpersonal organisation', constructing individuals as a cohesive category. Here, a more complex and causally-based description centres on

violence and disunity. The organising structure of the group is not simply a lack of educational opportunity, but amorally ascribed cohesion that secretes itself through the fibre of the group, manifesting itself through violence and social dissonance. Jayyusi (1984) argues that only some 'morally organised' groups can be characterised like this; that is, 'a group specifically constituted by its members round some set of moral-practical beliefs, commitments, codes, values' (p. 48). Groups organised around such structures routinely project through their behaviour the moral essence of the collective as a whole (Jayyusi, 1984). Behaviours performed by group members do not arise from the unique attributes of the individual, but rather are 'made to represent the character and activities of the other members of the group' (Jayyusi, 1984: 48). From this perspective, Sudanese refugees are constituted as performing frequent category-bound anti-social and violent acts because as prescribed group members, organised as part of a homogenised moral collective, they share 'race', educational deficits and pre-arrival deprivations in common.

The inferential implication of this categorising is that blame and responsibility for the problem are fairly and squarely placed on the shoulders of the Sudanese refugees themselves, threading a causal common thread that morally and experientially weds the group to violence and conflict. Further, the implication is that shared pre-arrival experiences and 'race' concomitantly determine problematic behaviours that must be managed by restricting Sudanese refugee numbers.

Also fundamental to the construction of a persuasive political argument, and the attendant buttressing of such arguments against accusations of racism, is the management of interest and stake through the warranting of descriptive claims as objective, disinterested and directly linked, through this account, to the

external world (Edwards & Potter, 1992). Consensus warranting is a particular rhetorical ‘externalising device’ that constructs an event or entity as an objective and neutral version through corroboration with other people (Edwards & Potter, 1992). In the case of Sudanese refugees, the problematic behaviours described by Andrews are nearly always, in the interview corpus, accompanied by consensus warrants that bolster the veracity of his account. In Extract 2, Andrews introduced his account of the ‘evidence’ for the quota decision, which the interviewer has asked for:

14 Andrews: I get .h regular reports from my
15 department (.) a:::h provided information
16 through various community groups and ethnic
17 organisat↓ions from other sources (.) police and
18 oth- otherwise

The ‘reports’ (i.e. race-based gangs and troublesome interfamily disputes) that Andrews subsequently outlines are thus reinforced against claims of self-interest and political bias and hence constructed as broadly accepted and agreed upon versions of the groups’ behaviour. In this extract, consensus on the Sudanese refugees is spread amongst groups like the police, but also amongst ‘community groups’ and even ‘ethnic organisations’. The upshot here is that the following description of Sudanese refugees (which could be heard as politically motivated in the light of Andrews’ own political career and his Party’s history of invoking ‘the race card’ on immigration issues) is constructed as being consensually held, *even* by organisations who advocate for ‘ethnic’ groups. This formulation of ‘various groups’ corroborating the information is particularly robust to accusations of ‘they would say that, wouldn’t they’ type allegations. The police, a government-funded organisation, may be criticised in this way – ‘ethnic

organisations’, on the other hand, would not be expected to provide evidence against groups whose interests they are expected to protect. This more surprising association provides a form of ‘stake inoculation’ (Edwards & Potter, 1992), protecting the account from accusations of interest and bias. Furthermore, accounts that provide some sort of stake inoculation also defend against imputations of racism. Andrews’ account is further warranted as factual through the invocation of language that presents his account as a neutral and empirically derived summation of accessible ‘data’ (26) and ‘reports’ (14). This rhetorical device, named *empiricist warranting* (Gilbert & Mulkay, 1984; Potter, 1996), deploys sets of linguistic resources that redirect agency for the account’s epistemological validity away from the speaker and onto the ‘data’ itself (Potter, 1996). The empiricist repertoire employed by Andrews has the effect of reducing his relationship to the ‘evidence’, depersonalising his role in how such ‘evidence’ was interpreted or gathered. The unproblematic treatment of ‘data’ informing the decision to reduce the quota further externalises Andrews’ agency in how Sudanese refugees are described in Extract 2:

26 Andrews: ...we know when we look at the data .h that .h
 27 this is a group that have .h aḥ (.) special or
 28 uni:que challenges beyond those of other groups
 29 of refugees

In this way, ‘data’ is the final word on the matter; the numbers speak for themselves, offering an unbiased and empirical measure of this group’s deficits.

In Extract 3 below, Andrews is being interviewed by Madonna King from ABC Radio, Brisbane. Although similar to the structural formulation discerned in the previous two extracts, that construct Sudanese refugees as

different and extreme in contrast to other category groups, this extract illustrates how a 'race-based gangs' construction can, when challenged by an interviewer, be bolstered by a causal narrative that again invokes pre-arrival deprivation.

Extract 3.

22 King: alright ur what proof the second point first what
23 proof do you have than ar (.) Africans and
24 particularly the Sudanese .hh aren't adjusting to
25 the Australian way of life
26 (.)
27 Andrews: .hh well there's lots of ah evidence about this
28 I-I receive through my department .hh community
29 reports on a regular basis and .h those reports
30 over over this year have .h included ah a number
31 of ah .h incidents ara-around ah (.) race based
32 gangs .h altercations between various (.) ah .h
33 groups (.) ah from Africa .h disagreements
34 amongst prominent African community
35 organisations=tensions within families .h ah
36 etcetera etcetera
37 (.)
38 King: .h didn't we have this though with ah
39 Vietnam†:ese gangs with Leban†:ese gangs with
40 Austr†:lian gangs as well?
41 (.)
42 Andrews: .hh well ah it seems to be a (.) particular
43 problem that we're facing .h even people who
44 would not necessarily agree with what we done.hh
45 ah say yes there is a problem=I think .hh I
46 think we've got to name the problem I mean our
47 response if three fold .h let's just recognise
48 that there is a problem there=putting our head in
49 the sand is not going to solve it .h secondly
50 (.2) let's resource it which we're doing with an
51 extra .h two hundred and ten million dollars in
52 this year's budget .hh and thirdly
53 .hh let's not exacerbate it while we're trying to
54 resolve some of these [challenge
55 King: [so is your evidence though
56 that-tha the problem is bigger with the Sudanese
57 community than o-other ethnic based communities
58 (.)
59 Andrews: it-it-it seems that this is a group that have
60 got .h and and as I said=others have recognised
61 this (.) police have recognised it ah reports I
62 get back ah through my department from various
63 groups and sources .hh
64 King: a problem in Queensl†:and?
65 (.)
66 Andrews: a problem ah (.) it seems to be across the
67 country (.) we're dealing with people who's .hh
68 for example average schooling is about four
69 compared to .h seven of refugees who came just
70 four or five years ago .hh ah forty percent have
71 spent their time in refugee camps compared to .h
72 just fifteen percent .h four or five years ago .h
73 reading levels are much lower the (.) need for
74 interpreters is much higher .h and the age group
75 is particularly young .h two thirds o:f (.)the
76 group are under the age of twenty fi:ve

Again, in Extract 3, the category term ‘refugees’ is not directly deployed and the collective is categorised initially as ‘groups from Africa’. King challenges Andrews to defend his position that ‘groups from Africa’ are any different or worse than other groups centrally categorised around nationality (or race) who may form gangs. This question directly challenges Andrews to delineate and explain differences between category groups: firstly, between African refugees and groups that emigrated to Australia earlier (Lebanese, Vietnamese); and, secondly, between African refugees, and what can be read as an Anglo-Celtic based group (white Australian). Although this question holds its own interest in how membership categories are deployed, what I am interested in here is how this question is picked up by Andrews.

The question posed by King is potentially problematic for Andrews, and we need a short explanation of the social history of the question in order to understand the rhetorical context. The question works in a socio-historical (white) discourse in Australia that represents immigrant groups as vulnerable to forming ghetto communities on arrival from their homeland (see Hage, 1998). A corollary to this discourse is how these ‘ethnic communities’ sometimes spawn gangs that, because of their status as new groups settling in Australia, take on a particularly threatening and dangerous identity. In time, these ‘gangs’ become less threatening as the group loses its ‘Otherness’, and become increasingly recognised as historical urban myth, rather than posing a real threat. So, in making this comparison to other ‘ethnic-based’ gangs, King places Andrews’ gang rhetoric in a socio-historical context, which has an ironizing, or undermining effect. That is, this question proposes that these ‘ethnic-based gangs’ are only threatening because they are novel, and do not pose any great long-term danger to the Australian community. Therefore, Andrews is faced

with an imperative to find an alternative descriptive dimension, other than ‘race-based gangs’, to particularise Sudanese refugees as constituting a bigger problem than any other group that have formed gangs (and have been, in time, constituted as non-threatening).

One way of seeing the rhetorical challenge presented here is that Andrews needs to *choose* category membership terms that can be heard as naturally ‘co-occurring’ (Jayyusi, 1984). That is, he needs to construct a causal narrative that connects category terms that can be logically attractive and persuasive to interlocutors, proving the necessary differentiation between groups that the particular question is demanding. The employment of the formulaic causal narrative that compares previously arrived refugee groups to the current Sudanese arrivals on the dimensions of youth and educational deficits is deployed again in this extract to provide the necessary differentiation and extrematisation. The inferential work accomplished here constructs ‘the problem’ (e.g. gangs) as a naturally occurring consequence of pre-arrival deprivations: no previous group has experienced this degree of hardship, and no group has been this young.

The co-deployment of these two deterministic, causal narratives (‘race-based gangs’ and educational deficits in spawning gangs) in a mutually supportive formulation, illustrates how such rhetorical devices can be arranged in talk in highly flexible ways for particular ends. Importantly, categories are used here for the pivotal political work of policy legitimisation through the finessing of an account that contains *layers* of causal explanation. In this way, Andrews’ account is rendered with an explanatory depth that is arguably far more defensible from censorious challenges than a uni-dimensional assertion of Sudanese refugee abnormality.

Refracting criticism for a policy decision that reduces the quota of humanitarian refugees from Sudan is clearly a major challenge for a Minister for Immigration. Category descriptions and narratives that invoke both explicit negative representations of Sudanese refugees, but also implicit and inferred messages, work in tandem in these extracts. I now look at how a broader causal narrative is constructed which focuses on culture to explain why integration is so difficult for Sudanese refugees.

Culture as cause

Thus far I have focused on how descriptive categories have been constructed to formulate a narrative that may (or may not) be heard as part of a persuasive and intelligible argument for the reduction of Sudanese refugee numbers. Sudanese refugees were represented as highly problematic on a number of dimensions, causally explicated through links with pre-arrival experiences and nationality (race). In this section, I focus on a broader cultural explanation deployed by Andrews to support his quota reduction policy.

Extract 4¹⁴ features a markedly different description formulation to previous extracts analysed here; images of ‘race-based gangs’ and uneducated youths are supplanted by a historical narrative account. Andrews is being interviewed in a ‘doorstop’ context in the Australian city of Melbourne.

¹⁴ This extract has not been transcribed by the author. It forms part of a ‘doorstop’ interview (3 October 2007). Doorstop interviews are interviews where numerous journalists have the opportunity to ask a politician questions relating to a prescribed topic or media release, thus no recordings are available.

Extract 4.

85 Journalist: In what way have African refugees had more
86 trouble settling in than refugees from other
87 generations in the past?
88 Andrews: Well each generation comes from different
89 backgrounds. When you talk about refugees, for a
90 long time the major source of refugees to Australia,
91 if you go back to the beginnings of
92 this programme after the end of the Second World
93 War, many of the people who came to Australia as
94 refugees came as refugees from Europe, who came
95 from largely the same Western liberal democratic
96 culture as we share in Australia. They may have
97 spoken different languages, eaten different
98 foods, etcetera, but largely there was a sharing
99 of culture in terms of the people who came to
100 Australia. More recently we've had people from
101 parts of Asia, for example, in which there has
102 been some similarities, again, in terms of the
103 culture. Now this is not to denigrate or to
104 suggest that there is something wrong with
105 particular cultures, it's just being realistic
106 enough to say that if we've got some challenges
107 then we ought to be clear-headed enough and we
108 ought to be sensible enough to say let's look at
109 those challenges and let's work in a way with the
110 people concerned to ensure that we can meet their
111 aspirations, meet the aspirations of Australians
112 general.

Andrews in this extract is asked by a journalist 'in what way have African refugees had more trouble settling in than refugees from other generations in the past?' Andrews' response takes a 'culture difference' construction to account for refugee integration problems. This discourse can be seen to contrast and essentialise culture on a normative scale, wherein categories of refugee (immigrant) typologies are constituted in a binary (Western/ Other) hierarchical order of cultural (dis)similarity. Ranging from earlier arriving refugees from Europe to later arriving 'Asian immigrants', their respective commonalities with 'Western democratic cultures' has allowed these groups to 'share some similarities' in culture, to latch onto something culturally familiar, enabling them to enter into the fold. Conversely, and through the strong comparative inference, refugees from Africa, although not directly mentioned by Andrews, are

constituted as being outside what is considered to be the fundamental gel that binds different groups together: a Western liberal democratic culture.

On the cultural comparison continuum, African refugees are anchored at the negative pole, whereas the group entrenched at the positive pole does not necessitate mentioning. White Australians are privileged with the qualities and characteristics that are missing from African refugees. The Western democratic qualities that are deemed essential for integration are, through this logic, innate, immutable qualities not easily learnt and, as such, seem almost biological in their essence.

It is difficult to ignore the echoes of past discourses embedded in this extract. This discourse, of course, has a long heritage in how ‘the West’ (We) has understood the ‘Orient’ (Other) through history (Said, 1978). As Stuart Hall notes (1996), this rhetorical construction divides the world along simplistic and crude dichotomies – the ‘West and the rest’, allowing a binary (Western/Oriental) representation of the world. Indeed, such a formulation, as Hall argues, constructs a comparative framework for the explanation of *difference*. Although the narrative in this extract deploys a vaguely multicultural and multistage version of the continuum (as opposed to a simple binary ‘Us’ and ‘Other’), allowing for various ‘shades of grey’, Africans are still characterised as a people belonging to a culture that sits outside the parameters of what is culturally similar (or acceptable).

What is being achieved here in terms of accountability and blaming, and how does this formulation do this work without signalling a racist identity for Andrews, so feared in a modern liberal society? The causal inference work accomplished by Andrews in this extract varies from – but is clearly synonymous with – the type employed in Extract 1 where refugee behaviours were causally

linked to educational and language deficits. Here, the inference connecting ‘settling problems’ is accounted for at the ideological level of articulation, where culture is an essentialised, immutable attribute, akin to other ideological markers of difference such as ‘race’ or nationality. The deployment of culture discourse – as opposed to a ‘racial’ discourse – is synonymous with a change in Western democratic discourse since the 1970s (Wetherell & Potter, 1992; but see Leach, 2005). Indeed, the orientation away from ‘race’ and onto ‘culture’ as a site for constructing difference, and for supporting exclusive refugee policy, has a number of rhetorical advantages in constructing a descriptive, causal account that directs blame and responsibility. This discourse can be understood as avoiding accusations of blatant ‘biological’ racism, and can be reformulated as an ‘integration’ or culture incompatibility problem (see Barker, 1981).

Dodging the racist identity through the deployment of a narrative that describes culture as distinct, essentialised and immutable is also effective because it focuses on behaviour that signals a fundamental incompatibility on a *cultural level*. Thus, all behaviours in a particular context that are deemed aberrant in a collective from Sudan can be causally attributed to core cultural differences, juxtaposed against a ‘Western democratic culture’. Group behaviours, run through this causal explanatory process, take on an essentialised and perennial form, which suggests that they are less apolitical invention than logically derived though commonsense knowledge about ‘real’ differences between cultures.

Such a social theory is also effective because it is intimately interlaced with what we ‘know’ about the nature of differences between groups; it is invoked and deployed seamlessly in discourse when situations necessitate its employment, i.e. when governments are pressured to justify exclusionary legislation. As such, when a particular refugee collective receives government

attention, and the justification of exclusionary policy hinges on group descriptions, a ‘culture difference’ argument provides the flexible platform for *any* group behaviour to be explained as deriving from culture, therefore granting it legitimacy and influence in explaining exclusionary legislation (see Barker, 1981; Reeves, 1983; Wetherell & Potter, 1992). Accounting for particular group phenomena, like Andrews is accounting for here, can be causally explained in ways that deflect claims of racism because its explanatory warrant is embedded in pre-existing, rhetorical resources available in the cultural sphere.

Causal arguments like these are arguably protected from dispute because they wear the every-day camouflage of *ideology* (see Billig, 1991; Gramsci, 1971). Culture as a causal and justificatory resource shares a common frame with other social phenomena explained in an ideological way, justifying and supporting dominant political and social systems, i.e. populist ‘cultural’ explanations like the Cronulla riots and the Western Sydney gang rapes¹⁵. As a causal explanatory system, ‘culture as cause’ in this extract is not novel or extraordinary (and racist) because it is part of a stock of explanations that are used in day-to-day political and lay discourse.

The nub of my argument here is that the construction of culture differences presents a politician with a fluid, rhetorical resource that can be moulded to justify a variety of policy and legislative decisions. Culture, constructed in this way, can be postulated as an immutable collective quality, not easily manipulated by government programmes and interventions. Culture can be indexed as a trait that in some extreme instances stubbornly resists all efforts to bend into a form that integrates – or fits in. The inferential logic that follows

¹⁵ The Cronulla riots (2005) and the western Sydney gang rapes (2001) were two Australian social controversies that were understood and discussed in the media as being ethnically and racially motivated acts of extreme violence that were causally predicated on ‘race’ and culture.

from this is that such ‘problems’ necessitate and deserve punitive measures. If a refugee’s culture won’t bend, then exclusion is putatively the only option left. As Barker (1981) has noted, theories of culture difference do not highlight cultural superiority per se, but articulate that it is natural and part of ‘human nature’ to mark out and defend our cultural territory. Moreover, it is our right to demand exclusion of foreigners who cannot bend to the traditions and norms that constitute a nation’s ‘way of life’.

The differential orientation to the term ‘race’

A predominate feature of the language of ‘new racism’ is the orientation away from terms that have had their genesis in eugenic beliefs which delineates humans along racial lines. The term ‘race’, especially, has a tainted and highly problematic heritage and is therefore, not surprisingly, a term not often deployed in modern Australian politics. However, in Extract 5, ‘race’ is posited by Mitchell, the interviewer, as the chief reason for the decision to ‘adjust’ for ¹⁶ the refugee intake (in line with much of the media analysis of the controversy). The orientation and development of the term ‘race’ could be highly problematic for Andrews in this interview and its avoidance is instructive.

¹⁶ Barker (1981) was heavily influenced by the philosopher David Hume in understanding how ‘new racism’ views the preference for one’s own ‘race’ as natural and warranted.

Extract 5

33 Mitchell: .h okay (.) I understand that on the basis that there might be
34 people more needy tha-that the refugee intake is adjusted .hh
35 but it would be the first time that we would it not be the
36 first time we've adjusted the intake on the basis of ah (1.0)
37 of a race?
38 (.5)
39 Andrews: .hh well it's not on a basis of a race as such it's simply on
40 the basis of whether or not people can (.hh) settle in
41 Australia (.) I mean .h [I
42 Mitchell: >[yeah but its a decision on the race
43 isn't it=aren't we saying well you know the Sudanese people are
44 having trouble settling therefore we'll have fewer come in
45 (.3)<
46 Andrews: .hh well I don't know what decisions have been taken in the
47 past (.) ah over you know (.) the fifty to sixty years of our
48 immigration programme .h but (.) certainly it seemed to me and
49 looking at it (.4) ah when I came to this portfolio and
50 consulting widely about it=and just looking at what evidence
51 was a'bout .hh it was clear that .hh settlement wasn't
52 occurring at the rate that-tha occurred with other .h ahh
53 refugee and other migrant groups to Australia

An interesting feature throughout the corpus is how the term 'race' is managed by Andrews. In Extract 5, Mitchell explicitly puts to Andrews in his question the accusation that 'race' is behind the reduction in the intake of 'Sudanese people'. Mitchell gives further emphasis to this claim by positioning it as a historical fact first at 35: 'but it would be the first time that we would it not be the first time we've have adjusted the intake on the basis of ah (1.0) of a race?'. In his turn, Mitchell is not asking for 'data' or 'evidence', unlike other interviewers like Fran Kelly (Extract 2), but preferences a reply turn of either 'yes' or 'no'. The question directly lays the central accusation of racist policy making on the table. Andrews' answer partially orientates to the question by repeating the term 'race', but only to amend its meaning 'race as such' (39) provides a bridging and escape from the dangers inherent in Mitchell's terminology and assertion, presenting an answer that does the convention of 'hearing' the question, but only to defensively move onto an answer focusing on an integration narrative. In other words, 'race as such' can be determined to *show* that Andrews is attending to the question and answering it, but not in the preferred yes/no interrogative design of the question, and there may be good reasons for this move. In this way, Andrews

can both construct a ‘de-racialised’ (Reeves, 1983) account, based on integration problems for the reduction of the quota, and simultaneously defend against insinuations of racism by avoiding direct reference to race. It is highly debatable whether this strategy succeeds in this interview, as Mitchell repeats the question at 42–4, initiating this with ‘but’, implying that he believes his question has not been answered. However, this sort of question, formulated with a highlight on ‘race’ as the gross categorisational label, is dangerous territory for Andrews, and defensive and avoidant answering follows.

The deployment of ‘race’ in interviewer questions, as an explicit challenge to Andrews, was not a common feature in the interviews analysed here. Questions more commonly featured a challenge to the empirical basis of Andrews’ claim that integration rates were problematic. In Extract 2, Fran Kelly asks Andrews to provide ‘the facts and figures’ (9) that his decision is based on. In Extract 3, Madonna King requests that Andrews provide ‘proof’ (22) that ‘the Sudanese aren’t adjusting to the Australian way of life’ (24–5). Both these interrogatives allow for and preference the more complex narrative answers that Andrews supplies. They are not directly orientated to accusations of racism – and do not mention ‘race’ per se – but are formulated around a more implicit and finessed challenge to the status of the ‘data’. Interestingly, in both these abstracts, ‘race’ is invoked in the rhetorical construction of ‘race-based gangs’, embedded in the broader causal narrative of non-integration.

The deployment of ‘race’ in these extracts as a constitutive component of how these gangs form as contrasted to the direct disavowal of race as a reason for the quota reduction, attests to the flexible nature of such rhetoric. When an explicit imputation of racism is made through an interviewer’s question, ‘race’ is orientated *from*, but is not interactionally unproblematic. Conversely, a finessed

question style, circumnavigating direct accusations, preferences more complex answers, eliciting a broader, causal narrative style of accounting. Andrews' construction of an account that utilises 'race-based gangs' was observed in three of the interviews analysed here, and forms a highly graphic and symbolic element to answers relating to the epistemic validity of the 'data'. Although the term 'race' now seems outmoded and supplanted by more equivocal language, its deployment on a number of occasions in the data suggests that when the rhetorical pragmatics allow for its use, 'race' is worth the risk in allowing a political speaker to conjure fear-inducing imagery and causal inferences in ways that advance a political project.

The deployment of race in this extract highlights that potentially problematic words such as 'race', for a political speaker, are not always banished or rejected outright in interviews, but on occasion can be deployed in highly flexible ways for the rhetorical work at hand. The employment of racial categories and, specifically, the deployment of 'race' have been argued by advocates of 'new racism' or 'modern racism' (Barker, 1981; Billig, 1991; Reeves, 1983) to be fading phenomena as politicians employ criteria more in-line with liberal values to argue for the exclusion of some minority groups. However, discourse fully cleansed and 'de-racialised' (Barker, 1981; Reeves, 1983) was not observed here and, thus, may further highlight the complex and ever-changing structure of racist discourse.

Conclusion

The words of the political elite have a formidable resonance within our societies. This article has analytically focused on how such words justify contentious legislation under the gaze of the media limelight. As Edelman observes:

Dominant categories of speech and of thought define the economically successful and the politically powerful as meritorious, and the unsuccessful and politically deviant as mentally or morally inadequate. For the same reason, policies that serve the interests of the influential come to be categorised as routine and equitable outcomes of duly established governmental processes (1977, p. 39).

I have identified observable characteristics of a discourse that deploys gross cultural/racial categorisations and evaluations, which functions to justify exclusive refugee policy. Based on these cultural differentiations, and inherent within them, consistent problematic behaviours and deficits were explained through multidimensional causal devices and narratives that deployed pre-arrival experiences and deficits, 'race' and culture. These explanatory narratives constructed an account of Sudanese refugees which was central to the discursive functioning of blame and responsibility for the contentious reduction of the African refugee quota, whilst avoiding accusations of racism.

The sorts of causal connections (attributions) observed in this analysis have not received great discursive analytical attention since Edwards and Potter's (1993) Discursive Action Model (DAM), and little work has focused on how causal inferences are discursively accomplished in race talk specifically. The DAM (Edwards & Potter, 1993) advocates for a 'relocation of attributional findings within a wider, discursive model' (p. 37) than has typically been the case in traditional cognitive attribution models within social psychology (see Heider, 1944, 1958; Jones & Davis, 1965; Kelley, 1967). This does not deny that cognitive elements exist for delivering and understanding causal explanations, but suggests that as an element of social action, it is best understood through talk-in-interaction and as part of a pragmatic social context. There is little doubt

that causal explanations of events and actions are important psychological processes in everyday sense-making. This may be due to the effect that attributing cause to social events may import a sense of control and understanding over sometimes threatening or novel phenomena (Hewstone, 1989; Kelly, 1955). Although causal attributions may be viewed as a universal ‘cognitive control’ mechanism (see Kelly, 1955), helping construct a consistent and veridical view of the world, causal thinking may also be conceptualised as an important rhetorical and sense-making tool that is *discursively accomplished*.

This investigation has illustrated how language that employs causality functions as an action. In the political interview, the sketching of causal narratives to explicate a policy shift, and manoeuvre around issues of responsibility and blame, are not best understood as universal cognitive alignments, but as implicit inferences detailed in all descriptions of individuals, groups and events.

Causal formulations can also be understood to provide a defence against imputations of racism. Political elites, armed with a causal narrative explaining why a group is aberrant - anchoring his or her policy direction on ‘commonsense’ ideas about the effects of deprivation on those coming from Africa – are notionally well protected from claims of ‘irrational prejudice’. The problem of refugees from Africa is hence construed not as a racial one, but as a problem of cause and effect - of imported trauma and education deprivation affecting the ‘settling’ process in Australia. This association is not easily disrupted. Who could argue that refugees from Africa come unimpaired by their experience as refugees? That is why they have been granted protection and a new country to settle in. Defending against accusations of racism with the premises of why refugees *are* proclaimed refugees, is thus highly robust to dispute.

The deployment of the term ‘race’ in its various manifestations highlighted in this study, unlike causal arguments, is a more precarious discursive strategy for a politician. When to deploy the term ‘race’ and when to orientate away from its loaded meanings may be related to political expediency. In other words, the deployment of ‘race’ may be advantageous when it holds symbolic weight, as in ‘race-based gangs’, but less advantageous when asked outright if ‘race’ is a motivating factor. Further research on the various ways ‘race’ works in political rhetoric may be worthwhile because, as this study has illustrated, ‘race’ is not always a dirty word.

I posit that persuasive political rhetoric which deploys intelligible causal explanations, categorisations and symbolic imagery are part and parcel of a wider body of shared causal knowledge, and is thus bounded by the commonsense discursive knowledge about African refugees currently active in any given social milieu (see Brookes, 1995; Hanson-Easey & Moloney, 2009; Moloney, 2007; Worboys & Moloney, 2005). However, I view the ongoing evolution of refugee representations and causal explanations –functioning to give structure to such representations – as a constantly shifting dialectic process (Markova, 1996, 2000). In other words, stable ideological social knowledge and theories are continually interacting with the temporal discursive constructions in political rhetoric and news media reports to construct manifold versions of events and causal explanations, available as ready resources for the political business of policy justification. As this Chapter has illustrated, novel and surprising causal theories are fashioned in the situated context. That is, a policy decision that reduces Sudanese refugee numbers is premised on pre-arrival experiences that have essentially determined their inability to ‘settle’ in Australia. Causal

explanations that have previously been deployed to explicate *why* these refugees need our protection is ironically twisted to advocate for their exclusion.

A discourse that firmly and essentially ties pre-arrival deprivations, race and culture deterministically to problematic behavioural representations, and portrays these as inherent attributes of a homogenised collective in order to justify a policy that reduces refugee numbers, is fundamentally racist in nature. As Miles and Browne (2003) note, racism differentiates groups by reifying particular features as evidence of a distinct ‘race’. However, the significations that function to label collectives are historically and culturally contingent, further attesting to their socially constructed nature (Miles & Browne, 2003).

Similarly, as evidenced here, what differentiates a group from another in racist talk can be multifarious and complex. What is held constant, however, is the marking of exclusionary boundaries dependent on some feature or another of the group, constructed as an immutable and inherent attribute of a collective. Multilevel arguments that employ various causally orientated descriptions may constitute a form of racist talk that may be highly resistant¹⁷ to rebuttal. Providing reasons for an event renders such a description with an epistemological depth that it no longer stands alone as a mere politician’s take on things, but a historically (and ideologically) derived set of knowledge that putatively ‘goes together’ in a logical relationship. Describing sets of problematic behaviours or events, and concomitantly or sequentially buttressing these descriptions with a narrative that explains their origins, invokes impressions of these phenomena being a part of a reality that melts into a new racist vocabulary (Edwards and Potter, 1993). My point here is that the rhetorical design that

¹⁷ The deployment of a causal device throughout this political controversy may not have been particularly successful due to myriad influencing and ironizing variables, i.e. Andrews’ political record and the media’s attention to any potential manipulation of controversies for political gain in the lead up to a federal election.

deploys these causal devices plays a central role in racist discourse that draws the demarcation boundaries for the exclusion and unequal treatment of groups and, as such, an important area for future discursive analytical work

Discursive analytic work is a powerful analytic process when it remains sensitive to the ever-changing topography of racist discourse and the political action that this discourse forges openings for (Wetherell & Potter, 1992). I take the position that racism, as a structural prescription of unequal treatment (Leach, 2005), is concomitant with and dependent on a discourse that ascribes such treatment. The *practice* of racism, and its attendant avoidance of censure, is contingent on the discourse and commonsense that allows group inequality to run smoothly¹⁸ under what seems a fair and commensurate socio-political system.

As I noted earlier, Australia has a history of differentiating new refugee groups (and immigrant groups in general) as ostensibly different, problematic and as constituting threats to the very fabric of the nation's identity. Sudanese refugees are, as I have illustrated, a recent group to have fallen victim to the genealogical narrative that threads its way through Australian socio-political discourse. Although the human outcomes of such discourses are much the same as they have always been – usually containing elements of exclusion, social vilification, exploitation and marginalisation – the linguistic practices that drive these inequalities are constantly and dynamically being re-constructed: situationally honed for the work of racist policy legitimisation. Indeed, a discourse that invokes causal elements may constitute part of a manifestation of 'new racism' that goes on doing the same old work – justifying and legitimising exclusion and the marginalisation of minorities and 'those not like Us'.

¹⁸ As Foucault (1980) has illustrated, the power of language is embedded in its essence, shaping behaviour and habits directly

What this investigation has illustrated is the multifaceted nature of political discourse in the interactive arena of the news interview. Descriptions of refugee groups, back-grounded with all their manifold narratives of privation and culture, are given voice in defending controversial political policy in the lead up to an election. The interviewer's calls for 'data' and 'proof' to substantiate changes in refugee policy constitute an imperative for the politician to construct formulations that function as persuasive rationalisations. Complex questions and political contexts, it seems, require equally intricate answers. The ongoing and ever-malleable dialectic that reproduces and sustains unequal social relations and dominance continues to change shape.

Chapter 4: Complaining about humanitarian refugees: the role of sympathy talk in the design of complaints on talkback radio (Published).

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Discourse and Communication 5(3), 1–25.

Statement of Contributions:

Mr Scott Hanson-Easey (*Candidate*)

I was responsible for the conception and primary authorship of the paper. I conducted the literature searches and analysed the data, and I was corresponding author and primarily responsible for responses to reviewers and revisions to the paper.

Signed:

Date 15/12/2011

Professor Martha Augoustinos (*Co-author*)

The realisation of the idea, collection of data, and analysis of data were the work of Mr. Hanson-Easey. Mr. Hanson-Easey was responsible for writing this paper; my role was to comment on drafts, make suggestions on the presentation of material in the paper, and to provide editorial input. I also provided advice on responding to comments by the journal reviewers and editor. I hereby give our permission for this paper to be incorporated in Mr. Hanson-Easey's submission for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Adelaide.

Signed: Martha Augoustinos

Date 15/12/2011

Abstract

Complaining about humanitarian refugees is rarely an unequivocal activity for society members. Their talk appears dilemmatic: ‘sympathy talk’, comprising of rhetorical displays of ‘care’, tolerance and aesthetic evaluations, is woven together with more pejorative messages. In this Chapter I investigate how ‘sympathy talk’ functions as a discursive resource in talk-in-interaction when people give accounts of minority group individuals. A ‘synthetic’ discursive psychological approach was employed to analyse a corpus of twelve talkback radio calls to an evening ‘shock jock’ radio personality in Adelaide, Australia, after the stabbing death of a Sudanese refugee. Analysis shows how host and callers dialogically negotiate and orientate to various sympathetic and humanitarian descriptions/evaluations. I contend that sympathetic talk advances the activity of conversation, softening complaints that could be made accountable as prejudiced. Sympathy talk also functions as a counter-argument to perceived punitive or ‘racist’ complaints. Moreover, this Chapter proposes that such rhetoric shares an ideological thread that potentially undermines Sudanese refugees’ social positioning. Dialogue that deploys sympathetic formulations may be an element in the increasingly varied and subtle activity of ‘new racism’. I discuss how sympathetic accounts contain, within their semantic structure, their own antithesis for deployment in anti-racist practice; for the development of counter discourses, fundamental to the disruption of pervasive ideological representations and the construction of alternative refugee identities.

Introduction

A stabbing in a central business centre of an Australian city eventuating in the death of an adolescent Sudanese refugee has recently been cause for social consternation and debate. This study investigates how talkback interactants (host and caller) orientate to this event, and subsequently explicate their own opinions and experiences of African-Australians. This article, employing critical discourse analysis, offers a perspective on how these accounts derive their meaning from the larger 'argumentative texture' (Wetherell, 1998). In this way, social actors in talkback radio are conceived as holding and articulating pre-formulated, hegemonic meanings (see Gramsci, 1971) in relation to representations of refugees and their activities; whilst concomitantly modulating their talk reflexively in regard to the interactions they are engaged in.

As van Dijk (1992) has shown, central to race discourse in a liberal democratic culture is the denial that such talk is indeed racist: disclaimers, justifications and orientations away from utterances that may paint problematic identities for speakers are central. Late-night talkback programs, such as the one under analysis, allow for caller and host to talk about issues and problems in ways that avoid 'irrational prejudice' (Billig et al., 1988), but simultaneously represent refugees and other minorities as problematic. Moreover, examining talkback interactions opens up the analytical aperture to allow us to view how racist discourse is accomplished and contested *collaboratively* in dialogue (Condor, Figgou, Abell, Gibson & Stevenson, 2006). Condor and her colleagues have shown how prejudice mitigation and denial are jointly produced and contested. In this way, talkback radio provides acuity into how individuals choreograph their rhetorical moves, marshalling discursive resources to advance their

particular argumentative goal. This research augments previous research on prejudice mitigation and denial but specifically attends to how speakers manage the dilemmas inherent in positioning humanitarian refugees (invited to Australia under UNHCR guidelines) in subjugated power relations to long-settled Australians.

Previously (Hanson-Easey & Augoustinos, 2010) I have shown how causal narratives that highlight pre-arrival deprivation, traditionally a central element for being classified as a refugee, act as a discursive resource to grossly categorise refugee groups and partially justify a reduction of the humanitarian refugee intake from Africa. In the present study I investigate how talk displaying sympathy with refugee struggles can act equivocally in argumentation. I show how what could be described as ‘sympathy talk’, normally associated with talk that is positive, or orientating to notions of tolerance and humanitarianism, can be rhetorically paralleled with pejorative messages, promulgating cultural stereotypes in talkback discussions.

I should make my definition of ‘sympathy’ clear at this juncture. For the purposes of this Chapter, sympathy talk encompasses a displayed understanding of refugee struggles, ‘care’ or humanitarianism, positive evaluations, such as aesthetic appraisals that, within the context of the speakers’ overall argument, act as rhetorical devices. It does not assume that such talk is driven by emotion, or is a manifestation of some emotional state (see Edwards, 1997), but is conceptualised as a resource for talking. My contention is that sympathy talk denotes a general orientation to rhetorical imperatives that organise talk about humanitarian refugees. In other words, sympathetic formulations may be a contingent resource for speakers to organise talk specifically about humanitarian refugees, and not refugees in general.

Finally, I show how various renditions of sympathy talk can be an important strategic element in formulating complaints that are justified as valid, *or* as part of a counter-position that argues that these complaints are indeed punitive or ‘racist’. The production of credible accounts has been shown repeatedly by researchers to be bound up with interaction issues of neutrality, stake and interest (Potter, 1996; van Dijk, 1993). It is now a reliable feature of ‘race talk’ that speakers will regularly make some attempt to modulate their talk with devices that attempt to protect their identities from assertions of racism. In summary, my aims in this Chapter are to: continue to track how these devices are reconciled with complaints about humanitarian refugees (a notionally complex act); discuss how this particular group’s refugee history may influence these ‘sympathetic’ formulations, and consider what ideological consequences may spring from this discourse.

Analytical frame

This study adopts a critical discursive social psychological (henceforth CDSP) analytical frame (Edley, 2001; Wetherell, 1998; Wetherell and Potter, 1992) that melds a discursive psychological (Edwards & Potter, 1992) and a post-structuralist approach to the investigation of how individuals construct and produce accounts in local settings. This synthetic approach accents both the localised flow of discourse - ‘talk in interaction’ - and the ideological narratives, or ‘doxic’ (Barthes, 1977) elements of talk that facilitate intelligibility (Wetherell, 1998). This approach is concerned with the local pragmatics of interaction in the joint construction of accounts, whilst viewing the discursive, ideological resources that social actors deploy as constitutive components of a wider pattern of sense making with a tractable ideological history (Edley, 2001; Wetherell,

1998, 2001). Importantly, CDSP views language as permeated with the power to render social orders and inequalities as just.

Critical discursive psychologists have come to view racist talk as variegated, contextually contingent, dialogic, often dilemmatic and underscored by prejudice mitigation (Augoustinos, Rapley & Tuffin, 1999; Billig, 1985; Billig et al., 1988; Condor *et al.*, 2006; Every & Augoustinos 2007; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Rapley, 1998; van Dijk, 1984, 1987, 1992; Verkuyten, 1998, 2001; Wetherell & Potter, 1992). The delivery of race talk, especially when it occurs within social interaction, is rarely a simple case of ‘irrational’ category descriptions or crude biological racism. The construct of prejudice, an elusive concept at best in social psychology (see Billig *et al.*, 1988; Figgou & Condor, 2006), has nevertheless been postulated as a social practice that is sensitive to the opprobrium which may ensue from expressing what is considered ‘irrational’ antipathy towards minority groups. The risk of social censure and loss of face that these studies have identified as an important feature of ‘new racism’ (Barker, 1981), attests to the social nature of racist practice. New racism now seems contingent upon masking prejudice in reasonableness, in ambivalent talk that on the surface could, without analysis, pass as people just talking, pragmatically, in de-racialised (Barker, 1981) tones about a minority member.

However, it is not my intention in this Chapter to search for and label ‘racist’ expressions. There has been, and continues to be, rigorous debate in social psychology and the wider academic literature about what counts as racism (see Edwards, 2003; Every & Augoustinos, 2007; Figgou & Condor, 2006). These debates have highlighted the problems in providing ‘racism’ an exclusive social scientific definition, acting as a determinative for its diagnosis. Without digging into these debates here, the approach I take aims to identify the patterns

of everyday talk that constitute a racialised outgroup, and how these racial groups are problematised (Miles, 1989; Reicher, 2001). I do this by focusing on how interactants orientate to 'race talk'; that is to say, how ingroup members themselves accept, moderate or refute arguments that invoke these racial categories and associated theories.

Institutional setting - Talkback Radio and 'God's great leveller'

Talkback radio and its various renditions now play an important role in how news and politics are communicated to large numbers of Australians. Talkback is a radio format that utilises call-ins from listeners to speak on topics previously initiated by the host, or on subjects that callers themselves initiate. Since 1967, talkback radio in Australia has been implicitly conceived to have a democratising role, giving a voice to 'everyday' Australian concerns, opinions and views (Turner, 2009). This format was coined, by one of its earlier producers, with the egalitarian tag of 'God's great leveller' (Bodey, 2007, p.15). Radio's ubiquity has melded with talkback's perceived democratic, participatory footings, and has significantly reinforced the format in the Australian media environment (Turner, 2009; Ward, 2002).

What is of analytical interest in relation to talkback radio is how interactants negotiate their talk within talkback's dialogical format, and how this talk positions and represents Sudanese refugees as problematic to a broader listening audience. As host and callers arbitrate between themselves over how to construct their talk, and what rhetorical devices and ideological resources can be reasonably deployed to substantiate their positions, we begin to see a rich discursive profile open up for analysis. Moscovici (1984) has conceptualised the sorts of representations and every-day ideologies I am interested in here as

evolving and reproducing socially: 'in the streets, in cafes, offices, laboratories... people analyse, comment, concoct spontaneous, unofficial philosophies....' (p. 30). Similarly, talkback can be likened to a mass media variation of chatter between customers in Moscovici's coffee shop¹⁹, albeit a more controversial and conspicuous version. Thus, talkback radio provides an analytically underutilised window from which to view interactions that would be near impossible to reconstruct experimentally or within an interview setting.

This study aims to make analytical use of this forum, charting how individuals and the media interact to construct and reproduce representations of Sudanese refugees, positioning them in subordinate power relations to other groups in Australia. As van Dijk (1995) has noted, the media, among other 'elite' groups, have a privileged role in accessing a populace and modelling social beliefs about minorities. Talkback radio, although enabling social actors to engage in its production, shares many of the 'elite' aspects of other media formats. The talkback host is the unquestionable king of his (and it is, on the whole, a 'white' male who fills this role) domain. It is the host and his producer who are empowered to select callers they wish to speak to, and leave on hold the ones they do not. In the cruder, more populist version of talkback, 'shock-jock' hosts make a sport out of denouncing callers they don't agree with, often provoking and ridiculing their views to entertain their listeners²⁰. 'Shock-jock' talkback is not interested in affording impartiality in constituting its arguments. It feeds on a staple of populist opinion, confrontation and the 'personality' of the host (Turner, 2009). Its unplanned and highly unpredictable format provides

¹⁹ Or Facebook or Twitter, to update the analogy.

²⁰ See <http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/big-bob-francis-in-row-with-granny/story-e6freo8c-1225777051492>

insights into the workings of elite discourse as it is jointly constructed, advanced and contested *in situ*.

The data

This study analyses twelve audio recordings of calls to Bob Francis' night time talkback show on 'FIVEaa'²¹, an Adelaide based radio station. Calls from the 12th November 2008 (the date of the stabbing death of Daniel Awak in Adelaide) to the 26th November, 2008 were searched for talk which related to 'the Sudanese'. Recordings were transcribed using a simplified version of Jeffersonian transcription conventions (Jefferson, 2004).

Analysis and findings

The analysis begins with an examination of specific modes of rhetorical self-presentation, which work to mitigate and defend talk that could be made accountable as racist. These are interactionally honed, linguistic devices that function to assist the speaker to deliver their position in ways that do not explicitly present a pejorative view of refugees.

In Extract 1 below, the host is introducing the topic of the stabbing on the night of the event, which functions as part 'editorial' and part request for callers to ring in with their views. In this way, callers regularly adopt this topic setting as a general thematic guide, and invoke some explanatory, descriptive and causal elements initiated by the host to tie their own complaint to.

²¹ The stations full advertised name is 'FIVEaa Adelaide 1395, INTERACTIVE RADIO'

Extract 1

1 BOB: ah: whaddya feel about that-ah: th't situation in to(h)wn
2 today.= there's a teenager is dead now? .h a:h another
3 critically injured after being stabbed in a wi:ld brawl
4 between .hh Sudanese migrants in the city this afternoon. .h
5 y'know? (0.6) I've he:ard (0.3).h rumours in to:wn. that
6 families that are coming out from the Sudaⁿ .hh living in
7 Adelaide .h ar. are bringing their their sor-of .h ah- their
8 troubles with the_m .h between the Hutu's .h and the Tutsi
9 tribes .hh and tho:se situations are festering? in our little
10 beautiful town like Adelaide? .hh and this could very >well=
11 well I don't know we- wether this was related to the- the
12 thing this afternoon< bu- .h ya'know I thought I'd jus bring
13 it up b'cause it's been brought up by .hh other people around
14 town? and I think .hh if you've got problems .h take'em back
15 to your own bloody country.

In this extract the host deploys a lay-anthropological account, premised on the assumption that imported tribal tensions between ‘the Hutu’s and the Tutsi’s’²² (8-9) are ‘festering in our beautiful town’ (9-10), and this is posed as a possible explanation for the stabbing. In this way, ‘Sudanese migrants’ are constructed as importers of brutal, holocaustic violence implied by the categories of ‘Hutu’s’ and ‘Tutsi’s’. Adelaide, by contrast, is represented as a veritable hamlet, a vulnerable ‘little beautiful town’ in contrast to the overwhelming horrors of the tribal genocide in Africa. The tribal problems are not simply imported from Sudan, but are ‘festering’ (9). This evocative, biological metaphor represents these tribal conflicts as continuing to ulcerate, rankling within and on the benign body of Adelaide. The implication here is that these resentments are perennial and volatile.

Thus, the Sudanese, constructed as harbingers of violence, predicated on the tribal conflicts of Africa, are defined as negative human capital. They bring ‘festering’ trouble with them from Africa. Francis’ solution is unequivocal: ‘if you’ve got problems take them back to your own bloody country’ (14-15). In this rhetorical moment - where it is quite possible that the host is attempting to spark

²² These tribes were the main protagonists in the Rwandan genocide.

debate at the beginning of his talkback show – the host’s talk expresses little sympathy or tolerance for Sudanese refugees.

Extract 1 highlights one of the more punitive responses to a perceived infringement of what is deemed acceptable behaviour from Sudanese refugees. However, for the most part, the host in many of the calls analysed here treads a more moderate ‘tolerant’ line. Francis’ orientation to a more moderate line in interaction with his callers attests to the variability inherent in the corpus which I now give attention to. Moreover, as I shall elucidate, sympathy and tolerance can function as discursive resources for interactants to draw upon as they design their arguments, in situ, for a particular dialogic goal.

Platitudinal tags

The orientation to humanitarian and egalitarian/democratic principles by the caller in the following extract is what I call platitudinal tags. These tropes appear to attend to the management of positive self-presentation and mitigation against potential censure. In this instance, platitudinal tags imbue the caller’s argument with claims of multicultural tolerance, but, concomitantly help initiate a complaint about ‘the Sudanese’ as ‘a bit backward’

Extract 2.

(21seconds removed)

1 APRIL: .h now I jus- you were talking about the Sudane:se not long ago:
2 BOB: yes
3 APRIL: .h umm (.3) and you were saying about (1.1) they (0.8) come to
4 Australia and that's fi:ne an-and (.4) we welcome (0.2) migrants?
5 [and
6 BOB: [yep
7 APRIL: everyone? .hh umm but it seems=↑we're in the Eastern suburbs and
8 a-eh (.) we:(.3) are being it-j'st j'st swamped by them=and
9 ↑that's fine y'know we welcome that .hh but (0.3) some of the:ir
10 (0.5) traditions and their beliefs we we find a little bit
11 backward. .hh I mean,
12 BOB: like what
13 APRIL: .h we: um: we have a family or a house that is backed onto our
14 property?
15 BOB: yeah
16 APRIL: .h a:nd (0.4) there would be prob'ly three::(0.6) fema:les that
17 are (1.0) umm having babi:es?
18 BOB: [yeah
19 APRIL: [a:nd there would be at least one of them pregnant at any time?
20 BOB: yeah
21 APRIL: .h with at lea:st six or seven children? .hh (.) and no male to be
22 seen in the house.
23 (1.3)
24 BOB: ↑really.
25 (0.2)
26 APRIL: this is what we fi:nd fascinating. (.) [a:nd,
27 BOB: [these all Sudanese.
28 (.4)
29 APRIL: yes,
30 BOB: yeah?
31 APRIL: .hh u:m (.) but (0.8) they (0.3) we've got a German Sheph'd? (0.5)
32 they will h:ang their children over the fence (.) an .h and and
33 say "aww look at the doggy. look at the doggy." and everything?
34 BOB: mm
35 (.)
36 APRIL: and our dog (0.9) y'know jumps up y'know something's being ha-
37 held over the fence [.hh
38 BOB: [yeah
39 APRIL: they're um(0.8)they're- they jus- they don't(0.3) a- w-we try:
40 and talk to them?=we try and explain to them th't .h you can't do
41 this to: (.) to a dog that you don't know? or:
42 BOB: yea:h
43 APRIL: >y'know< bu-(0.2) but this is a family that .hh we never see a
44 ma:le in this [(house)
45 BOB: [do they respond?

The caller (April) initiates her call, like many other callers to the show, by announcing the theme of her topic as consonant to the topic previously raised by the host: 'now I jus- you were talking about the Sudane:se not long ago' (1). Before developing her complaint, a complaint that could potentially be heard as prejudiced, the caller deploys a platitudinal tag that pre-empts her main point. Similar to what Hewitt and Stokes (1975) describe as 'credentialing', these tags act as disclaimers against accusations of harbouring capricious attitudes. Even in the current talkback context, which, through the announcer's own crafting of the

tone of the talk on the topic, both within the call and beforehand, that represent 'the Sudanese' as problematic, such disclaimers are still deemed necessary. The caller's platitudinal tags are as rudimentary as 'that's fine' (4), 'we welcome migrants' (4) and 'we welcome that' (9), alongside seemingly antithetical and pejorative metaphors of being 'swamped by them'²³ (8). What these platitudinal formulations orientate to is a wider discourse of multicultural tolerance. Similar to what Cochrane and Billig (1984) observed in their study of adolescents in Britain, such talk may highlight how the rhetoric of tolerance is a mere sheen, expediently wiped away when other tangible (neighbourhood complaints) matters necessitate a solution.

Thus far the caller's talk has focused on building an account, both through explicit description as well as subtle inference. The caller's Sudanese neighbours are described as a large family who are reproducing at a surprising rate, especially as no male can be identified 'in the house' (21-22). This particular complaint is accompanied by an abstract, moral innuendo that works to subtly suggest that there is something mysterious going on here, and she uses the euphemism of 'finding it fascinating' (26) to reiterate her suspicions. In the next extract, the host and the caller discuss the host's theory that the lack of any visible males could be due to them working in the mines in the north of Australia.

²³ In Australia, there has long been a tractable discourse that deploys metaphors of 'flooding', 'floods' and 'waves' in relation to refugees (see Lack & Templeton, 1995; Pickering, 2001; Marr & Wilkinson, 2003)

Extract 3.

77 BOB: I me- mean I li- I love()it could be a situation where the
78 three males involv'd with those women could be up-ah: .hh ah:g
79 working in the mines?=e:r north of Australia?
80 APRIL: quite possibly↑[quite possibly.
81 BOB: [yeah
82 BOB: because that's er that's .hh y'know at least they're trying to
83 get a job?
84 APRIL: yes [no and- an- and all for it?
85 BOB: [yeah
86 APRIL: that- that (0.5) w: y'kno↑w
87 BOB: .hhh
88 APRIL: but [but
89 BOB: [can you imagine how hard it would be to g- to to have to
90 lea:ve a country=we're thankful here in a Australia that we've
91 not in a wa:r situation.
92 APRIL: an- and [tha-
93 BOB: [.hh when you look at (0.3) [conseq-
94 APRIL: [that's why we say ya'know
95 tha- that's its gre:↑at that they've come here,
96 BOB: yeah,
97 APRIL: .h and yes that they've (0.3) they've got ya'know .h a health
98 system=they've got a country that is welcoming them↑ .h (0.6) ah-
99 but we .h we (0.7) we we-see these family and these children and
100 these mothers an- .hh and we don't ever see any erp- ep- we don't
101 see any m↑ales in the suburbs.
102 BOB: [what ()
103 APRIL: [and we see a lot of women with children?

Redressing the caller's gloss of the mystery of missing Sudanese males, the host proposes a hypothesis that unproblematically accepts that families without males are something that necessitates explanation, and he provides a hypothesis that the three pregnant females may have male partners in mines in northern Australia. Francis goes as far as furnishing the hypothetical mine workers with a motivation; 'at least they're trying to get a job' (82-83). This explanation is imbued with such a respectable ethos that it is not rebutted by April, nor is it hearably accepted either, and she idiomatically replies: 'yes no and- an- and all for it' (84).

For the host, it becomes apparent that his mining father's hypothesis is not being fully accepted by April, and this becomes hearable in her next turns at line 88. Taking a new angle in his subsequent turn, Francis ups the sympathy ante, asking his caller to imagine how difficult it would be to leave a home country, and to be thankful for not living in a 'war situation' (91). This is a

rhetorical strategy, designed to elicit tolerance, or some sort of acknowledgement that there may be alternate reasons for April's subtle insinuation that there is something morally aberrant about her Sudanese neighbours. April's turn, 'that's why we say ya'know tha- that's its gre:↑at that they've come here' (94-95), is formulated so as to not *directly* rebuff the host's sympathetic (humanitarian) rendering of her neighbours as genuine refugees, fleeing a war situation to settle in Australia. It would be difficult for anyone, except the most unashamedly bigoted or callous to argue against this humanitarian position. What this platitude does do here is accomplish agreement with the host's sympathetic turn in order to remain 'reasonable'. April further develops this humanitarian line by developing her own image of refugees being welcomed and receiving health care: 'and yes that they've (0.3) they've got ya'know .h a health system=they've got a country that is welcoming them↑ .h (0.6) ah-but ' (97-99). This reasonableness out of the way, April turns back to her core complaint of the missing males.

A feature of this extract is the interaction between the host's challenges to the caller's complaint, and the reflexive deployment of response turns that orientate to such challenges. This extract suggests that when humanitarianism is invoked in talk, it is not a move that can be easily ignored without social censure. Indeed, I speculate that there may be a distinct imperative in talk, that when humanitarianism is deployed in argumentation (as observed in the above sequence) it is necessary to orientate to it. Not doing so risks undermining the speakers' stake in presenting an account that is not driven by prejudice.

Protecting the children

The following extract comes from the same call with April and illustrates another rhetorical formulation that works to ward off potential censure, but once again, is prejudicial in its rendering of ‘Sudanese refugees’ as possessing dubious moral and behavioural standards.

Extract 4.

177 APRIL: um: .h and look we've er >we've got nothing against them< and an
178 they're beautiful little children (0.5) we (0.3) ya'know they
179 haven't been taught the .h (0.3) animals are unpredictable a:nd
180 (0.5) and if you a:re taught e- teasing it an animal it will bite
181 back?
182 BOB: yeah,
183 (0.6)
184 APRIL: s:o we jus- (0.4) ya'know it that sort of a thing
185 [and-and we try to talk
186 BOB: [.hh well lets hope it doesn't phwa doesn't get to
187 a situation where .hh
188 APRIL: [n:o? eh-
189 BOB: [we have to wait until somebody does get (0.3) [b:itten
190 APRIL: [but we wo-
191 BOB: before anything happens?
192 APRIL: we won't let it get to that point,
193 (0.2)
194 BOB: [yeah.
195 APRIL: [that, (.)we will not le- (.2) let
196 it get to that,
197 BOB: [yeah.
198 APRIL: [that is were we've (0.5) we think no that's not (0.9) tha- that
199 wo- won't happen. (0.4) becau's we wi:ll restrict that from
200 happening (.) s:o .hh look w^ue .h they a:re. (0.6) very much in
201 our area a:nd .h as much as they keep to themselves (0.3) w-we see
202 a lot=there are children just coming up (0.2) left-right and
203 centre of(0.3)Suda- (0.2)Sudanese children that are jus- (0.9)
204 ya'know everywhere. a-and .h they're beautiful children=but they I
205 think (0.4) to a certain extent they need to be: .hh a little more
206 educated,
207 (0.3)
208 BOB: yeah? I understand.
209 (0.6)
210 APRIL: if they haven't been.

This extract is taken from the end of April's call and can be read as a summation of her complaint that her Sudanese neighbours, by hanging their children over her back fence, are tempting her German Shepherd to jump up and potentially bite them. We observe the caller positioning herself in relation to 'them' (177) as adjudicator on how many 'Sudanese' are in 'our area' (200-201) and what is to be done about educating Sudanese children 'if they haven't been' (210). There are a number of devices here that again, function to forward this complaint as

balanced and reasonable, including the disclaimer of ‘we’ve got nothing against them’ (177). However, the focus here is on a rhetoric that deems Sudanese children (and importantly, their parents via implicit association) as needing direction and education from the mainstream ‘we’.

For the caller, Sudanese children can be classified as both ‘beautiful’, and also needing education about fundamental common sense, something that accrues a high degree of symbolic importance in abnormalising Sudanese refugees in this call. Describing Sudanese children in this way treads a delicate line in which April positions herself as educator and manager of the issue: ‘s:o we jus- (0.4) ya’know it that sort of a thing and-and we try to talk’ (184-185) and, ‘we won’t let it get to that point’ (192). April and her family are taking on the burden of responsibility to prevent a dog savaging and, although their efforts of talking to the family have ultimately failed thus far, further unspecified efforts will be put in place to stop any harm coming to the children.

What is to be made of this formulation? What rhetorical work is being achieved in constructing her account in this particular way? This way of talking about the issue positions the caller as the benevolent overseer of neighbourhood behaviour and norms, tacitly responsible for boundary setting and the education of the uneducated and taken with the caller’s missing males complaint, her account delineates what moral, educational and behavioural standards ‘the Sudanese’ are in breach of. Thus, her account is embedded with latent, moral blamings around responsibility for setting proper boundaries for children. The rhetorical work done through the description of children being recklessly hung over a fence for a German Shepherd to bite is a highly emotive and connotative

one²⁴. What sort of parent would court such danger? Moreover, what sort of parent would *need to be told* that this was a potential hazard to small children?

In the most obvious sense, one of the functions of this sequence is to neatly position the caller in a morally normative (positive) contrast relation to Sudanese refugees, further augmenting her claim that this group is problematic. More delicately, however, when a complaint is glossed in caring, paternalistic undertones, it becomes a particularly complex rhetorical move to contest, undermine, or challenge as being motivated by prejudice, neighbourhood grudges or xenophobia. For example, a speaker may exculpate any prejudicial aspect of an account by orientating to his or her fundamental concern for the welfare of the individual or groups they are talking about: it is the children's welfare that impels the complaint and who could blame them for caring about children? Thus, a speaker's complaint can be turned from the potentially prejudicial, to a justifiable, morally instantiated complaint. In other words, the account is 'inoculated' (Potter, 1996) from the charge that the real point of this narrative (that the caller has gone to some effort recounting on radio!) derives from a basic worry about the numbers of Sudanese 'in our area'; and all the inferences that could be taken from that complaint if it were not augmented with a paternalistic gloss.

The caller's identity through this call is carefully managed vis-à-vis her display of 'care' for Sudanese children. Harsh and potentially problematic claims of Sudanese children being 'jus ya' know everywhere' are immediately qualified by aesthetic appraisals of 'beautiful children', effectively managing counter-claims that April may be harbouring a nasty distaste for humanitarian refugees.

²⁴ To give this point further depth consider the backlash from the public, media and child protection agencies over Michael Jackson famously hanging his infant son over a balcony in 2002.

Put another way, invocations of ‘care’ for her neighbour’s children works to build a balanced identity for the caller. That is, April is not wholly predisposed to being vindictive or unfeeling towards Sudanese refugees. How can she? She is worried about their children being mauled by her German shepherd.

‘Bloody stupid and racist’: The problem with totally racist comments.

Thus far attention has been given to the generally fluid, dialogic negotiation that callers and host engage in through their turn taking, and how interactants’ accounts and complaints are co-constituted. Both the host and his callers conjointly choreograph their moves, and although the caller’s complaints are usually broken up with challenges and moderations, they are not outrightly rejected by the host, and calls mostly proceed to end with the caller having delivered their central message.

Extract 5 below highlights a marked contrast from the previous call as the caller (Dee) advocates an unambiguously punitive measure in relation to ‘the Sudanese’.

Extract 5.

(1.21 removed)

1 DEE: ...there's not enough support workers to take me elsewhere
2 BOB: .hh a:we that's a pity.
3 DEE: yea- anyway I didn't phone about me?
4 BOB: .h ok what did you phone for.
5 DEE: ah we:ll? when I came out in sixty-four?
6 BOB: yeah?
7 DEE: um (0.6) I regarded ad- Adelai↑de as a lovely country town?
8 (0.4)
9 BOB: heh heh heh
10 (0.3)
11 DEE: I'm sorry I can't regard it as a lovely country
12 [town anymore
13 BOB: [.hh it's a bit like [Chicago in'tit?
14 DEE: [what on earths happening Bob.
15 BOB: it's a bit like bloody Chicago in'tit?
16 (0.4)
17 DEE: auwgh (0.3) now I did hear you sa:↑y (0.5) before I phoned
18 about the Sudanese?
19 BOB: yeah,
20 (0.2)
21 DEE: now (0.8) I (see) I'm not at all racist.(0.5) a-b[ut
22 BOB: [bu↑t
23 DEE: I think they should all be gathered up and sent back,
24 BOB: a::w you see that's jus=that is a total (0.2) racist comment.
25 DEE: I'm I'm sorry?
26 BOB: ABSOLUTE RACIST COMMENT,
27 DEE: I'm sorry [but
28 BOB: [BLOODY STUPID AND RACIST,
29 DEE: Bob we don't need them.(())
30 BOB: [YOU ARE STUPID FOR SAYING THAT,
31 DEE: oh don't call me st[up↑id
32 BOB: [YOU'RE STUPID FOR SAYING THAT .h GO BACK
33 AND LEARN SOMETHING ABOUT .hh HISTORY AND WHY .h PEOPLE LIKE
34 THAT COME TO THIS COUNTRY .hh AND GIVE THEM A CHANCE TO
35 GET GOING [HERE.
36 DEE: [but they [don't(take it?)
37 BOB: [ONE CHILD HAS DONE SOMETHING WRONG .hh
38 AND YOU HAVE SAID SOMETHING .h THAT IS ABSOLUTELY RIDICULOUS.
39 DEE: Bob the Italians and the Greeks came
40 out. [And (soon) they did very ↑well
41 BOB: [AH'HA .h >I'LL BET YOU YOU PROBABLY HAD THE SAME IDEA
42 ABOUT THE ITALIANS AND GREEKS WHEN THEY FIRST CAME OUT.<
43 DEE: no [I didn't?
44 BOB: [NAH .h NOT INTERESTED IN TALKING TO YOU. .h I THINK YOUR
45 ATTITUDES .h YOUR'RE A DICKHEAD.

As is common in many of the calls analysed here, the call begins with an amiable conversation about personal matters; in this instance, about the host's recent leg injury and the caller's own health problems²⁵. The host demonstrates his empathy for Dee's problems at line 5 uttering 'a:we that's a pity' (2) and Dee progresses the call to what is her primary motivation for calling: the stabbing and

²⁵ There is some interesting discursive work to be done here on how talkback host and callers talk in ways that suggest a pre-existing relationship (although interactants may have potentially never talked before) and how this hearable 'intimacy' works in talkback radio.

'the Sudanese'. Dee begins her complaint by substantiating her sociological credibility in making claims about the changing social nature of Adelaide, stating that when she 'came out in sixty-four' (5) she saw 'Adelaide as a lovely country town' (11). But now, without explicitly uttering it, she implies that a stabbing was an exemplar of why things are now different and why she 'can't regard it a lovely country town anymore' (7). Francis, deploying a jocular tone agrees, and retorts, it's 'just like bloody Chicago isn't it' (13).

Until this point the call has been hearably genial, in that both interactants are sharing and agreeing upon similar representations about Adelaide becoming a dangerous place, just like 'Chicago'. The caller's next turn relates to a previous segment of Francis' show that we can assume is the opening editorial commentary (Extract 1). Setting her topic, the caller utters 'now I did hear you say (0.5) before I phoned about the Sudanese' (17-18) and then progresses to deploy the disclaimer of 'I'm not at all racist (0.5) a-but' (21). This prolepsis has been widely noted (see Hewitt & Stokes, 1975; Wetherell & Potter, 1992; van Dijk, 1984, 1992), and observed to function as a mitigation, defending racist accounts or arguments against inferences that the speaker has an underlying attitude of 'intolerance' towards an out-group. What is particularly noteworthy is how this rhetorical device *fails* so dramatically to mitigate as designed²⁶. Even before the caller has the opportunity to finish her turn, Francis pre-empts what is to follow and both interactants simultaneously utter the cardinal 'but' (21-22). As Francis has correctly anticipated, Dee moves on to deliver the abrogative immigration advice: 'they should all be gathered up and sent back' (23).

²⁶ The diminished effectiveness of the strategy of denial of racism was highlighted in a comedy performance that the author attended recently. The comedian used "I'm not a racist but.." as a pivotal element of his joke. The joke was widely understood and this attests to the hackneyed nature of this formulation.

Proceeding from this point in the call, Francis' rhetoric is designed oppositionally, deriding and accusing Dee of uttering a 'total (0.2) racist comment' (24) and challenging the status of her intelligence, asserting that she is 'stupid for saying that' (30). Moreover, the host chides the caller for prejudicially generalising from one event (the stabbing), to a recommendation that 'all' the Sudanese should be removed from Australia, 'ONE CHILD HAS DONE SOMETHING WRONG .hh AND YOU HAVE SAID SOMETHING .h THAT IS ABSOLUTELY RIDICULOUS' (37-38). The host is hearably orientating to the caller's lack of nuance when making causal sense of the stabbing, and her crudely formulated proposition that 'I think they should all be gathered up and sent back' (23). What usually functions at these moments to lubricate the interactional wheel, especially when complaining about humanitarian refugees, is arguably not present in this call.

It is the lack of delicacy compared to other calls, by directly calling for the expulsion of 'the Sudanese' en masse, flags this caller as an individual who is displaying an antipathy for Sudanese refugees that the host clearly deems as unacceptable. The opinion that the caller delivers is not backgrounded with the sorts of narratives and explanations that are observed in other calls. There is no sketching of any personal, backyard encounters with 'the Sudanese', or lay sociological explanation to support the general contention that this group needs to be expelled from Australia.

This interaction is particularised in this corpus by the caller's blunt opinion, unadorned with the more subtle tropes that come to constitute a 'sympathetic' complaint, and the hosts cutting orientation to these omissions. Notably, the host contends that the caller is not only 'racist' but also ignorant about 'WHY .h PEOPLE LIKE THAT COME TO THIS COUNTRY .hh

AND GIVE THEM A CHANCE TO GET GOING HERE' (33-35). What counts as a constitutive element of the caller's 'racism' is her lack of *displayed* sympathy that suggests she lacks understanding of the reasons that forced these refugees to come to Australia.

What is more, the host orientates to a notion of (in)tolerance in his attack on the caller, and her displayed rigidity in grossly categorising all 'Sudanese' on the basis of one event. One suspects that without sympathetic formulations to manage interactional matters of 'stake' in this call sequence, the caller is left open to a range of accusations that are predicated on her views being heard as coming from a deeply personal place. Arguably, the caller's antipathy towards Sudanese refugees is treated by the host as especially symptomatic of an acute ignorance or prejudice, in part because her arrowed words are directed at this particular humanitarian refugee group. Without the softening devices of sympathy, suggestions of deportation are thus heard loud and clear, in the pernicious register they were spoken in.

Using aesthetic evaluations

In the next call (which follows the last call on the same night) we illustrate how host and caller deploy discursive resources in ways that function to highlight aesthetic qualities of Sudanese women. It should be noted that the caller references the previous caller at the start of her call, which suggests that she is primed, or at least alert to, the potential problems inherent in proposing punitive action against Sudanese refugees.

Extract 6.

(43 seconds removed)

1 HEATHER: now we had a lady ring up eithe:r(0.5)last night o:r the night
2 before .h whenever? (0.3) and she said that the Sudanese
3 people are being put into housing trusts .h that no one else
4 wants? (1.2) well that is not tr↓ue (0.5) because I have seen
5 and been in one? .h and is absolutely beautiful? (0.4)
6 rig↑ht .hh no:w (0.8) u:m? [I
7 BOB: [there's a lot of housing trust:s
8 that people don't want becaus- they are in the wrong (.)
9 suburbs.
10 (0.6)
11 HEATHER: we:↓ll. (0.4) I don't (0.4) call (0.3)
12 [this area in the wrong.
13 BOB: [haven'ya heard that. haven'ya heard that.
14 What- what's what area?
15 (0.3)
16 HEATHER: I don't call this area in the wrong [()
17 BOB: [what's the area?
18 HEATHER: .hh I'm in Penningto↑n (0.2) [yeah,
19 BOB: [yeah?
20 HEATHER: .hh now I think e:r the African peop- girls especially they
21 look absolutely beautiful?
22 (0.2)
23 BOB: ↑aren't their colours in their (.) clothes
24 beautiful yeah [yeah,
25 HEATHER: ↑↑y[e::s
26 (0.4)
27 HEATHER: .h e:r (0.2) ya'know they look
28 so stunning? and they got the pearly white
29 te:eth and [all done up ()
30 BOB: [A:H GIVE'EM A ↑CHA:NCE TALK TO THEM: (.) BE
31 [NICE WITH THEM,
32 HEATHER: [↑↑yeah
33 BOB: AND THEY'LL GET ON [WELL WITH YOU TOO.
34 HEATHER: [↑↑yeah
35 BOB: [yer yeah.
36 HEATHER: [I say hello to them
37 BOB: [yeah,
38 HEATHER: [as they go past my front=they haven't been here for a while
39 so they must have moved out the area,
40 BOB: yeah,
41 (0.3)
42 HEATHER: but th- (0.3) and their hai↑r is done up like in really (0.3)
43 must take them forever? in the mirror?
44 (0.3)
45 BOB: [hah heh heh heh
46 HEATHER: [or they can prob'ly do it blind↓folded
47 BOB: yeah.
48 (0.2)
49 HEATHER: with their hair?=ya'know with the plating and stuff? (0.5)
50 and that's so attractive. (0.5) and e:r (.) but Bob (0.8) I
51 think the reason why people are gett'in a bit livid here? .hh
52 is because some people have been on the waiting list for
53 housing trust for over fifteen years? .h s:o (0.5) ya'kn↓ow
54 urm and >they haven't been able to get in?< .h maybe p'haps
55 (0.5) ya'know there's something hidden there=I dunno?
56 BOB: but a lot of those peop↑le who've been waiting fifteen years
57 have been? .hh they've had a- a a roof over their heads and
58 hav'been waiting for .hh something the government can do for
59 them?
60 HEATHER: yeah?
61 BOB: .h ah these people have over from (0.4) NOTHING (1.2)
62 ABSOLUTELY NOTHING
63 (0.4)
64 HEATHER: what,
65 (0.5)

66 BOB: fr- from Africa? (0.6) they've come out here with (.)
67 NO[THING
68 HEATHER: [oh ↑yeah of course (0.3) [their clothes on their back?
69 BOB: [ya'know SO YOU CAN'T EXPECT THEM
70 TO GO AND [LIVE IN A ↑TENT
71 HEATHER: [yeah no no I realise [that,
72 BOB: [yeah,
73 HEATHER: they do get assistance though and they do get housing trust
74 and [()whatever
75 BOB: [we:↑ll that's what we with- did that's what we did with
76 the Europeans that came out here years ago.
77 HEATHER: ↑that's ↑right
78 BOB: yeah-
79 HEATHER: yea- .hh now hydrotherapy..

The caller initiates her main complaint by challenging the facticity of a previous caller's claim that Sudanese refugees were being allocated 'housing trusts .h that no-one else wants' (3-4), and she has evidence that this is not the case as she 'has been in one .h and it is absolutely beautiful' (4-5). The caller's claim elicits a counter from the host, and he utters, 'there's a lot of housing trusts that people don't want becaus- they are in the wrong (.) suburbs ' (7-9). It becomes clear that this utterance by Francis is orientated to by the caller as a challenge to her argument, and, more personally, as an affront to the suburb that she herself lives in (we can deduce now that the house she has visited that was 'beautiful' is actually positioned in her own suburb). This is evidenced by the caller uttering: 'we:↓ll. (0.4) I don't (0.4) call (0.3) this area in the wrong' (16). After the caller discloses her area ('Pennington'), the dialogue rapidly shifts to an aesthetic evaluation 'now I think e:r African peop- girls especially they look absolutely beautiful' (20-21). Francis can be heard to orientate to this aesthetic formulation, uttering 'aren't their colours in their (.) clothes beautiful yeah' (23-24).

What can be made of this sort of aesthetic-cultural talk in this segment of interaction, and more specifically, how does this repertoire work within the call's overall discursive structure to advance the caller's complaint? Firstly, it is

hearable that interactants are affiliated when talking about aesthetic matters pertaining to ‘Sudanese women’. This is evidenced by overlapping continuers such as ‘yeah’ and ‘yes’ at line 24-25, and the host’s aligned response to the caller’s initial aesthetic orientated utterance at line 23, ‘aren’t their colours in the clothes beautiful’. Subsequently, the host emphatically moves to extend the caller’s aesthetic evaluation to a broader appeal of ‘A:H GIVE’EM A ↑CHA:NCE TALK TO THEM: (.) BE NICE WITH THEM’ (30-31), which gets agreement from the caller (‘yeah’ line 32). Interestingly, the caller moves to provide some evidence of her acceptance of her Sudanese neighbours: ‘I say hello to them’ (36). Further, interactants jocularly agree that African hair styling is complicated, but ‘they can probably do it blindfolded’ (46).

This talk about aesthetics works within this particular location in the sequence to steer the caller’s account away from potential trouble. At the start of this extract, interactants can be heard to be experiencing trouble coming to terms with their respective positions on housing trust properties. The host is avowing that there are indeed some housing trust locations that are undesirable, and the caller is defending her view that ‘Sudanese people’ are not being provided poor housing. Clearly, the caller’s complaint is not being received unproblematically by the host and instead of pushing through this line of argument, risking further interactional trouble she opts to deploy an aesthetic formulation.

With this change of tack, we can observe a marked change in how interactants orientate to each other’s turns. That is, they can now be heard to be collaborating in their talk. Aesthetic evaluations in this call do some work to restore affiliation and, for the caller, also act as potential disclaimers against holding prejudiced attitudes (Hewitt & Stokes, 1975) before she introduces a controversial complaint. This aesthetic repertoire eventually fuses with a

complaint in a seamless fashion: ‘with their hair?²=ya’know with the plaiting and stuff? (0.5) and that’s so attractive. (0.5) and e:r (.) but Bob (0.8) I think the reason why people are gett’in a bit livid here? .hh is because some people have been on the waiting list for housing trust for over fifteen years? .h s:o (0.5) ya’kn↑ow urm and >they haven’t been able to get in’ (49-54). We may conclude that the caller’s admiration for ‘African’ hair braiding and white teeth does not influence her main complaint that these same people are being unfairly provided public housing. Furthermore, even in the face of the host’s loud and aggressive challenge, making a comparison between the Sudanese who ‘come out here with (.) NOTHING’ (66-67) and those who have had a roof over their heads, the caller remains steadfast: ‘they do get assistance though and they do get housing trust and whatever’ (73-74). The caller does produce what can be heard as a platitude in deference to the host’s humanitarian argument, uttering ‘oh ↑yeah of course (0.3) their clothes on their back (68). The host further justifies his rationale for the need to offer housing to Sudanese refugees, arguing ‘that’s what we did with the Europeans’ (75-76), and now the caller demurs and takes shelter in another topic: ‘hydrotherapy’ (79).

This orientation to aesthetics illustrates the rhetorical usefulness of demonstrating a multicultural ‘appreciation’ for the speaker. But this appreciation is curtailed beyond recognition of the exotic, and completely dissipates in the face of competition for the scarce resource of public housing. Appreciating the exotic in cultural dress, hairstyles and teeth, symbolises her reasonableness in accepting ethnic others. However, as it becomes patently clear in this call, there are inherent interactive dangers in building a complaint upon this sort of aesthetic appreciation rhetoric. Although both interactants orientate to aesthetic resources, when the caller moves back to present her core complaint

about Sudanese refugees being unfairly preferred public housing, it is challenged by the host and she ultimately moves away from the argument, to talk about another (safer) topic. This call reveals how humanitarian (sympathetic) rhetoric is, for the host (with his institutionalised power) an effective rhetorical counter to punitive complaints. The host's hypothetical question 'SO YOU CAN'T EXPECT THEM TO GO AND LIVE IN A TENT' (69-70), and his proposition that 'they come out here with nothing' (66-67) can be heard to bring into play basic humanist principles that are highly robust to challenge. In line with the previous call, we can see how sympathetic resources can be evoked to *both* advance punitive complaints in interaction *and* undermine complaints that advocate for public housing to be redistributed towards long-settled Australians.

Human capital and the 'tolerance' of humanitarian refugees

There are some important ideological threads running through both host and caller's sympathetic talk that draw on and reproduce ideological positions within society. I have discussed how these discursive resources work in the rhetorical arena, softening the caller's complaints, working to inoculate prejudiced claims against potential accusations of racism and, in the hands of the host, as an argumentative counter-point to punitive arguments. But, there is a wider system of sense making going on here, with attendant exclusionary consequences, and this concerns a characterisation of Sudanese-Australians as holding precious little in terms of *human capital*.

I use the concept of human capital broadly here to describe human attributes, competencies, knowledge and talents that ultimately repay a profit to individuals and their society, whether economically and/or socially (see Smith, 1776). In short, human capital refers to the productive capacity of individuals

and the sorts of education, training and other investment ‘inputs’ (i.e. medical care) that have the potential to yield an ‘output’ or ‘rate of return’ on such investments (Becker, 1993). Investment in, and realisation of macro-level human capital is thus theorised to play an important causal role in a nation’s economic success (Rindermann, 2008; Weber, 1964). In fact, it has been long argued that a higher collective cognitive ability, developed through education²⁷, determines the success of nations and cultural groups alike (Rindermann, 2008).

I now turn to develop this idea of human capital and how this ideological notion frames talk about refugees from Africa. I argue here and elsewhere (Hanson-Easey & Augoustinos, 2010) that, apart from troubles experienced in their homelands, like ‘tribalism’ and trauma from war, Sudanese refugees are construed as capital drains, needy and dependent on government for their basic welfare (Moloney, 2007). This theme is highlighted in Heather’s call (as with many of the other calls in the corpus): apart from female aesthetics, as attributes worthy of comment, there are very few other positive category attributes in the stock barrel of common sense that are alternatively deployed. In this way, African refugees are discursively stripped of a potential identity that includes being a legitimate source of human capital; instead, they are objectified as exotic hair stylists or ‘beautiful children’ with inherent moral and educational challenges.

One of the implications of this discourse, one which voids a refugee’s life to a restricted set of categories, is that it provides the ideological grist for accounts that represent this group as neglecting their side of the implicit social contract. In other words, if Australia is providing health services, housing and is

²⁷ Cognitive ability and education are often understood to be reciprocal, in that “schooling raises intelligence, and intelligent people realize the advantages to be gained through a better education” (Rindermann, 2008. p 138).

‘welcoming them’, a refugee, arguably, with little human capital import, is tacitly expected to behave in ways that do not exceed the limits of ‘tolerance’ for the hosts.

And here is the nub of my argument. Deploying repertoires that position refugees as relatively empty of meaningful and pragmatic resources - cultural, educational or otherwise - and Australia as essentially altruistic and humanitarian, augments an ideological construction that delineates between those who are endowed with the power to tolerate (and notionally, not tolerate), and those who exist as the tolerated (and hence, sometimes not tolerated) (Hage, 1998). The implication of this tolerance asymmetry has the potential effect of obligating refugees to act in various ways that do not go beyond what is commonsensically, but fluidly constituted as morally and behaviourally acceptable. Under the guise of host and caller’s orientation to humanitarianism, sympathy talk lays a fluxing tolerance, precariously positioning refugees who near the edge of national exclusion.

Social accounts of a stabbing, perceived privileged access to housing, or unconventional attitudes towards the threat of German Shepherds are hence, not matters to be explained *per se*. Alternatively, they are phenomena held up to flag a breach of refugees’ reciprocal obligations to comply with social expectations; or at least, social criteria that are invariably delimited for refugees in particular. Clearly, the nature of the complaint is not wholly relevant here. Any matter could be used to delineate what is aberrant (although, clearly, some metaphors, tropes and representations are inherently more useful in conjuring abnormality than others). What enables these complaints to cohere into an ideological practice is that they come to be deployed in ways that ultimately delineate the *thresholds of tolerance*. However, the threshold of tolerance is not static but flexible,

and rhetorically contingent upon what speakers are doing in talk-in-interaction, and what socio-political change they are advocating. For the most part, host and callers in this study tread the path of moderate ‘tolerance’, notable in Extract 6 ‘A:H GIVE’EM A ↑CHA:NCE TALK TO THEM: (.) BE NICE WITH THEM’ (30-31)²⁸. The idiom ‘give-em a chance’ presupposes that it is implicitly contingent upon long settled Australians to wield the power of tolerance. Setting the boundaries of what constitutes ‘a chance’ is not something originating from refugees themselves but, alternatively, is offered from above. It is within white Australians’ *power to tolerate*, but in being tolerated, refugees are subjugated to the fluid whims of the majority’s delimiting practices. Linguistic resources that attune to humanitarian, sympathetic, paternalistic and egalitarian ideologies can be viewed as implicit forms of delimited ‘tolerance’, and I will instantiate this with some examples from the calls analysed. When the host speaks of giving ‘em a chance’ (165) below in extract 7, it is clear that this magnanimity is time-limited and wholly contingent on how well ‘the Sudanese’ are deemed to have ‘assimilated’. The caller (April) in this segment of the call is discussing how ‘they’ (her Sudanese neighbours) seem to be avoiding her attempts to communicate.

²⁸ Also, in another call from Alan: ‘lets give () lets give the other people a chance’ (Line 145-146).

Extract 7.

153 HEATHER: ...and it's jus sort'of? (0.3) ya'know well (.) how can we .hh
154 communicate with them when they sort'of=and if we do see the[↑]m (.)
155 they (.) then run away?(1.0)
156 it's sort'of like they [wanna
157 BOB: [yeah
158 APRIL: be by themselves but (0.3) the:n .h
159 (0.7) they- (0.3) they wanna [be
160 BOB: [ha- how long have they
161 been there? in wha- in your area.
162 APRIL: awh: (0.3) in our area?
163 BOB: [mmm
164 APRIL: [prob'ly five-six years?
165 BOB: awh its been that long=I was jus- going to say give'em a chance
166 to .hh
167 APRIL: n:o,
168 BOB: to sort'of ah a- assimilate to it but e:r
169 APRIL: [no no- no
170 BOB: [but you- you- you've done that?
171 (0.3)
172 APRIL: oh they've been here for a long time.
173 BOB: yeah,

Of note in this extract is how various behaviours are deemed to signify 'assimilation' problems, and how the host delimits tolerance in relation to time limits. Importantly, central to this formulation is the positioning of both caller and host as the natural arbiters of what is tolerable from a spatial perspective. The Sudanese are thus positioned spatially and anomalously as 'in wha- in your area' (160-161). In this way we can begin to see a community being discursively constructed as an imaginary space (see Anderson, 1983; Hage, 1998). Community space is cleaved in two: one group of people are legitimately accepted, so endogenous that their belonging is taken for granted; the other need to be referenced, marked as 'in our area'. Belonging to the later community space, Sudanese refugees are implicitly represented as alien - originating from the outside. Thus a binary is created: in-group Australians, unfettered by the limits of tolerance - and the Other, whom are analysed for signs of non-assimilation within a finite, but ultimately arbitrary time-frame i.e. 'five-six years' (164).

This contrast binary is essentially managerial: that is, white Australians are unproblematically raised to the position of power, where they arbitrate on

varying degrees of tolerance. Extract 7 highlights an empowered position inherent in the discourse of white Australians that Hage (1998) coins *empowered spatiality*. As Hage argues, this power to tolerate is conceptualised as: ‘the power to position the other as an object within a space that one considers ones own, within limits one feels legitimately capable of setting’ (p. 90). Similarly, for host and caller, their discussion orientates to this discourse of privileged delimiters of what can be tolerated within *their* spatial boundaries.

Extract 8 highlights this nationalistic, spatial boundary setting, and its underlying power to demarcate ‘our’ area, and ultimately, what constitutes a straining of ‘tolerance’ for the caller.

Extract 8.

204 APRIL: look we- .h they ar:e (0.6) very much in our area a- a:nd .h as
 205 much as they keep to themselves (0.3) w- we see a lot- there are
 206 children just coming up left right and centre of th- Sud'n (.)
 207 Sudanese children that are jus (0.9) ya'know everywhe↑re

The caller’s complaint centres on the view that ‘they ar:e (0.6) very much in our area’ (204). Moreover, in this sketching of the caller’s neighbourhood, ‘Sudanese children’ are ‘ya’ know everywhere’ (207). This formulation conjures imagery that has some resonance with a long-standing metaphor in Australian discourse of being ‘swamped’ or ‘flooded’ by immigrants (see Lack & Templeton, 1995). This metaphor is backgrounded by an implicit spatial assumption, marking boundaries around the nation. These borders tacitly deem the other as infringing into a national space that intrinsically excludes them from full belonging and membership. In the extract above, what is observable is how this space - as a delineation of those who belong indigenously and those who do

not - is deployed in talk when a speaker is developing an argument that articulates a straining of 'tolerance'. In this way, the complaint can be constructed as not a wholesale rejection of 'the Sudanese', but a moderated version that takes issue with the numbers of Sudanese in 'our area'. Tolerance of the Sudanese is being stretched because their numbers have reached a point where their increased visibility is unacceptable. We may take this line further and speculate that the caller's complaint over Sudanese numbers and their increased visibility may be influenced by a fear that the fabric of the neighbourhood is being irrevocably altered by this group's presence.

Of course, this complaint would not hold if it were not founded on the presumption of a domestic space that was fundamentally 'ours' to begin with. It would make no sense to proffer an argument like this if 'the Sudanese' were considered an integrative part of what is constituted to be ours. The discursive sketching of a domestic space and the attendant delineation of who is endogenous to that space is thus central to discursive formulations of strained tolerance in relation to refugees.

Conclusion

In this Chapter I have demonstrated how interactants on talkback radio orientate to what have been broadly categorised as 'sympathetic' resources that incorporate displayed 'care', aesthetic evaluations and humanitarian tropes in complaining about and defending Sudanese refugees. I have argued that talking about a minority group in this fashion is not only rhetorically consonant with advancing pejorative accounts, but can also be evoked to argue against what is deemed to constitute pejorative, unjust and arguably racist arguments. Through the detailed study of interactants' talk, we begin to discern how social actors may

construct and forward their complaints, whilst managing the delicacies of talk about humanitarian refugees and, *on the most part*, protect their accounts from being undermined as callous or prejudiced.

In this Chapter, I have also highlighted how complaints about a refugee minority are achieved collaboratively, in the real-time communication context of talkback radio. The analysis of talkback affords insights into how members attend to the manifold, rhetorical requisites that confront speakers when providing accounts of humanitarian refugees from Africa. Following on from the work of Condor et al. (2006), these observations further explicate how talk in-interaction is honed towards not only the explicit delivery of a complaint, but to the management of a speaker's identity as fair and credible. What is interesting in the study of naturally-occurring argumentation on talkback is how callers, who may initially assume they are in alignment on issues with the host, come to discover through conversation, that they must reflexively adjust their rhetorical strategies in order to dodge interactional trouble. In this way, the (sometimes) adversarial nature of talkback provides a rich analytic site to view how rhetoric is choreographed in the heat of argumentation.

What is potentially new here is an iteration of a 'stake inoculation' device (Potter, 1996) that attends to the dilemma inherent in criticising refugees who have been invited to Australia on humanitarian grounds. Many of the discursive resources that have been observed in talk about refugees and 'asylum seekers' that arrive by boat in Australia, who seek protection from persecution on arrival, are not apposite in this rhetorical context. Assertions of 'illegal asylum seekers' (e.g. Saxton, 2003) as threats to the nation's sovereign 'right' to protect its borders from 'boatpeople' (Gale, 2004; Pickering, 2001) are not discursively applicable to humanitarian refugees who have been accepted and processed

through the ‘offshore’ (United Nations sanctioned) programme. Much of this highly politicised language on asylum seekers has attended to notions of a constructed threat from peoples who have not yet had their claims for asylum accepted, and thus fall under the suspicion that they are, for example, ‘economic migrants or threats to the nation’s health (Gale, 2004; Pickering, 2001). In contrast, humanitarian refugees from Sudan and other countries cannot be easily categorised and hence talked about in this fashion. Throughout the corpus of calls, it is evident that most interactants are aware of the dilemmas of speaking about humanitarian refugees in ways that may project a callous or prejudiced identity. Without the discursive resources that have come to emblematically represent ‘asylum seekers’ as illegitimate and othered, sympathy talk with its humanitarian undertones, may very well be tightly synchronised to the rhetorical exigency that speakers face when needing to present themselves as understanding, but concomitantly communicate their complaint.

On a more speculative note, the various sympathetic formulations discussed here can also be viewed as being historically and ideologically generated. Africa and its people have not historically been associated with wealth or social and political stability. Alternatively, they have been represented ideologically as a homogenous ‘third world’ continent, characterised as violent, chaotic, and dependent on Western humanitarian assistance (Brookes, 1995; Moeller, 1999). Impoverished images of Africa, as projected through the media, are thus available as rhetorical and sometimes contradictory resources for speakers.

In this Chapter, I have attempted to analyse various inter-related discursive activities, including the interactional issues of stake (Potter, 1996), and how the orientation to sympathy can be understood as a rhetorical move.

Importantly, I have also suggested that ‘sympathy talk’ constitutes a discursive resource with a history, and in particular contexts, has a role in constituting accounts that have serious political and social consequences for Sudanese refugees. The synthetic analytical approach (Wetherell, 1998) adopted here has allowed for these insights into both participants’ orientations, and a post-structuralist critique of the commonsense resources that seem to organise members’ talk about a minority group.

This analysis has tried to view the conversational practices and sense-making of members as social actions that can - and sometimes should be - viewed as an inexorable part of the social, material and political condition. However, the findings presented here must be hedged. Sudanese refugees are one of the newest social groups to have been settled in Australia, and little discursive work has attended to how humanitarian refugees are constructed in talk. Indeed, naturalistic data (interactants in conversation) on this topic is difficult to procure and, clearly, the findings highlighted here would benefit from further analysis to ascertain whether they are pervasive in different domains and to what degree sympathy changes as Sudanese refugees become less recognised *as* refugees through time.

The insights articulated here have the potential to open new paths for anti-racism to follow in order to subvert hegemonic discourses. Crucially, the types of arguments that are *not* given air, that are systematically ignored or implicitly argued against in formulating these members’ accounts is potentially instructive for devising the sorts of alternate narratives that could be brought into a new dialogue about this minority. A counter-dialogue could be constructed that moves beyond the simplistic orientation to sympathy in ambivalent formulations, and begins to accept that African-Australians

constitute more than the sum of the situations that forced them out of their homelands. This is by no means an easy task, as it runs against the grain of much of the mainstream reportage about Africa over the decades. Indeed, Germaine Greer sardonically noted during the famine in Rwanda and after a year of brutal war in 1994:

At breakfast and dinner, we can sharpen our own appetites with a plentiful dose of the pornography of war, genocide, destitution and disease. The four horsemen are up and away, with the press corps stumbling behind (p. 1).

As Greer argues, our perennial appetite for Africa's calamities are happily accommodated by the media as they report on the unimaginable human suffering that inevitably becomes adjoined to the people that flee these places. Beyond a paternalistic sympathy, a new dialogue could attend to the kinds of human resourcefulness and strengths that enable refugees to survive the cataclysms of war, famine and disaster and the multifaceted layers of group identity that *are not* contingent on war and disease; not as a constitutive element of an ambivalent resource for the practices of marginalisation and exclusion but, alternatively, as part of a discourse that widens the aperture of African-Australian's constructed identity and social positioning.

Finally, in this Chapter, I have hopefully augmented our understanding of how talk that invokes displayed, 'positive' evaluations of a minority works towards interactional requisites and wider ideological ends. Humanitarian refugees are not a group that can - without being characterised as callous or prejudiced – be reasonably talked about in pernicious tones. Talking about different social groups clearly compels different modes of rhetoric, and sympathy talk may be an example of this imperative.

Chapter 5: Narratives from the neighbourhood: The discursive construction of integration problems in talkback radio (In Press).

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Journal of Sociolinguistics (In press).

Statement of Contributions:

Mr Scott Hanson-Easey (*Candidate*)

I was responsible for the conception and primary authorship of the paper. I conducted the literature searches and analysed the data, and I was corresponding author and primarily responsible for responses to reviewers and revisions to the paper.

Signed:

Date 15/012/2011

Professor Martha Augoustinos (*Co-author*)

The realisation of the idea, collection of data, and analysis of data were the work of Mr. Hanson-Easey. Mr. Hanson-Easey was responsible for writing this paper; my role was to comment on drafts, make suggestions on the presentation of material in the paper, and to provide editorial input. I also provided advice on responding to comments by the journal reviewers and editor. I hereby give our permission for this paper to be incorporated in Mr. Hanson-Easey's submission for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Adelaide.

Signed: Martha Augoustinos

Date 15/12/2011

Abstract

This Chapter examines how speakers deploy narrative devices in talking about Sudanese-refugees. Particularly, I show how narrative constructions form an important basis for the advancement of accounts about integration problems into the local polity. I analyse talkback ‘phone-in’ calls to a local Adelaide radio station that provide callers an opportunity to give accounts of events and social phenomena that concern them in their local settings. Analysis shows that speakers regularly deployed narrative constructions, first-hand ‘witnessing’ devices that functioned to legitimate accounts as veridical versions of events, and contrast devices to explicate the moral and behavioural aberrance of Sudanese-refugees. The analysis illustrates how these discursive devices function rhetorically in interaction, in ways that differentiate Sudanese-Australians as problematic. Through this analysis, I contend that narrative devices precipitate and bolster socio-political policies that have serious, negative consequences for Sudanese-refugees.

Introduction

As Potter (1996) has noted, the way people recount their experiences, tell their stories and represent their lived world to others, is a richly complex and delicate business. Descriptions in conversation, particularly when these descriptions form an important basis for a complaint against a refugee minority, must attend to a mosaic of interactional and epistemological issues. This is no truer than on talkback radio, when callers phone-in and provide their opinion on matters of personal interest. Speakers are aware that their talk is not only being heard by the host, but also by a silent mass of listeners. How do they present their account as a fair and balanced version of ‘reality’? How do they deliver their complaint in a way that is heard as authentic, untarnished by insinuations of bias, ‘interest’, or even ‘racism’? This Chapter examines how talkback radio interactants manage the production of narrative accounts of Sudanese refugees, and how these narratives construct this group as inherently different. Specifically, I examine the means by which talkback callers harness discursive devices that build veracity into their descriptions, whilst attributing negative evaluations of Sudanese refugees.

Towards these aims, this Chapter employs a discursive psychological approach to examine members’ methods for managing the pragmatic flow of conversation and the various discursive devices and rhetorical manoeuvres that accomplish various functions in talk-in-interaction; that is, the pragmatic procedures and linguistic devices that do something in talk, such as building facticity into descriptions (veracity), blaming or justifying pernicious assertions (Edley, 2001; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996). My discursive psychological approach here also imbricates a ‘critical’ approach to language in

its role in legitimating social relations (see Wetherell, 1998). A discursive psychological approach, augmented with critical discursive analysis, conceives of talk as a social practice that involves constructing unique accounts in interaction and as drawing on the shared nature of knowledge; that is, what passes for common sense in a given social milieu (Billig, 1991). Viewed in this way, talk is constituted by an orientation to recycled - *but re-fashioned* - systems of representations, categories, beliefs and opinions for occasioned use in conversation, for a particular rhetorical aim. As Billig (1987; 1991) points out, speakers are not subservient to these modes of language, but consistently reformulate linguistic resources, respecifying them into new patterns of talk (if this ability to modulate talk were not possible, there would be no point in arguing about the putative 'reality' of social groups).

To ground this critical discursive psychological approach in something a little more tangible, we may consider how shared, discursive resources become manifest in contemporary 'race talk'. For example, there now exists a body of empirical data to suggest that participants orientate to 'culture' in various formulations as a discursive resource when accounting for minority group disadvantage (e.g. Augoustinos, Tuffin & Rapley, 1999; Barker, 1981, Wetherell & Potter, 1992). Unlike 'old fashioned' racism that regularly deployed biological, eugenic theories to explain and justify gross social injustices, 'new racism' (Barker, 1981) is now understood to orient to cultural difference as a taken for granted, ideological resource for justifying and rationalising inequality, including the exclusion of ethnic 'others' who 'don't fit' within the dominant culture. Thus, across nations, in subtle and flexible iterations, culture can be observed to act as a discursive resource, conjured up for reflexive deployment in argumentation. In sum, a discursive analytical approach treats every-day sense making in terms of

how it functions rhetorically within interaction. It is argued to be sensitive to the joint construction (dialogic) of accounts that work within a wider socio-political context, reproducing inequality, power relations and hegemonic knowledge.

Thus, the aim here is to delineate how talkback callers and host, in interaction, invoke and organise culturally available categories, narratives and images that legitimise assertion of difference between groups, and how these differences are argued to rationalise problematic behaviours of group members.

This work augments a growing base of discursive psychological and sociological work that attends to how people orientate to culturally available resources and linguistic devices when talking about refugees and minorities (see Gale, 2004; Goodman & Burke, 2010; Hage, 1998; Saxton, 2003; Tileaga, 2006; Verkuyten, 2001). Discursive work in this vein is especially attentive to the role of ordinary talk in the construction of minority identities, functioning to legitimate the various socio-political positions and entitlements that are being advocated for in a broader social context.

Sudanese refugees in Australia

Since 1996, more than 20,000 of the Sudanese Diaspora fleeing Sudan's second civil war and the conflict in Darfur have been settling in Australia, principally through Australia's offshore, humanitarian refugee programme (Commonwealth of Australia, 2007b). The settlement for this group can be understood to be constituted by two rather different processes. First, they must fulfil the extensive (and arguably, a narrow interpretation of what a refugee is) criteria set down by UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) and the Australian government to classify as humanitarian refugees and thus be 'legitimately' settled in Australia (see Grove & Zwi, 2006). This is a protracted process, and

applicants continue to be vulnerable to threats of violence and uncertainty in temporary refugee camps (Grove & Zwi, 2006). Secondly, once in Australia, they commence a 'resettlement' process through which they are expected to become 'active participants in the community as soon as possible' (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009, p 1).

Similar to other immigrant groups in Australia's history, refugees from Africa have been intermittently subject to an evaluation of their rate of 'resettlement', and some media and political commentators have posited that this process is not progressing at a sufficiently appropriate rate (see Hanson-Easey & Augoustinos, 2010). For example, the former Minister for Immigration and Citizenship under the previous Australian Liberal government, Kevin Andrews, was explicit in his justification for cutting the humanitarian quota for Sudanese refugees from 70 per cent to 30 per cent in 2007, stating that African refugees 'don't seem to be settling and adjusting into the Australian life as quickly as we would hope' (Topsfield & Rood, 2007, p.1). Andrews' decision to radically reduce the Sudanese quota was specifically predicated on particular concerns (tabled without any empirical evidence to support such a contention) with 'cultural issues', and the formation of 'race based gangs' (Farouque & Cooke, 2007). In 2009, an adolescent Sudanese-Australian was stabbed to death by another Sudanese youth in the central business district of Adelaide, eliciting media attention, talkback debate and consternation that coalesced around notions of 'tribal frictions', violence and Sudanese 'gangs'. Similar debates, framed in racialised terms, ensued in the Australian media after Liep Gony, a nineteen-year old Sudanese-Australian student, was bashed to death in Melbourne (see Windle, 2008).

In sum, concentrated media attention has framed characterisations of Sudanese refugees as ostensibly prone to criminality, gang violence and 'integration problems', with ethnic/race attributes being used to explain these phenomena (Windle, 2008). Pre-existing, social and political influences on these phenomena (i.e. racism) are not considered in these accounts, and 'difference' is construed as lying with the Sudanese themselves.

The construction of difference

Talk that functions to connote difference or abnormality regularly relies on the deployment of contrast devices to provide such cues (Dickerson, 2000). Dorothy Smith (1978), in her seminal work 'K is mentally ill', describes how accounts can be furnished with various types of contrast devices, functioning to index what is normal and what implicitly deviates from this standard. Smith's analysis of an account of 'K's' mental illness by a 'friend', Angela, attends to the subtle production of descriptions that characterise K as mentally ill.

In accord with Smith's work, ethnomethodological/conversation analytic and discursive psychological work has sought to illuminate how members attend to interactional matters of stake and veracity in telling their stories (Edwards & Potter, 1992; 1993; Hutchby, 1996, 2001; Pomerantz, 1984; Potter & Edwards, 1990; Sacks 1992; Wooffitt, 1992). What these various analytic works explicate is how descriptions of events are rhetorically designed by speakers to be heard as directly observed and experienced, whilst anticipating how such accounts might be undermined by refutation and counterclaim (Edwards & Potter, 1993). Ian Hutchby (1996, 2001) has observed that 'open-line' talkback radio provides a forum for callers to avow opinions that deploy 'witnessing' devices, and this talk is pressed with an authenticity that comes from seeing and experiencing

something ‘first hand’ (Hutchby, 2001, p. 482). That is, callers work to authenticate the accounts ‘by presenting themselves as ‘witnesses’ in the wider sense of bringing into play *knowledge in proof* of a claim, opinion or assertion’ (p. 483). In other words, callers regularly frame their accounts and opinions by way of personal experience, justifying and bolstering their opinions’ veracity, furnishing it with an objectivity that cannot be achieved easily by a ‘second hand’ recounting of events. The ‘witnessing’ of events thus provides speakers with a warrant to expound their particular view, in a time restricted and sometimes belligerent talkback setting (Hutchby, 2001).

Constructing ‘witnessed’ accounts

In talking about social entities, speakers are not simply mirroring a direct version of these entities through their words, but are systematically working into category descriptions various inferential messages about their meaning, connoting such things as difference, blame and threat (Potter, 1996). Roland Barthes in his seminal work *S/Z* (1970) illustrated the highly connotative nature of how ‘reality’ is constructed through narrative. Focusing on literary text, Barthes work highlights how discourse that reflects a naïve reality is not a pure reflection of nature, but a human achievement founded upon historically evolving ‘codes’ of meaning woven through the text. Without going into the complexities of Barthes codes, what this analysis can draw on is how connotations in relation to referent words are potentially more powerful in providing meaning in discourse than the straight (realist) denotation of a word or description. We can elaborate further on Barthes’ conceptualisation of connotation by examining how a caller describes what style of jewellery Sudanese gang members are wearing in this example from the corpus:

ROSS: they've all got gold chains around their neck (0.3) they got bloody earrings in their ears

Here, the caller is heard to be eliciting a connotative code that orientates to accessories that have become associated with American gang culture. Thus, the textual meaning, furnished from the description of 'gold chains', would connote far more than the simple descriptive denotation of jewellery. Gold jewellery here has a culturally bound (but not static) set of meanings attached to it, and connotes a threat inherent in this group, a danger bound up with representations of 'gangsters' from America. In sum, we can begin to see how words and descriptions come with meanings and inferences beyond their basic referents, and importantly, how descriptions bring to into play the notion of contrast in developing categorisation 'differences' between social groups, or 'othering'. What I mean by 'othering' here, is the discursive practice that represents this group as a natural, and essentially different (from the in-group) collective, who, rationalised by this difference, pose a threat to the in-group's culture and accepted 'ways of life' (Grove & Zwi, 2006). The practice of othering, vis-à-vis the production of witnessed descriptions and narratives, are a focus for this Chapter.

Gail Jefferson (1984) has highlighted how 'normalising devices' work to present speakers as ordinary, disinterested communicators of out-of-the-ordinary, violent events. Building upon Harvey Sacks' (1984) work, Jefferson details how speakers regularly report what they were initially thinking (first-thought formulations) before they go on to give their account. The following example shows how this works:

I was walking up towards the front of the airplane and I saw by the cabin, the stewardess standing facing the cabin, and a fellow standing with a gun in her back. And my first thought was he's showing her the gun, and then I realised that couldn't be, and then it turned out he was hijacking the plane (Sacks, 1984, p. 419)

The speaker here outlines what he or she was thinking just before the realisation hit that something very out-of-the-ordinary was occurring: a hijacking. As Jefferson argues, this *shows* the ordinariness of the speaker as someone not used to such things. That is to say, the speaker *accomplishes* ordinariness through the deployment of this device. Robin Wooffitt (1992) has documented how a similar device warrants a forthcoming account, de-coupling it from potential assessments that the account is a part of a pre-existing pet interest, or even part of some ongoing and pervasive prejudice. Wooffitt (1992) explains how speakers who claim to have had some experience of paranormal activity regularly pre-empt the part of the account where they recall this experience with a mundane activity. The two-part format of this device is summarised thus, 'I was just doing X ...when Y'. That is, speakers formulate as part of this narrative a recollection of what routine activity they were involved in just before they experienced the paranormal event. Wooffitt argues that this achieves a number of upshots for the speaker in normalising their recollection. Simply, this device contrasts the speaker's pre-existing, mundane 'normal' environment with the paranormal activity that is witnessed. For the current analysis, rhetorical devices that normalise an account are understood to accomplish rhetorical and interactional moves that protect the speakers' version from being easily undermined.

It is worth summarising here my twin, but complementary aims and epistemology for this analysis. This Chapter will give attention to the content of

speakers' narrative accounts, how they are constructed with explicit and connotative, culturally available meanings that work towards constructing Sudanese refugees as different and problematic. I also aim to show how narrative and descriptive practices are instantiated in talk with rhetorical devices that warrant their telling, not as an interested and potentially biased activity, but as a veridical and directly observed event. The interactional issues of stake, interest and accountability that underpin the practice of discursive action, constructing 'realities' in talk (Edwards & Potter, 1993), are not considered distinct from the broader context of power and social positioning that they are entwined with. Thus, the discursive psychological approach I employ here seeks to examine how talk accomplishes action in the rhetorical moment, *and* how discursive patterns of talk employ interpretive resources, or common sense knowledges, organising members' talk to justify social relations and structures within society (Wetherell, 1998).

Talkback radio and social influence

Talkback radio and its sometimes vociferous consort, 'shock-jock' radio, is a rich analytic site for my investigation into how speakers design their talk about social events concerning Sudanese refugees. Anyone can, theoretically, participate on talkback radio and present their views²⁹. The talkback format is often unplanned, providing a setting where rhetoric is played out with all its various nuances and fascinations (Liddicoat, Dopke, Love & Brown, 1994), and where common-sense can be explicated and analysed. For the discourse analyst, talkback radio is an access point to the 'lived ideology' of society (Billig et al., 1988), where the

²⁹ However, Mickler (1998) has detailed that the host on talkback radio has the ultimate editorial control over who speaks and what they are allowed to say.

dialogic shape of talk can be examined as people mobilise ideological meanings, attempting to persuade interlocutors and justify their positions.

The calls that I analyse here were broadcasted on *The Bob Francis show* on *FIVEaa*. *FIVEaa* is a commercial radio station³⁰ that services the Adelaide region and features a mix of ‘interactive’ talkback programs, news and sports.

According to a recent Nielsen poll (Radio survey #2), *FIVEaa* enjoys a 13.4 percent (21,000) share of the listener market in Adelaide, and Francis’s talkback show, running from 8PM – 12 midnight, Monday to Friday, is the most listened to night-time radio show (Nielsen, 2011)³¹ According to *FIVEaa*³² promotional material, a typical listener is likely to be aged over 40, is partnered and ‘finds it easy to make ends meet’ (DMG, 2011).

Bob Francis is a well-known talkback radio personality in Adelaide and has been presenting on radio for over 50 years. He has built a reputation for controversy and outspokenness (Pepper, 2009), especially on ‘race’ and ‘law and order’ issues where his punditry is considered, by some, to articulate the silent voice of the ‘real people’ (Adams & Burton, 1997, p.155). In 2004, Francis was investigated by the Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) and was found to have ‘incited or perpetuated hatred against or vilified Aboriginal people on the basis of their race’ (ABA, 2004, p. 1). As the ABA findings explicate, Francis’ derogatory comments about Aboriginals incited his listeners to afford their own views on Aboriginal people, with one labeling them as ‘hapless, useless, lazy people’ (p. 10). On another occasion, on-air in 2005, Francis threatened to ‘smash’ an Adelaide magistrate’s ‘face in’ over a decision to consider bail for a man charged over possessing child pornography - something that the magistrate

³⁰ FIVEaa is owned by DMG Australia, a company who operate a number of commercial radio stations around Australia.

³¹ This figure has been as high as 23.6 percent in 2009 (Pepper, 2009)

³² Based on polling research from Nielson.

was required to do by law (Media Watch, 2005). He was subsequently found guilty of contempt of court, and this episode, like a number of other controversies, has made its way into newsprint and nationally broadcasted television shows like *Media Watch* on the ABC. However, his status in the radio industry as a 'living legend' is unaffected by his engagement with the legal system. In 2005, Francis' achievements in the commercial radio industry were recognised with his induction into the 'Commercial Radio Australia – Hall of Fame'.

What the *Bob Francis Show* arguably provides is a discursive arena for callers to avow their opinions on a range of issues, some of which pertain to sensitive issues such as social relations and 'race'. Francis himself, forging an example, sets the normative boundaries widely for those callers who wish to ring in and voice their problems with minority groups. And, although there are institutional influences on how such talk is structured, the nature of talkback provides 'real-life' conversations for analysis. Thus, talkback radio provides access to a form of naturalistic talk that would be impossible to garner using interviews and focus groups.

Moreover, the representations, themes and discursive resources explicated on talkback radio have socio-political consequences beyond the immediate 'entertainment' value, especially if call topic relates to a pre-existing community anxiety. As Graeme Turner (2009) has noted, 'shock-jock' hosts are ostensibly in the business of flaming populist sentiment as a means of garnering audiences and notoriety. Importantly, 'shock-jock' radio often turns its attention to political issues, where social issues can 'gain a new set of "legs"' through being given a run on the radio: from time to time, this prolongs the life and extends the provenance of the story' (Turner, 2009. p. 421). Indeed, talkback has been

implicated in the magnification of the pogrom-like violence against Lebanese Australians (see Poynting, 2006, 2007). Moreover, talkback radio has provided a medium for public debates on ‘Sudanese refugees’. Twenty-four hours after Kevin Andrews made public that he will significantly reduce the humanitarian refugee quota from Africa, *Media Monitors* reported that the issue received 345 mentions on radio³³ (Topsfield & Rood, 2007). Although there is evidence that the Australian media has negatively framed Sudanese refugees as problematic on racialised grounds (Windle, 2008), little analysis has attended to the form these discourses take on talkback radio.

The Data

The data analysed here is derived from a larger corpus, comprising of 16 calls to *The Bob Francis Show* on *FIVEaa*. The search term ‘Sudanese’ was initially employed to identify calls in a media database that related to any general call topic involving this group between 12th November, 2008 and 21st May, 2010. Twenty-three ‘call summaries’ met these criteria. As my research program primarily pertains to the analysis of how Sudanese refugees are constructed as problematic and essentially ‘different’, further inspection of the calls was undertaken to omit calls that (a) only made passing reference to Sudanese refugees, or (b) were assessed not to provide adequate detail for analysis (6); or (c) did not portray Sudanese-Refugees negatively (2). Fifteen calls met these criteria. For the current study, calls were analysed for the way that speakers worked into their account ‘first hand’, or witnessed rhetorical elements. Seven calls (47%) featured narrative ‘tellings’ of an event where callers described the

³³ And also, 13 press articles, 26 television and 50 internet mentions (Topsfield & Rood, 2007)

event as directly perceived, or experienced.³⁴ Calls were transcribed in accordance with a simplified version of Jeffersonian (2004) transcription conventions.

Analysis and Discussion

The construction of narrative contrasts

I begin my analysis with an extended call sequence³⁵ that provides a detailed and dramatic description of a violent incident witnessed by the caller. The narrative analysed here demonstrates how speakers can work up a richly inferential narrative with ‘witnessing’ devices, which ultimately forwards an account that implies this one event is symptomatic of deeper, social problems, generalisable to the broader collective of ‘Northern African people’. I give attention to how the recounted event is differentiated from alternate versions and their attendant, causal explanations.

³⁴ For example, a witnessed account from a caller, ‘Ray’: ‘I looked out the front window with a Sudanese gang (.) confronting a Vietnamese gang .h they has Samurai swo: rds an: d machetes and knives and whatever .hh somebody got cut because there was a-ahh (0.5) ahh blood on the (0.3)’.

³⁵ Although long, this extract is displayed in full so as to show how the account develops naturally without editing.

Extract 1.

1 BOB: a:h hi Gre↑g
2 (0.7)
3 BRAD: g'day Bob how'ya goin mate.
4 BOB: good mate.
5 BRAD: .hh u:m(.)jus like to say a big fan.
6 (.)
7 BOB: thank you pal?
8 (0.4)
9 BRAD: u:m now of(0.7)just before we get started I- I'm bu- by no
10 way racist in any way shape or form.
11 BOB: yep.
12 BRAD: u::m .hh but this evening I was I was out and about and I-
13 I h witnessed a young Sudane:se? (0.9) lad (.) get-(0.9)
14 completely (.3) smashed by his own kind,
15 (0.9)
16 BOB: really?
17 (0.4)
18 BRAD: u:::m (0.3) ee (0.3) an its I-don't I don't know (0.3)
19 after the young lad was: stabbed and killed in the city
20 .hh is- is- (0.8) the Adel=the South Australian police
21 doing anything this? or [or.
22 BOB: [.hh well I don't know I- I'd read
23 in the paper or saw something on television the other
24 night and the show:ed (0.4) a:h a group of ah: young .h ah
25 black kids who weren't Aboriginal they were obviously ah
26 um African (.) African kids? .hh [and
27 Brad: [yep
28 BOB: ah they they'd set up a:h ga:ngs like the ah .h the Crips
29 and [what's the other ones called
30 BRAD: [yeah yep- yep- yep-
31 BOB: .h and the- they're dressed with red bandannas and blue
32 bandannas .hh and their starting up little gangs an and
33 working out from .h from a:h ah bus stations and all that
34 sort of stuff.
35 BRAD: [yes
36 BOB: [.hh and that's not on.
37 (0.3)
38 BRAD: yea↑h it's definitely not on [its()
39 BOB: [yeah I jus hope that the
40 Police are right on top of that (0.2) right from the
41 beginning?
42 (0.2)
43 BRAD: well I- I'd- I'd like to say like (0.4) I-I'd welcome any
44 culture int'our into [our country.
45 BOB: [yeah
46 BRAD: we we've got a great country? an- and .hh and even our
47 nation anthem says we've got boundless place to share?
48 BOB: yeah?
49 BRAD: .hh I jus- (0.7) ya'know? [()
50 BOB: [what happened with this
51 situation=what happened with this situation tonight.
52 BRAD: we- well there was: fi:ve young lads from what I saw?
53 BOB: [yeah
54 [and the:n one of them got hit and knocked down? (0.5)
55 u::m .h his mates stood over the top of him and pushed
56 these other people away=and then all of a sudden .hh one
57 of those blokes had dragged him out between (0.3) his
58 mates legs a:nd kicked him in the stomach and slapped him
59 a couple of times across the face .hh a:h (0.3) ya'know a
60 lot of people have run (.) run for the ai:d? an- and these

61 people've- have buggered off an- and even friends ended
62 up bugger buggering off?
63 BOB: really.
64 BRAD: th- the ambulance has taken this young man awa↑y (.) u:m
65 (0.3) it-its jus not on its (0.5) it its just not right?
66 (0.4)
67 BOB: .h it unbelievable these days th-the way that people fight
68 ya'know its-a:h .h ya'know put one down on the ground and
69 somebody else comes along with just a boot and jus- kicks
70 him in the head? .hh a:h the old days of fighting when I
71 was at school you-you'd wrestle .h and you- you might a:h
72 .h rip ya'know rip some'bodies shirt but- .h nobody really
73 got involved in .h in really (0.4) terrible .h kicking in
74 the head that was jus- wasn't on that was .h that wasn't
75 cricket? old boy. .h
76 BRAD: well tha- well that's it that's it I'm twenty six Bobby
77 an- and when I when I was at school it wa- it was fisty
78 cu↑ffs and .h when when the bloke got knocked down it was
79 all over [and
80 BOB: [yeah yeah
81 BRAD: and if the teachers broke it up broke it up before then
82 well that's that's how [it how happened?
83 BOB: [yeah (.) well at one which
84 would'of=when it was over it was over< and you got up and
85 you shook hands and said OK thanks a'lot we- we've had our
86 fight now its all over with?
87 BRAD: well that's it that's it,

Notably, to begin the call (after the caller praises the host - not an uncommon feature observed in the corpus), the caller makes a disclaimer (Hewitt & Stokes 1975) that orientates to the possibility that the following account could be heard as motivated by racism, with the utterance 'I'm bu- by no way racist in any way shape or form' (9-10). As the caller begins his narration, he premises the description with a witnessing device that Wooffitt (1992) has described to conventionalise the witnessing of an out of the ordinary event, as something that just happened within a routine context: in this instance, being 'out and about' (12). The effect of this device works is to normalise the context in which this violent event occurred. In this context, being 'out and about' works alongside the prior disclaimer (I'm by no way racist), to inoculate the narrative from potential claims from interlocutors that the caller has a pre-existing, pejorative 'interest' in the aberrant nature of Sudanese refugees and their behaviour.

Continuing his account, the caller moves to detail the event that constitutes the reason for the call, specifically 'I h witnessed a young Sudanese? (0.9) lad (.) get-(0.9) completely (.3) smashed by his own kind' (13-14). What is particularly interesting in this segment is the metaphor 'completely smashed', an extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986). Extreme case formulations have an evocative effect, on some element or another that functions rhetorically, and in this instance, the use of 'completely' accentuates the severe nature of this violence. Being 'completely smashed' glosses the initial description of the event as a dramatic and a connotatively brutal altercation, that may have a number of implications for the narrative and how it functions in the call to advance a particular rhetorical aim. Firstly, the extrematised summary, 'completely smashed', of the event contends with the potential pressure the caller may feel to maintain the host's, and larger listening audience's attention to his story (Hutchby, 2001), warranting the accounts telling on-air. Anecdotes of a less dramatic order may be heard as potentially unworthy of telling, especially in the institutional setting where a larger listening audience is understood to be 'present'.

Further, this representation is augmented by what is inferred by the utterance, 'by his own kind'. This wording could be read in various ways, but we can confidently hear this as being consonant with what sequentially follows in both the caller and host's talk in relation to *intragroup conflict*. That is, conflict occurring between subgroups within a collective; an explanation that is elaborated on by the host, when he contends that the Sudanese are importing their 'warring factions from their tribes' (94). An important upshot of extrematising the event in this way is the rendering of 'the Sudanese' as different. This is no schoolyard fight, and these are not typical adolescents.

The emphasis on the aberrant nature of the violence and, it being an intragroup phenomenon implies that the event may be generalisable to other incidents concerning Sudanese refugees, something that is subsequently elaborated on. The caller links his narrative with a previous violent incident involving a Sudanese youth who ‘was stabbed and killed in the city’ (19). The host orientates to this generalisation as he delineates another link to news reportage that discusses the development of gangs of ‘Sudanese kids’ (but not ‘Aboriginal kids!’) who take on names resembling those of American ‘colour gangs’. Sequentially, what is observable within a few turns in this sequence is the collaborative construction of a shared causality for two distinct events (the stabbing and the witnessed fight), involving two separate groups of individuals. In other words, ‘the Sudanese’ are rationalised by the interactants, via their nationality/ethnicity, as the causal basis for both these events.

At line 59-60, the host requests the caller to provide more descriptive depth to what happened ‘with this situation tonight’. Notably, the caller initiates this segment of the narrative with a quantification device (Potter, 1996), detailing that ‘there was: fi:ve young lads from what I saw’ (52). Using numbers to provide detail of how many individuals were involved does further work to authenticate the account, as it implies close observance, building veracity into the description (Potter, 1996).

Interestingly, the quantification is augmented by the utterance ‘from what I saw’ (52), which can be read to act as a disclaimer, as it hedges the caller’s account as potentially imprecise. However, as far as *he saw*, there were five. This disclaimer functions to underpin the account as always *potentially* flawed. It is generally accepted that individuals can only rely on what one ‘sees’ when reporting on reality, and there is always a chance that our perceptions could let

us down. Thus, tacitly, any potential error in telling our version of events is protected from assertions that they are due to biases of motivation, or conscious misappropriations, or distortions of evidence. Putatively, humans - in good faith - sometimes do get their perceptions and memories muddled (we are only human!). However, numbers are an important element in setting the narrative scene and in this account the number of participants has a constructive and rhetorical function, connoting that this was something more than a fight between friends; it was something approaching a melee.

Another feature of this extract is how a subtle moral undertone is further construed through the narrative's categorical construction. At line 54, the caller tells how the victim is initially protected by his 'mates', but goes on to tell that he is ultimately left isolated and vulnerable to his assailant, who has in turn 'kicked him in the stomach and slapped him a couple of times across the face' (58-59). Importantly in this segment, the victim's 'mates', (and it is very unclear here when his friends have deserted the victim) have fled: 'ya'know a lot of people have run (.) run for the ai:d? an- and these people've- have buggered off an- and even friends ended up bugger buggering off' (59-62). In concert with the 'completely smashed by his own kind' metaphor, this utterance can be read to constitute a *moral assessment*. It is arguable that when the caller speaks of 'even friends have ended up bugger buggered off' (61-62), he is not simply describing 'what happened', but is highlighting a morally relevant (to the speaker, at least) element of the event, thus insinuating some sort of moral misconduct on the part of the assailant *and* the victim's friends. The abandonment of one's 'mate' who is being beaten up - especially when the mate's friends seem to outnumber the assailant - implies cowardice in the victim's friends. Without having to explicitly articulate it, this description neatly subsumes a contrast to what would

have been morally accountable action - that is, not 'buggering off' in the face of a threat to a friend.

Clearly, if abnormality and difference is to be implied here, as Smith (1978) has noted, some type of normality needs to be made available for this contrast to function intelligibly. From line 69, an exchange where the violence witnessed by Brad is contrasted, by the host, to a form of 'acceptable' violence found in the past. Both host and caller provide examples of acceptable violence, and the host jocularly lamenting: 'the old days of fighting when I was at school you-you'd wrestle .h and you- you might a:h .h rip ya'know rip some'bodies shirt but- .h nobody really got involved in .h in really (0.4) terrible .h kicking in the head that was jus- wasn't on that was .h that wasn't cricket? old boy' (70-75). Similarly, the caller notes that 'it was fisty cu[↑]ffs and .h when when the bloke got knocked down it was all over ' (77-79). The contrast narrative observed here is interesting in that it provides a normative baseline from which the caller's narrative can be evaluated. Schoolyard fights of yesteryear take on a harmless, 'boys will be boys' gloss, and intrinsically different from brutal acts like 'kicking in the head', witnessed by the caller. An unspoken morality limits these fights of yesteryear to 'fisty cuffs', 'wrestling' and shirt tearing. Schoolyard violence is glossed as ambivalent violence, and even has an observable, honourable finality to it, as the fighters 'shook hands' (85) after the fight was agreed to have been resolved. In contrast, the caller's Sudanese violence is constructed as anarchic, unprotected by the moral structure of yesteryear's schoolyard. Indeed, it is now connoted as something far more threatening, unstable, and in-line with a far more troubling causal determinate.

In the following extract, taken from near the end of the call, the problems that have been argued to be behind the fight, and thus constructed as

emblematic of ‘Sudanese people’, are further elaborated, and solutions are posited to curtail these behaviours.

Extract 2.

106 BOB: I hope they’ve got I hope they’ve got these a:h these
107 people by the balls and grab them before they get ah (0.3)
108 ah too- too too- troublesome.
109 (0.2)
110 BRAD: well that’s it=well how strict can they get can they
111 ya’know .hh (0.7) every two- (0.9) not- not pinpointing
112 but the Sudanese people seem to be walking out late at
113 night? walking around all the time lurking (.) loitering
114 in areas ya’know what I mean .hh but can police (0.3) walk
115 (0.2) walk up to them and say “I need to see your ID (.)
116 you’re loitering you need to go home” ()

The call to this point has been built upon the initial narrative introduced by the caller. The account has been accentuated by the deployment of a contrast narrative device, and the host has provided a subsequent attributional explanation of the problem. In Extract 2, the account moves onto advocate a solution to the form of extreme violence described, and the people that commit it. Both interactants are calling for social action, utilising the police force to concentrate attention on ‘Sudanese people’. The host formulates this through a sexualised and aggressive euphemism of control, ‘I hope they’ve got I hope they’ve got these a:h these people by the balls and grab them before they get ah (0.3) ah too- too too- troublesome’ (106-108). The caller’s turn continues to supplement a problematic construction of ‘Sudanese people’, as possessing a predilection for ‘walking around all the time lurking (.) loitering in areas’ (112-114).

The category term ‘lurking’ does some important work here to provide warrant for the subsequent call for action against this group. ‘Lurking’, as

opposed to the previous verb ‘walking’, invokes representations of threat that in sequential terms, works to warrant the call for punitive action. He continues to inquire ‘can police (0.3) walk (0.2) walk up to them’ (114-115) requesting identification. Although differently phrased, both host and caller are clearly advocating for policing practices that restrict basic freedoms by promulgating the use of racial profiling strategies³⁶ to identify and target people of Sudanese appearance. This is the pivotal ideological point in the call, where we observe how a theory of inherent abnormality, transmitted through a narrative based on witnessed ‘experience’, becomes the foundation for a racially-based, socio-political call for action.

As the call comes to its conclusion, the caller sums up his overriding concern: that ‘no one gets hurt again’.

Extract 3.

130 BRAD: u:m .h I jus- I jus- (.) I jus- want’a see something
131 something happen just s- jus so- no one gets hurt again?
132 BOB: yeah yeah

After advocating for ‘the Sudanese’, to be racially profiled by the police, as they are known to ‘loiter’ and ‘lurk’ at night, the caller further works to legitimate this contention in the name of ‘public safety’. It is his concern for public safety and a concern for people like ‘the Sudanese lad’ that has led him to suggest that police profiling is necessary. The deployment of a public safety gloss in arguing for racial profiling, acts as both a justification, and as disclaimer against potential claims of racism. Indeed, threats to public safety arguments can be fashioned to justify policies that restrict freedom, in the name of the ‘good of the community’.

³⁶ A widely accepted definition of ‘racial profiling’ is the use of ethnicity as an important factor in determining suspicion in some non-suspect specific investigation (Amnesty International, 2010)

The utilitarian doctrine of ‘the greatest happiness of the greatest number (of people)’ (Bentham, 1996), simply respecified³⁷ in this rhetorical context, is a highly flexible rationalisation for legitimating limitations upon minorities appraised as a threat to the majority. My point here is that arguments that advocate racial profiling and other restrictions of liberty, clearly necessitate a premise (‘lurking’) to present as justifiable. The ‘pinpointing’ (Extract 2. Line 111) of particular groups as threats, necessitating special police attention, is notable here in this call in that what started out as a description of a fight between a few young people, has concluded with a proposal of punitive measures for *all* people of Sudanese appearance. I maintain that much of the work in this call that allows the transformation of a single event into a global claim about ‘Sudanese people’ is in part at least, accomplished by the description of the ‘fight’ and the inferences that are embedded in its recounting.

Constructing the good immigrant

I shall now turn to a call that constructs a narrative that infers that some ‘immigrants’ are, in contrast to Sudanese-Australians, better integrated. The caller moves between first-hand witnessing, to the construction of a socio-historical account that functions by deploying a historical narrative as a contrastive to current refugee experiences.

³⁷ As Rosen (1996) argues, Bentham’s utilitarian principle of ‘the greatest happiness of the greatest number’ misrepresents how he viewed ‘equity’. Bentham argued that every member of society should share in an ‘*equal* quantity of happiness’ (My emphasis. Quoted in Rosen, pg. xxxvii, 1996)

Extract 4.

1 BOB: hi Peter?
2 (0.3)
3 PETER: .h ah hello Bob how ya'going.
4 BOB: good mate.
5 (0.4)
6 PETER: ah'up now (0.3) topic number three you've had three
7 callers and a diff different topic all [together now?
8 BOB: [that fine?
9 (0.2)
10 PETER: I am- I was I was looking at I wa- wa- I walk around the
11 streets here where I live and ah .h and eh the eh I- the
12 inta- I've noticed the integration of e::r the immigrants
13 or the people that come into Australia whether it be
14 refugees or whether they be whatsa'name .hh I don't I- I
15 find they don't seem'to I- I don't hear a lot of them on
16 your prograƒm .h and the- the- and when a:h but where'as
17 I'm I'm obv'sly ((cough)) from an immigrant er family=we
18 came out here in nineteen fifty-four and my father an
19 mother they didn't know any
20 English [they had to learn the language.
21 BOB: [from where? (0.2) from where?
22 (0.5)
23 PETER: from Germany?
24 BOB: yep
25 (0.4)
26 PETER: ya'know they had to lea:rn the language [ya'know?
27 BOB: [yeah,
28 PETER: ya'know .h and they didn't get the- I'dunno tha they seem
29 t:a some of the refugees and all'that get it very ea:sy
30 when they do come out here=my parents .h they went from a
31 place called Bonegilla over in Melbourne way? .h they got
32 to Adelaide=Pennington hospital then .h two weeks later
33 they got shipped up to O'Leaƒry of all places (()) .hh
34 O'Leary
35 BOB: [wo:w? that's the back of beyond?
36 PETER: I know
37 BOB: hah [hah hah
38 PETER: [and mum- and mum and me were up there and dad worked
39 on the railway line ya'know?
40 BOB: yeah,
41 PETER: we wer- admitantly we had a railway house=but although Dad
42 worked in the railways? ya'know? .h and then further on
43 her went down to anoth- we went to () a little place
44 called Belay North? [I don't know if you've heard of that?
45 BOB: [did they did they come out here and
46 then: they (.) had a contract for two years at least they
47 had to had a [job
48 PETER: [yeah, yeah.
49 BOB: but they they had to go to where they were told.
50 (0.4)
51 PETER: yeah.
52 BOB: yeah,
53 ten years (.) they had a ten doll=they were ten
54 dollar immigrants you [might say
55 BOB: [yeah yeah
56 PETER: ten-pound immigrants they-they had to stay for two years
57 and .hh and it obviously mum mum mum had a very hard time
58 with it? especially up in O'Leaƒry
59 [she was there for (three or four years)
60 BOB: [a::w goodness not being able to speak English would have
61 been terrible

62 PETER: I kno:w ya'know the (.) she even got a job in the hotel
63 ya'know (cough)
64 BOB: [did she?
65 PETER: [when dad was on on the line for a week ya'know .hh but I-
66 I- and bu- they but they sort'of integrated into the
67 community? Ya'know=she learnt her English ya'know and she
68 got around and then we went to a place called Peterborough
69 ya'know .hh a:nd that was a bigger community a railway
70 [town ya'know
71 BOB: [ye:ah,
72 PETER: but I've noticed er ()or- even eve- even the ones coming
73 out from the Middle East an'that they still have their own
74 community? (.) it's good to have that? .h I mean we have
75 German clubs? and ya'have your Italian clubs? but people
76 don't sort'of (0.6).h I mean have them places all the time

At the commencement of this call the caller pre-initiates his topic by uttering, 'I was looking at I wa- wa- I walk around the streets here where I live' (10-11), which I have identified in the previous call (See also Wooffitt, 1992) as a witnessing formulation designed to precede the subsequent production of a complaint about 'integration'. This device is observed to bolster the credibility of a complaint, providing a warrant for the caller's claim to have a direct experience of such problems. However, the complaint is not fully realised in this sequence, and it is characterised by a sequence of haltering, semi-formulated sentences that could be heard as 'self repair' (Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks, 1977). Self-repair is suggestive that the speaker is experiencing some trouble formulating his account as he expects some 'interactional trouble' to arise from what he is saying (Levinson, 1983; Schegloff et al., 1977). In this sequence, the 'interactional trouble' (lines: 11-12, 14-17) is signified by these semi-articulated utterances, and although the host does not give any indication that he is primed to interject, the caller does not pursue this line of complaint. Interestingly, at line 16 he changes tack, 'I'm I'm obv'sly ((cough)) from an immigrant er family—we came out here in nineteen fifty-four and my father an mother they didn't know any English they had to learn the language ' (16-19).

The following segment from Extract 4 is repeated here as it gives focus to a contrast structure that comes after the semi-formulated (self-repair) complaint that immigrants are not integrating.

- (i) Peter: I'm (cough) from an immigrant family and we came out here in ninety fifty four and my father and mother they didn't know any English they had to learn the language
Bob: from where from where
Peter: from Germany
Bob: yep
- (ii) Peter: you know they had to learn the language you know
Bob: yeah
- (iii) Peter: ya'know .h and they didn't get the- I'dunno tha they seem t:a some of the refugees and all'that get it very ea:sy when they do come out here...

Here, the speaker begins to construct a historical narrative of how his parents came to Australia without knowing English, and how they successfully - through necessity it seems - learnt the language. What is interesting here is how subtle inference works to construct the speakers' parents' experiences as a contrastive norm against which 'refugees' can (and should) be evaluated. By association, the speaker in part (i) aligns himself with his parents, 'I'm from an immigrant family' legitimating his status as knower of what it was like for his parents - as a vicarious witness of their struggle (it is unclear if he has any direct experience of his parents struggle with learning English). After the host's interruption, the speaker continues in part (ii) by reinforcing his 'precedent' behaviour (Smith, 1978). That is, his parents learning the English language, and the inferences of adaptation and integration that can be read from the fact that they 'learnt the language'. In contrast, the caller in part (iii) utters, 'didn't get the..', which could be heard as the initiation of a direct contrast formulation (i.e. 'didn't get the sort of support current refugees get') but, instead, he contrasts his parents less directly to current refugees/immigrants who 'get it very ea:sy when they do come out here' (28-29).

Interestingly, the construction of the contrast precedent does not end here. The contrast is fleshed out as a historical narrative, with the caller sketching the family's movements around the country: 'my parents .h they went from a place called Bonegilla over in Melbourne way? .h they got to Adelaide=Pennington hospital then .h two weeks later they got shipped up to O'Lea↑ry of all places' (29-33), and the host hearably orientating to the most salient narrative detail, ' wo::w? that's the back of beyond' (34). What becomes apparent as the call progresses is how the narrative is furnished with semantic elements that connote hardship for the caller's parents. Firstly, the caller's parents are constructed to be subject to others' (immigration authorities) decisions to determine where they lived: they were 'shipped up to O'Lea↑ry' (32). This notion of possessing limited agency to decide where the family lived is further expanded on as the host takes up the theme 'at least they had to had a job but they but they had to go to where they were told' (46-49). Further, the caller's mother is depicted as having had an especially 'hard time with it' (56-57), having to 'even get a job in the hotel' (61-62).

A rich narrative is developed here to connote how the caller's family lived through a period of immigration hardship; learning a new language, being 'shipped' to outback towns, with 'mum' working in a hotel. The core implication for the overall integration complaint in relation to recent 'immigrants' and 'refugees' is advanced thus: 'but they sort of integrated into the community? ya'know=she learnt her English ya'know and she got around' (65-67). The conjunction 'but' is important here as it confers upon the hardship narrative the inference that *in spite* of all these hardships, and possibly *because of them*, this family integrated. The speaker invokes the trope of 'the good immigrant' of the past, the grateful, humble immigrant who overcame adversity in a harsh, foreign

environment to eventually succeed. Indeed, the good immigrant is constructed as having worked hard and sacrificed personal freedoms to become a member of the nation.

Curiously, the caller's 'German' identity is not heard to play any role. The host requests this information, and it is given by the caller (in a form that could be heard as reticent), but is not referred to again in the call. What could this omission mean in relation to the immigration experience that is being developed? The integration narrative that the caller presents is rhetorically hinged on a contrast that positions his parents as people who have successfully shed their cultural identities like an old shirt. Upon arrival in Australia, the family are constructed to have jettisoned their German identities to become, through their immigrant experiences, 'new Australians'. As previously noted, the assimilation policies of 1950's Australia would have coerced this identity shift; it was an expectation that new immigrants leave behind their old ethnic identities (Foster & Stockley, 1988). In any case, what is most important here is what ideological function this assimilation rhetoric does in this account.

What this family history formulation achieves is a comparison, against newly arrived refugees and other immigrant integration experiences can be measured, which, in turn, provides causal explanations upon which evaluations can be grounded. This hardship narrative is contrasted to both the 'easy' time refugees get when they come to Australia, but also to 'even eve- even the ones coming out from the Middle East an'that they still have their own community' (71-73). So, in this instance, we observe that this narrative contrast device is providing an explanation *and* a potential solution to the integration problems the caller has 'noticed'. That is, the constructed lack of hardship upon arrival ('they get it very easy when they do come here') is rationalised in this call as having a

causal effect on (non)integration. Thus, a lack of perceived hardship on arrival - 'getting it easy' - forms a type of meritocratic system that represents 'the Sudanese', as the caller refers to them later in the call, as fundamentally non-integrative, for they have not endured the kind of forced integration experience that is inferred to have been so important in shaping the caller's parents' integration (assimilation?).

Extract 5 below continues the call from where the previous extract concludes. After the familial suffering narrative in this extract we see a characterisation of what integration problems might actually entail for both interactants.

Extract 5.

76 PETER: I walk around the streets and I say hell:o? to a lot of
77 the Sudanese people [ya'know.()
78 BOB: [yeah (.) so do I ()
79 (.)
80 PETER: and they don't answer back?
81 BOB: no,
82
83 BOB: no the- they walk along as if nobody
84 PETER: [yes?
85 BOB: [nobody is going to say anything [and I think they are
86 PETER: [yeah?
87 BOB: quite surprised when somebody does?
88 PETER: [yeah?
89 BOB: [.hh and by the time you've walked pa:st they've gone
90 "hell did somebody really say hello to me"?
91 (0.6)
92 PETER: .h an- an- and I think (cough) they don't sort a'lot
93 of'em don't a lot of people don't sort'of accept our
94 customs ya'know OK they have their own customs as well,
95 (.)
96 BOB: yeah,
97 PETER: and I I respect that=there is one particular (cough)
98 family around the corner here .hh they had a u:m (0.6) one
99 of thei:r (.) one of their people got killed in a car
100 accident=one of the Sudanese got killed (cough) in a car
101 accident .h and a:h (0.7)and then- then for fourteen days
102 it usually goes for twenty one days? .hh this particular
103 (cough) house that they lived in .h they were (.) there
104 were there e:very night for fourte:en days and that was
105 going on till midnight or- or because that's their custom
106 to have ah a wake?
107 (0.5)
108 BOB: rea^lly
109 PETER: whu- and a:h (0.2) an- sort'of OK I can understand that
110 (.) I- I accept that [bu- but-()
111 BOB: [bu- yeah but everyone to their own:
112 as long as they're not causing any problems to you let
113 them do what they want?
114 (0.5)
115 PETER: I agree but really when you have (0.6) when you have
116 around- about fifty or sixty cars? there at night?
117 BOB: yeah?
118 (0.4)
119 PETER: for a fortnight?
120 BOB: yeah?
121 PETER: and they're not quiet^t .hh ya'know () and if (.) fair
122 enough () maybe they should look at going somewhere else
123 ya'know (0.3) things like that...

Continuing on from his account of his family's immigrant struggles, the caller changes tack by relating a first-hand example of his experiences of non-integration, 'I walk around the streets and I say hell:o? to a lot of the Sudanese

people' (76-77), 'and they don't answer back' (80). This short utterance does important rhetorical work here to infer that his 'saying hello' behaviour is not a one-off attempt to be agreeable (and, by implication, a behaviour not typical of a prejudiced personality) but is, alternatively, a routine behaviour. If the words 'walked' (instead of walk) and 'said' (instead of say) had been used here instead, the effect of this narrative to impart a more generalisable assessment of integration problems would be diminished. This formulation glosses the speaker's experiences as more substantive, as they are based on multiple observances - of being snubbed by 'the Sudanese people'. Moreover, saying hello to 'a lot of the Sudanese people' also works to broaden the claim. It is not just one or two unfriendly (or 'non-integrated') 'Sudanese' that don't return the caller's salutations, but a plural 'they' that do not return the courtesy.

The second telling of a first-hand experience can be understood to be working up to a generalised, and more explicit claim about 'the Sudanese' not integrating, and is introduced dilemmatically by the caller: 'a'lot of'em don't a lot of people don't sort'of accept our customs ya'know OK they have their own customs as well' (92-94). The caller is hearably orientating to a problem of reconciling multiculturalism's edict of respecting diversified cultural practices, against what he is construing as aberrant behaviour, signalling non-integration. The narrative that follows centres on his Sudanese neighbours 'around the corner' (98) and their 'custom to have a wake' (105-105) after the death of 'one of their own people in a car accident' (100-101). The deployment of this narrative - one that connotatively involves grieving and loss for a family member - is a notionally risky one. This rendition of a neighbourhood complaint does not instantly evoke the populist markings of non-integration, like violence observed in previous extracts. As an exemplar of non-integration, participating in a

grieving process does not explicitly signify this group as explicitly different. Further, the act of grieving is arguably tricky to mould into something that can be employed rhetorically, and could leave the caller open to criticism of insensitivity and intolerance. However, this account contains connotations that do some important work in communicating aberrance.

The wake is glossed as strange, by virtue of its length, ‘they were (.) there were there e:verynight for fourte:en days and that was going on till midnight’ (104-107). The extrematised nature of the ‘wake’ is worked up by quantifying how many days the wake went on for (14), and till what time on those fourteen days people attend (midnight). Thus, the description of the wake has now become somewhat rhetorically defensible from claims of heartlessness, as its design now provides the wake an excessive gloss that intimates that the complaint is not about holding a wake *per se*. Alternatively, the quantification highlights the aberrant qualities of holding a wake for an excessive period of time, and the subsequent affects on the neighbourhood.

Importantly, the caller continues to mitigate potential interaction trouble that his complaint may engender, and does more work to signal his tolerance of other ‘customs’ by adding, ‘and a:h (0.2) an- sort’of OK I can understand that (.) I- I accept that bu- but-’ (110-111). Nevertheless, the host orientates to and challenges the caller’s complaint as intolerant, uttering, ‘yeah but everyone to their own: as long as they’re not causing any problems to you let them do what they want’ (111-113). This challenge leaves the caller in a rhetorical dilemma. How does he continue to affiliate with the host and display that he is not intolerant of other cultures, while still outlining that some cultural manifestations are, in fact, intolerable? The dilemma is reconciled as the caller moves to punctuate the complaint narrative with more problematic detail: ‘I agree but

really when you have (0.6) when you have around- about fifty or sixty cars there at night' (115-116). The addition of 'fifty or sixty cars' works to further extrematise (Pomerantz, 1986) the narrative, shoring up the description as something that contravenes what is accepted as fair and tolerable behaviour, even in a 'multicultural' society. The host can be heard to offer continuers in 'yeah' (117), while the caller repeats again that this is not a one off event, but continues for a 'fortnight' (121), and that 'and they're not quiet .hh ya'know' (121), adding further elaboration to the disruptive nature of the wake. Ultimately, the caller opines, 'maybe they should look at going somewhere else' (125-126).

What is of particular interest in this narrative is how the wake is finessed with enough inferential detail so as to signify integration problems. However, within this interaction, the caller contends with serious ideological dilemmas (Billig et al., 1988) in instantiating a wake as the basis for which exclusion can be predicated. Quantifying rhetoric does much of the legwork to forward this account, an account that represents Sudanese refugees as culturally strange and socially disruptive. Within the institutional context of talkback, where disputation and the undermining of caller's arguments by the host are regularly observed features of interaction (Hutchby, 1992, 1996, 2001), callers can be understood to orient to these imperatives when building their descriptions. Indeed, this description like many others in the corpus can be heard as indexed, or geared to meet the specific challenges that are thrown at it in argumentation. To meet these interactional demands, extrematisation devices can be characterised as working to incrementally 'ratchet' up descriptions that ultimately produce a persuasive version, accepted as beyond what is socially acceptable, and upon which punitive recommendations can be justified.

Conclusion

In this Chapter, I have examined the detailed process by which talkback interactants constructed their talk, employing narrative, witnessing and contrast devices to advance arguments that characterise Sudanese-refugees as different, ultimately augmenting a view that they are not integrating into the Australian polity at a satisfactory rate. The finessing of these narratives as ‘real’ and factual accounts - as events that were veridically observed - can be conceptualised as a situated, discursive accomplishment that has important ideological implications beyond the immediate interaction. Indeed, I have shown how vis-à-vis narrative constructions, Sudanese refugees can be blamed for lacking moral values (loyalty towards a friend in a fight) against normative, ‘acceptable’ fights of yesteryear. I have also shown that through a historical, narrative construction, constituting a ‘good immigrant’/’bad immigrant’ dichotomy, a lack of integration can be subtly explained and legitimated.

Callers to talkback radio are patently attending to an array of rhetorical imperatives and potential challenges when they avow their opinions about a minority who have come to Australia as humanitarian refugees (see Hanson-Easey & Augoustinos, 2011). I argue that the deployment of the narrative device functions as an inoculation from injunctions that a speaker’s argument is prejudiced, ‘racist’, partial, or just simply fallacious. Embedding descriptions into an ‘experienced’ personal narrative bulwarks the description against being undermined. Similarly, moral insinuations are effectively and subtly camouflaged (but still effective in their work of group differentiation) within a narrative. Indeed, motivations, cowardice, personality traits and attributional information can all be dexterously engendered to the characters that perform the represented

acts. In this way, we come to see how narrative practices, especially when they utilise a contrast device, function to differentiate Sudanese-Australians as Other and non-integrative.

It is worth stressing that the narratives presented here are pervasively accompanied by their attendant ideological upshots, reifying a social order that positions Sudanese-Australians in often vulnerable socio-political positions. As Kenneth Gergen (1985) argues:

To alter description and explanation is thus to threaten certain actions and invite others. To construct persons in such a way that they possess inherent sin is to invite certain lines of action and not others (p. 268).

Once Sudanese Australians have been shown to be problematic, then discriminatory practices (i.e. racial profiling) can thus be legitimated to combat the threat of social disorder. The accounts that speakers on talkback provide are specifically geared to stand as exemplars of integration problems more generally. Clearly, the ‘witnessing’ of a single event is not fair grounds for arguing that all Sudanese-Australians should be subsumed under a cloud of suspicion that justifies, for example, police profiling. This study has attempted to show how narratives can be worked up to infer that there is something *essentially* wrong with this group as an aggregate; that is, through these accounts, individuals can be constructed as sharing common dispositions and features, manifesting in problematic behaviour across different contexts. However, it remains an interesting question: why are arguably idiosyncratic ‘witnessed’ events so readily accepted as reasonable grounds for sweeping assessments of a grossly categorised social group? Would such an assumption hold if it were used to paint all ‘White Australians’ as potentially problematic because of one or two events?

Social psychological work on ‘psychological essentialism’ (e.g. Haslam, Rothschild & Ernst, 2000, 2002; Verkuyten, 2003) may provide important insights into why people talk of some out-groups as if they constituted a unified and coherent entity, linked by some underlying, inherent ‘essence’.

It is worth considering the potential implications of ‘non-integration’ talk noted in this Chapter. Talkback radio in Australia and elsewhere has been argued to have played a formative role in precipitating, or at least stoking ‘moral panics’ (see Thompson, 1998) in society, where outgroups have been characterised on racial/ethnic dimensions (i.e. Muslim) as threats, leading to pogrom-like retributions (Poynting, 2006). The mainstream media and talkback radio especially, have been implicated in the ‘amplification’ of events leading up to The Cronulla Riots in Sydney. As Poynting (2007) has argued, talkback radio does not conjure up moral panics in a social vacuum, but congeals pre-existing fears and ideological ‘common-sense’; sometimes conferring a ‘permission to hate’ to those who wish to take or endorse punitive actions against outgroups. Mickler (2005) notes:

The political potency of talkback is not that it actually ‘represents’ the views, voices and aspirations of the masses, as it implies, but that it can influence and mobilise them outside of the electoral process... (p. 33).

It is my contention that the close study of narratives of non-integration on talkback radio is *one* analytic site for understanding how minority groups are constituted as deserving of unjust treatment. These sorts of narratives are sometimes furnished with the power - if constructed persuasively - to have serious political consequences for minorities who do not have privileged access to the ear of legislators. To use a slightly hackneyed axiom, ‘the devil is in the

detail' when members design their talk to intimate differences between ingroup members and minorities; and on an ideological level, at least some of talk's power to legitimate unequal social structures and practices is to be located in the nuanced, strategic and situated discursive moves of speakers. Narrating exemplars of non-integration is, as I have shown, tightly bound up with the charting of inclusive and exclusive social groupings, and the entitlements that flow from these memberships.

Chapter 6: ‘They’re all tribals’: Essentialism, context and the ‘sectarian’ representation of Sudanese refugees (Unpublished).

Abstract

The concept of psychological essentialism proposes that a belief in inherent group ‘essences’ play an important role in minority-group prejudice. Much of the empirical work that aims to elucidate essentialism has emerged from a socio-cognitive paradigm that characterises essentialism as an internal, structured, cognitive orientation. This Chapter, adopting a critical discursive approach, examines naturally-occurring conversations on talkback radio to show how speakers represented Sudanese refugees as possessing an essentialised ‘sectarian’ or ‘tribal’ nature. However, these categories were deployed for contrary rhetorical ends, and were circumscribed as a serious threat by constructing these attributes as time-limited. Speakers also invoked an essentialised form of ‘heritage’ that functioned to rationalise differential ‘integration’ abilities for Sudanese and European immigrant groups in Australia. I argue that the deployment of essentialist rhetoric, as it appears in social practice, is contingent upon interactional and socio-historical contexts and that socio-cognitive approaches could be usefully augmented by a discursive paradigm that is sensitive to the ever changing and nuanced ways that groups are represented as essentially ‘different’.

Introduction

In recent times there has been a focus in psychology on the concept of psychological essentialism (Haslam, Rothschild & Ernst, 2000, 2002; Holtz & Wagner, 2009; Kashima, 2004; Kashima et al., 2010; Rothbart & Taylor, 1992; Yzerbyt, Rocher, Schadrin, 1997). Drawing from the doctrine of metaphysical essentialism, psychological essentialism, although often vaguely defined (Haslam et al., 2000), attempts to address how and why people believe that social categories carry with them unique and immutable undergirding properties, or 'essences', that determine what makes that category distinct from other entities (Haslam, et al., 2000; Leyens et al., 2001; Medin & Ortony, 1989): a belief that deeply rooted 'essences' naturally manifest in observable qualities in individuals and groups. Although they may not be perceivable or even particularly understood in terms of how they generate these observable qualities, they are none-the-less believed to be working behind surface traits such as skin colour (Prentice & Miller, 2007; Yzerbyt et al., 1997). The nature of essences is theorised to be: necessary, natural, often pseudo-biological and stable. Thus, essences, because they come from a deeply-rooted and unchangeable place, make membership to a particular category immutable, and members are considered to be homogenous (Haslam et al., 2000). It is important to note here that researchers interested in psychological essentialism are not charged with the challenge of identifying actual 'essences' that make something what they are: objects can never be discerned independent of how they have been described, something that discursive psychologists are especially attuned to. What psychological essentialism attempts to discern is people's perceptions of objects as containing an essence (Medin & Ortony, 1989).

Another line of research has attempted to link essentialist beliefs with ‘dehumanisation’ (Bastian & Haslam, 2010; Haslam & Bain, 2007; Lyens, Rodriguez-perez, Rodriguez-Torres, Gaunt, Paladino, Vaes & Demoulin, 2001). Lyens and colleagues (2001) have examined ‘infra-humanisation’ by testing whether an ingroup would (by utilising an implicit association test) attribute ‘secondary emotions’ more readily to their own group over out-groups. That is, attribute a greater so-called ‘human essence’ to in-group members in comparison to out-group members. ‘Secondary emotions’ (sorrow, fondness), as opposed to more ‘primary emotions’ (emotions such as anger that are shared with other primates) are conceived to be more uniquely human. Results showed that participants did avoid attributing secondary emotions to out-groups. This experiment is argued to provide evidence for the essentialist thesis that propounds that people will see their own group as more uniquely human than out-groups.

It is unsurprising, then, that there has been a recent flourish of social psychological interest in the concept of psychological essentialism. The very concept of distinct ‘races’, or human groups, is premised on essentialist assumptions, specifying some inherent entity is causally responsible for attributing particular features and behaviours to groups, and importantly, ascribing differences between social groups. Gordon Allport (1954) in *The Nature of Prejudice* postulated that essentialist thinking was central to the ‘autistic’ cognitive processes of ‘prejudiced people’ (p. 175). Allport’s cognitive account of why people use essentialist attributes to construct ‘monopolistic categories’ (undifferentiated social groups) is underpinned by the ‘principle of least effort’ (i.e. the cognitive miser). That is to say, for the ‘prejudiced person’, cognitions are driven by: an imperative for simplifying a complex world, intolerances to

ambiguity, and perceptions of ingroup heterogeneity and outgroup homogeneity. Thus, as a consequence of this cognitive economising, essentialist beliefs about social groups arise. Allport's contentions about essentialism, although individualistic and somewhat divorced from the social and political contexts in which they attempt to explain, point to the imperative to understand why people form essentialist beliefs in the service of grossly categorising out-groups³⁸.

Much of the research carried out in the socio-cognitive domain has focused on structural distinctions within essentialist thinking in relation to social categories. Rothbart and Taylor (1992) have argued that people make 'ontological errors' in their treatment of social categories as 'natural kinds' (i.e. entities such as 'water', or 'giraffe') when they should instead, be classified as social 'artefacts'. Essentialist thinking is marked by a mistaken tendency to view socially constructed categories such as 'race', or 'gay women/men' as if they were as immutable and inductively rich as 'natural kinds'.

Extending Rothbart and Taylor's (1992) postulates of 'natural kinds' and 'artefacts' typologies of essentialist categories into the empirical arena, Haslam and colleagues (2000) sought to examine the structure of essentialist beliefs. They found two distinct dimensions constituting essentialist thinking: 'naturalness' and 'reification/entitativity'. In accord with Rothbart and Taylor (1992), social categories can be treated as 'natural kinds' in the sense that they are immutable, containing an unalterable set of characteristics that are not historically contingent. Natural kind categories are also conceived as 'discrete',

³⁸ Essentialism has not always been treated by psychologists as problematic. As Richards (1997) chronicles, 'Scientific racism', especially the Darwinian inspired work of Francis Galton, is founded on essentialist notions. Galton's Eugenics and intelligence projects established the importance of hereditary in the classification of different 'races' in order to rank their relative suitability for 'civilization' (Richards, 1997 p. 19). More recently, the rancid odours of the eugenics doctrine emerged again as part of the 'race and IQ' debate, centring on the Herrnstein's *The Bell Curve*. In short, Herrnstein's neo-eugenics postulated that based on IQ tests, African Americans lack of social status and advancement was determined by their innate intelligence.

containing 'necessary features' (essential) that distinguish them from other categories. According to Haslam et al., (2002), the second essentialist dimension, 'reification/entitativity', concerns beliefs that categories share a unitary, or, homogenous character, through which imputations of an inherent, underlying 'natural' essence can be made. Importantly, 'reified' social categories are claimed to be 'informative', in that they provide rich inductive information about the dispositions of category members, causally determining the identity of members (Haslam et al., 2002).

In their study, Haslam et al., (2000) asked participants to rate forty social categories (e.g. 'old people', 'Asians') on nine elements of essentialism. Findings suggested that evaluative status of categories was significantly correlated ($r=-.36$) with reification/entitativity, but not with natural kind categories. Thus, as Haslam and colleagues (2000) posit, prejudice may not be as simple as believing in the immutable 'naturalness' of social categories, but may be premised on the 'entitative' nature of such beliefs. Indeed, it is speculated that efforts to combat prejudice should focus more on reducing the reification (instead of the naturalness dimension) of social categories, 'because naturalness itself is not devalued' (p. 125).

For the current study, Haslam et al.'s (2000) research poses a number of pertinent questions for the present examination of talk about Sudanese refugees on talkback radio. How does essentialist rhetoric, constructing a social ontology, work towards pejorative evaluations of social groups? How do these essentialist dimensions manifest in talk in interaction? And finally, on a more speculative level, what forms of rhetorical challenge may be possible to undermine essentialist discourses?

A line of research that resonates with Haslam et al., 's (2000) work, and the current study, is Yzerbyt and colleagues (1997) functional, socio-justificatory account of 'subjective essentialism'. Yzerbyt et al. (1997) detail how 'subjective essentialism' may function as part of a social rationalisation process, insofar as majority groups draw on a number of beliefs to help make sense of and explain their social milieu. Yzerbyt et al. (1997) explain their position thus:

In our subjective essentialistic view of stereotyping, groups' 'inherent' characteristics are some sort of social creations, that is, arbitrary qualities, that are attributed to social entities in order to explain their behaviours in a given cultural and historical context and to perpetuate the social system' (p. 47).

In other words, it is the 'social system' that provides an imperative for essentialist beliefs, assisting people to rationalise out-group behaviour and 'perpetuate the social system' (p. 47). For Yzerbyt et al. (1997), 'essentialistic reasoning' helps people orientate effectively to their social world. Perceived dispositional characteristics are treated as 'inherent' causal attributes, enabling a nuanced and deeply sophisticated way of perceiving one's social surroundings. When people wish to give account of why one group is deserving of negative evaluation, or, differential treatment, they turn to essentialist attributes that 'promote the idea that it (the existing social situation) stems from the nature of things' (Yzerbyt et al., 1997, p. 49).

For the current analysis, Yzerbyt et al. (1997)³⁹ justificatory role for essentialist thinking helps frame essentialism as a resource for making sense out

³⁹ It is surprising then, with subjective essentialism's focus on the 'social situation' that Yzerbyt and his colleagues (Yzerbyt et al., 1997) test their conjectures in structured experiments with university students. The experimental 'conditions' (contexts) within which participants display their essentialistic thinking, accounting for people upon some inner characteristic, have the unfortunate tendency to limit the sorts of responses that would shed light on how groups are accounted for. Invariably, much of the work on essentialism relies on pre-categorized

of a new social group and their attendant behaviours. The process of legitimating existing social patterns, including the stratification of social groups on the basis of ethnicity or 'race', has more than a passing resemblance to the notion of 'ideology' (Billig, 1991; van Dijk, 1998). Essentialist rhetoric may fruitfully be conceived as talk that invokes 'common sense' about various social groups and phenomena (see also Jost & Banaji, 1994, for their perspective on the role of stereotypes in providing system-justification). Importantly however, these ideological resources are not only tied to functional, justificatory activities, but can also be drawn upon for arguing *against* pernicious counter arguments. As Billig et al. (1988) argue in *Ideological Dilemmas*, people use ideological resources in talk in contradictory ways, arranged into complex compositions for a particular interactional context. Put another way, accounts that draw on essentialist assumptions can be thought of as highly dextrous resources for talking, but also constitute part of a wider socio-political system of practices that legitimate inequality and oppression.

Taking a discursive approach to essentialism, treating it as a social action instead of an internal, cognitive predilection, Maykel Verkuyten (2003) examined how ethnic Dutch and ethnic minority participants articulated essentialist beliefs in talking about cultural integration issues in their local community. Participants in focus groups were observed to deploy *both* essentialist and de-essentialist rhetoric, contingent on rhetorical aims. In other words, essentialist formulations, constructing intrinsic links between culture and ethnicity, were not necessarily analogous with prejudiced views; indeed, some ethnic Dutch participants invoked such rhetoric to argue against assimilationist positions. In a multicultural society, cultural essentialism is argued to constitute an important resource for

questionnaire 'items' offered by the experimenter, precluding ambiguity and highlighting the consistency of responses.

minority groups to protect and legitimise their cultural identities. Further, Verkuyten's study highlights the flexible nature of essentialist rhetoric by providing instances where ethnic Dutch participants avowed 'de-essentialist' views on the mutability of culture, in order to advance assimilationist arguments. Clearly, a belief that culture is malleable is fundamental to arguments that assert that minority cultures should 'adapt' to mainstream cultural norms: there is little use proposing that minority cultures should change if that change is not deemed possible in the first place. Ideologically, as Verkuyten points out, de-essentialist assumptions can be deployed to undermine the validity of allocating culture-specific resources, and can go some way to advancing arguments that cultural minorities should be held wholly responsible for their own 'integration' (see also Augoustinos, Tuffin & Every, 2005).

Verkuyten's (2003) study highlights the variable role of essentialist talk in different rhetorical contexts. The current study aims to provide some insights into how essentialist notions are drawn upon in conversation, providing explanations for social phenomena. Furthermore, when people draw on essentialist rhetoric in describing and accounting for social groups, they are not doing so in isolation, but with interlocutors. This rhetorical dynamic necessitates an analytic stance that views essentialism as one potential resource in talk among many, that is orientated to so as to manage situational demands, such as presenting a 'rational', unprejudiced identity. As Billig (1987) and Bakhtin (1981) so clearly explicate, language and thinking are dialogical; that is, utterances are constituted by competing forces that work to both persuade an audience and orientate them from alternative arguments and accounts. Thus, speakers are doing much more than giving voice to 'essentialist' inner thoughts when they speak, they are also continuously adapting utterances in response to previous

utterances in an ongoing sequence of dialogue (Billig, 1997). If essentialist talk can be characterised as an orientation that constructs minorities' behaviour as different or aberrant, then we can notionally assume that such an account is also working towards diminishing alternative representations of these groups.

This study, then, will examine essentialist talk as a rhetorically situated one, where speakers, in interaction, invoke aspects of essentialism in varying formulations, balancing different elements of homogeneity, immutability, internal coherence, historical invariance, toward some rhetorical goal or another.

Analytical frame

This study employs a discursive psychological approach (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Wetherell, 1998; Wiggins & Potter, 2007) that conceives essentialist talk as one potential, rhetorical element in interaction and social action: as a linguistic resource for communicating a particular version of the world. Whereas the social-cognitive approach is dedicated to delineating and appraising the processes by which individuals perceive, cognise and rationalise their world, discursive psychology focuses on how versions of 'reality' are constructed with various discursive resources such as categories, linguistic repertoires and so on.

A discursive approach also considers how descriptions of social entities are designed for a particular rhetorical aim. For instance, when speakers are accounting for a minority group and their behaviour, often embedded within these accounts are negative evaluations, attributions of blame, and subtle exonerations against claims that these versions are motivated by some personal, prejudiced motivation (Potter, 1996). Thus, having particular foci on the action that talk achieves, discursive psychology is particularly interested in the

context(s) that talk is produced in, and importantly, analysing, in situ, how talk is orientated to these situational contexts (Wiggins & Potter, 2007).

When speakers avow their opinion of a particular event or social entity, they also import and reconfigure historically provided ‘common sense’ resources available within society (see Billig, 1987; Wetherell & Potter, 1992). Discursive psychology, informed by critical discursive analysis (see Fairclough, 1985; van Dijk, 1993; 1995), situates discourse in the wider social-political context, and makes the link between every-day talk and the maintenance and reproduction of social inequality and dominance. Analysing talk pertaining to social groups and how they are putatively constructed as ‘different’, therefore, is orientated to charting connections between the historically available cultural resources that speakers invoke (and modulate) in interaction, and how these forms of talk function to legitimate various social structures and policies.

Background to the analytic material

Talk is an activity produced and indexed to the interactive (sequential), institutional (talkback radio), political and historical environment it is observed in, and this context has important implications for the analysis in this Chapter. The talkback calls analysed here were selected on the basis of their orientation to the topic of ‘Sudanese refugees’ in Adelaide. In particular, many of the calls within the corpus pertain explicitly or implicitly to the widely reported fatal stabbing of Daniel Awak, a fourteen-year-old Sudanese refugee, during a ‘brawl’ with another Sudanese adolescent in the central business district of Adelaide.

These events, as some callers to *The Bob Francis Show* intimate, resonate with other well-publicised (negative) events in Australia that generally construct Sudanese refugees as problematic (see Hanson-Easey & Augoustinos, 2010).

New cultural groups entering Australia have often been confronted with similar consternation over their impact on the wider populous (see Cope, Castles & Kalantzis, 1991). Indeed, 'immigration debates' tend to work cyclically in Australia, rising up from their slumber to again fall back to incubate till they become stimulated by some new salient 'event' (i.e. a terrorism event, 'race related' riots, 'illegal asylum seekers') (see Poynting, 2006, 2007). What these recurring debates regularly feature are notions of threat that coalesce around integration, and the implications of poor integration on social cohesion and national identity. Although, if such discourses are to communicate that a serious threat exists to a neighbourhood or the wider community, then it is necessary to formulate such accounts with inferences about why this group is behaving in such a threatening manner, how long they may pose this threat, and whether this threat can be systematically linked to the collective.

Thus, we can see how a socio-historical 'context' in the form of previous representations and beliefs about a problematised group intertwines with current (context) event to provide commonsense (ideological) resources for speakers to construct their explanatory theories with (see Reicher, 2001). Put another way, accounts that address fears about an outgroup's ability to integrate draw on a number of representational resources, both past and present, to impute not just a negative evaluation, but that these issues are problematic *because* they emerge from some inherent attribute that has manifested across time (not just an example of some idiosyncratic behaviour of a small number of individuals). We can then consider 'context' - both historical and current - as providing a set of discursive resources, of which essentialist arguments are one example.

However, context is not simply a resource for talking, it also circumscribes the use of such resources, making essentialist rhetoric contingent

on the social conditions. Language does not live outside of the world, it is made intelligible by it, and is thus sensitive to the social structure that it represents and explains. In short, language is delicately indexed to sociological events and conventions. These assumptions have important implications for the examination of essentialist language. If we are to delineate the role and structure of essentialism, then we should, as Billig (1997) suggests, give attention to how these patterns of talk function in argumentation. This focus will provide insights into what is accepted (in a particular place and time) as ‘commonsense’, ‘natural’, or ‘real’. In this way, such an investigation may provide interesting insights into how essentialist ideologies work within interaction, but resourced from a wider historical context.

Aims

For this analysis I use a critical discursive psychological approach (van Dijk, 1993; Wetherell, 1998; Wetherell & Potter, 1992) to investigate how psychological essentialism functions in practice; that is, in talk-in-interaction in relation to a particular social context. Through this examination I seek to show how social categories may be discursively furnished with shared, inherent attributes that bind them together as a collective. Importantly, I aim to delineate how an essentialised group attribute is rhetorically constructed to have a causal influence over the identities or behaviours of group members. It is the explanatory usefulness of essentialist theories and beliefs in relation to justificatory rhetoric that arguably makes this domain of research so pertinent to understanding how prejudice and racism function in relation to social events.

Although I do not consider essentialism as a constitutive element of a ‘prejudice-syndrome’ (Allport, 1954) that befalls the narrow minded and bigoted,

I do consider essentialist language to constitute part of a wider system of discursive resources that are available to speakers. The cognitive-experimental research already discussed here provides important insights into how an essentialist orientation may augment constructions of collectives as distinct entities, cleaving them off from other social groups. This discursive study aims to provide further observations into how such beliefs may function in a naturalistic context, where interactants are accounting for actual social phenomena.

In sum, my aim here is both theoretical and pragmatic. Theoretical in terms of further explicating how a discursive approach may construe how essentialism functions in social practice, augmenting previous socio-cognitive approaches to essentialism that have had their focus on the elemental structure of essentialism. And pragmatic, in that I am attempting to illustrate how essentialist rhetoric may constitute and sustain ideological representations of Sudanese refugees. Towards this end, I expect that such an analysis may prove relevant to anti-racist strategies and discourses.

Analysis and discussion

The essential tribe

Yzerbyt et al. (1997) have argued that people subscribe to essentialist beliefs especially when social groups need to be characterised in light of salient social events. In the following extract, the caller and host can be heard to be debating the causal acumen for what is glossed as ‘friction’ between Sudanese refugees in Adelaide. Notably, interactants enter disputation over the role of ‘tribal’ influences, and how these may background and frame current events.

Extract 1.

(12 Seconds removed)

10 KEN: I wi- will start with a:h (0.5) the ah (0.4) the Sudanese
11 now ah (0.4) Sudan is in the northern part of Africa
12 a:nd the [congo
13 BOB: [it's the bigges- it's the biggest coun- biggest
14 country in a:h .hh in in Africa=Su[dan?
15 KEN: [ye:s an- and you were
16 talking about the Tutsi's th- they've got nothin to do
17 with the Tutsis?
18 (0.3)
19 BOB: bu- but there's still tribal situations bu- bouncing in
20 from Rwanda .hh which is right next door?
21 (0.7)
22 KEN: we:ll rw- r: rw- Rwanda and Congo are right down the
23 Southern: more Southern part of Africa.
24 BOB: n::o (0.7) Rwanda and th- the ah .h Democratic Republic of
25 th- the Congo are a:ll along side each other.
26 KEN: yeah those two are but a- ah- as I say Sudan is up further
27 but anyhow I will go on with my subj- ther- the fiv-
28 there's nineteen hundred-ah (0.5) ah Sudanese in South
29 Australia,
30 BOB: yeah,
31 (0.6)
32 KEN: and ah- there's-ah five s^fects: (1.1) different sects
33 (0.5) in er- er- of ah people in that nineteen hundred?
34 BOB: mm-mm?
35 (0.3)
36 KEN: which therefore? (0.3) that how the friction is caused.
37 BOB: and they're all tribal's?
38 KEN: [yeah.
39 BOB: [tribal frictions yeah,
40 KEN: ah- (0.2) this is- this is what's causing the trouble with
41 the (0.4) young people which a::h they(0.4)they virtually
42 a:h resist (0.4) the other peop^fle because they get (0.5)
43 preferences over ya'know different things and all that
44 sort of thing this is how it's all started up?
45 BOB: yeah.
46 (0.6)
47 KEN: and virtually they come out here with nothing (0.4) and
48 then the fed- federal government um gives them every'thin
49 and they giv'em them a house
50 and all [that sort of thing.
51 BOB: [well what do you expect the government to do.
52 Giv'em absolutely nothing and let'em live they way lived
53 in Africa?
54 KEN: no no but'tha that's what I say th- th- the government
55 gives'em th- tha- like a- a start in life,
56 BOB: yeah they give'em a start in life an- m- and most of those
57 people come here .h to get a good start in life? but you
58 get some assholes? who make it bad for everybody else.
59 KEN: that's right...

In this extract, the caller initiates his topic by recounting geographical details about Sudan, and interestingly, takes to task statements that the host has previously made about the causal influences of the "Tutsis" on Sudanese refugees

in Adelaide, challenging the host's claim that 'tribal situation are bouncing in from Rwanda which is right next door' (17). Getting the geographical 'facts' straight, including the correction of what the caller views as factual errors made by the host, can be understood as doing important work in warranting the following explanatory account about 'sects' within the Sudanese community. Drawing causal lines between socio-cultural background, and current social phenomena - making 'attributions' so to speak - bulwarks this account as knowledgeable and informed (see Edwards & Potter, 1993; Hanson-Easey & Augoustinos, 2010).

From this juncture, the caller's account is orientated to further working-up an explanation for the 'friction' that exists between 'the Sudanese'. As Haslam and colleagues (2000) have contended, if we are to understand how essentialist, social theories (social ontologies) function to legitimate inequality, then we should ask not just how a group is believed to be a 'natural kind' social category, but also how they are 'reified'; that is, as a homogenous, coherent group with historically invariant characteristics. In this extract, a sense of inherent invariability of (actual and potential) behaviour is brought to bear by constructing the sectarian nature of Sudanese society as temporally stable. As interactants represent Sudanese society as inherently 'tribal' and sectarian, they rationalise that the current, violent local 'frictions' in Australia are manifestations of this intrinsic tribal quality. And this representation is premised on an important assumption: in different contexts, in different phases in history, problematised behaviour of the Sudanese can be conceived of as remaining consistent. Their sectarian nature causally determines this.

This depiction, however, of a homogenous 'sectarian' collective, is paradoxical. The quantification of 'five sects' within the 'nineteen hundred'

further works to delineate sharply bounded groups ('sects') within the larger collective. Hence, not only are 'the Sudanese', as a unitary social category constructed as essentially 'tribal', individuals belonging to these 'sects', constituting the aggregate ('the Sudanese'), are rendered, paradoxically, distinct from each other as well; that is, they are perceived as heterogeneous. Indeed, this is a social collective that is tethered to its tribal and sectarian past. It cannot move beyond its essentialised 'tribal' nature to behave in ways that are in line with normative standards generally and, importantly, cannot seem to loosen their sectarian couplings, prohibiting them from co-existing peacefully with their own national group.

Importantly, the sectarian nature of 'the Sudanese' is explained to manifest in a somewhat surprising way. Social services, such as public housing, constitute the stimulus for pre-existing 'frictions' to emerge. A cleavage between the 'sects' has thus been opened: 'they virtually all resist (0.4) the other people because they get (0.5) preferences over you-know different things' (47-49). Here, it is the welfare state and its provision of housing that stirs up the sectarian nature of 'the Sudanese', and inevitably, they are represented as turning on each other.

What is particularly interesting in this extract is how essentialist notions of sectarianism work to advance inferences that public housing and other supports to Sudanese refugees are not justifiable. For the caller, it is the problematic interplay between the inherent sectarian nature, that have contiguously travelled with the Sudanese to Australia, and how this sectarianism becomes manifest when 'they get preferences' over 'different things', that drives the conflict.

Also notable in this extract is how the host takes up the sectarian representation of ‘the Sudanese’, and how he ultimately rejects this as a legitimate reason for limiting social supports. The host clearly orientates to the caller’s proposition that there are indeed ‘sects’ within the Sudanese community, uttering, ‘and there’re all tribals’ (37) and ‘tribal frictions’ (39). However, although he subscribes to the theory that ‘tribal situations are bouncing in from Rwanda’ (), he does not affiliate with the caller’s view that Sudanese refugees are unjustifiably being ‘given everything’.

The caller’s argument till this point has received tacit support from the host, but the insinuation that public housing for Sudanese refugees should be limited, is not accepted. The implication of this non-agreement, however, poses a rhetorical bind for the host. How does he remain consistent with his earlier agreement that the Sudanese are indeed ‘tribal’, but limit this influence to argue against a universal removal of public housing? To navigate a route through this impasse, the host invokes what Billig (1985) calls, *particularisation*. Instead of categorising, like the caller is attempting to do, the Sudanese *on masse*, as a homogenous collective, the host distinguishes a ‘particular stimulus’ (Billig, 1985, p. 82) from the general category. That is to say, he chips a small group off from the main collective and blames them for such tribally driven violence: particularised in this way, it is the ‘arseholes’ that ‘give everyone else a bad name’ (64). However, the ‘tribal’ explanation is not fully discarded by the host, for this characterisation seems like good commonsense in light of the theorised influences of the ‘Tutsis and Hutus’ that begin the call. What the host, via particularisation, moderates here is the process by which tribal influences manifest, not grossly across the whole population, but in the aberrant minority.

In the terminology of psychological essentialism, the host in this segment of talk moderates the assumed homogeneity, or uniformity (entitativity) of the category; not in reference to their shared, inherent ‘tribalism’ (something that the host repeatedly makes pronouncements on), but on how this characteristic becomes conspicuous. A group may be labelled as collectively ‘tribal’ or sectarian ‘in essence’, but this feature may not reliably predict behaviour across the group as whole.

A direct causal correspondence between an essentialist representation and problematic behaviours is shown here to be contestable and non-linear. For the host, essentialist notions, such as invariable tribalism, appear to act as an explanatory resource that can be deployed on the one hand, but can be circumscribed on the other, especially when it is deployed by the caller to legitimate a complaint about the provision of social services to Sudanese refugees. The parallels between essentialist notions and justifications for punitive practices are not, perhaps, helpfully conceived as inert relationships, but alternatively, flexibly synchronised to the argument at hand. Moreover, on a more speculative note, these links may also be influenced in talk by the broader social context that may make punitive arguments against humanitarian refugees difficult to sustain without the threat of being labelled callous or ‘racist’ (see Hanson-Easey & Augoustinos, 2011).

Although a high proportion of calls that deployed essentialist assumptions of tribalism constituted a negative evaluation of Sudanese refugees, in the next extract, a ‘tribal’ formulation is used to attenuate the perceived threat that this tribal spectre poses to the ingroup.

Extract 2.

(4 seconds removed)

1 KEITH: several previous callers have mentioned Sudanese and
2 usually .hh when people are: babbling a:h about migration
3 they usually .hh clutch at straws and one of those is
4 Sudanese? .hh they and th- th- the caller several hours
5 ago mentioned that .hh they: cause us trouble here .h no
6 they don't give us trouble they fight amongst themselves
7 .hh their fights are usually tribal ones an- don't concern
8 us?
9 BOB: ri|ght
10 KEITH: .hh s:o hh they might be brin- bringing there troubles
11 here in a sense but they don't trouble us too much
12 because usually .hh they- they do their own kind of
13 infighting.

Here, the caller employs the essentialist 'tribal' resource to provide a retort to 'previous callers' (1) who 'clutch at straws' (3) when talking about (im)migration issues, including 'the Sudanese'. The caller in this instance is constructing an attenuating argument aimed to limiting the degree of threat that the Sudanese are presumed to pose to 'us' (non-Sudanese). Similar to the tribal formulation in Extract 1, these influences are deployed in an essentialist form, assuming that their 'fights' (7) are best understood as 'tribal ones' (7), and that these conflicts have their genesis in Sudan, having been transmitted to Australia contiguously with the immigrants.

A 'tribal' essence is again, implicitly assumed to characterise *all* Sudanese immigrants as part of a homogenous collective, no matter where they originate from in Sudan, what their specific history is, and what religion they subscribe to. However, in this sequence of talk the ascription of tribal properties to Sudanese immigrants is used to draw boundaries around potential violence, marking it as a phenomenon unique to this group. As noted in Extract 1, what could be viewed as a highly prejudiced representation of a collective as inherently 'tribal', does not

follow a direct path to a negative evaluation: quite the opposite, this formulation is employed to delimit the type of threat posed to the in-group. Ostensibly, it is being deployed in the service of defending Sudanese refugees. Interestingly, the essentialist categorisation of this group as a coherent, homogenous (entitative) collective is assumed, and although it could be perceived to be founded on unpalatable assumptions, this account can hardly be labelled ‘racist’.

In attempting to negate the degree of Sudanese threat, *vis-à-vis* representing the potential violence as a localised, intra-group phenomenon, the speaker’s account is highly vulnerable to current representations of how generalised the tribal fights extend. The ‘trouble’ that this caller is referring to are, in fact, violent events that have, for the most part only involved, or reported to have involved, Sudanese refugees. In other words, arguing that these problems are essentially ‘tribal ones’, limited to this collective only, is only sustainable whilst this segregation of ‘trouble’ continues to be represented thus. This argument’s intelligibility largely relies on a set of assumptions that could easily change in line with new events, such as for example, a change of focus by the media on events that signal a wider threat to the non-Sudanese community.

The point here is, once again, that dominant representations within the media, for instance, have a mediating role in shaping what sorts of essentialist formulations can be intelligibly made in conversation. Importantly, the causal link between an essentialist ontology and prejudice is not static, and like any good rhetorical resource, essentialism can be used for both critique and defence.

In Extract 3 below, the host and caller have been discussing a fight that the caller has witnessed, involving a Sudanese adolescent being assaulted by another Sudanese adolescent. In this segment of the call, the host is formulating a causal

theory that explains the sorts of violence as distinct phenomena related to the broad social category of people from ‘Northern African countries’.

Extract 3.

(2.56 removed)

68 BOB: and from what I've hear:d? and I hope it- it's not true
69 but I- I've heard that'ah that ah people coming out from
70 .h ah the northern African countries who've been .h
71 allowed to come out here an- an- and be part of our .h our
72 nation here .hh are bringing their .h ah their their
73 warring factions from the tribes that they belong to .hh
74 in: Rwanda and Sudan and places like that ya'know th- .h
75 the Hutu's and the Tuts'i's and all that sort of stuff, .h
76 BRAD: well that- thats yeah?
77 BOB: an'that an'that's terrifying (beca'hav'ya) that have been
78 done in the past between .h ya'know Croatian and Serbians
79 and ah I'm I'm hopeful th- that's .h all finished but
80 still seems to drag around .hh an'it and it it h↑angs
81 around .h betwe:en a:h sort'of parents and then the- then
82 down to kids and goes through through through generations
83 .hh of the hatred (.) of of different people,
84 BRAD: yep...

Although the host does ‘hope it’s not true’ (6) (a disclaimer of sorts, inoculating his account from being judged unfair or racist), he does clearly delineate how people from Northern African countries, as a homogenous collective, invariably import their ‘warring factions from the tribes they belong to in Rwanda and Sudan’ (73-74).

Here, again, we discern how this violent event is interpreted as a consequence of tribalism and sectarianism. The violently emblematic tribal imagery of the Rwandan genocide, invoked by the deployment of ‘Hutus’ and ‘Tutsis’, engenders this explanation with more than just causality; it also imbues it with an extreme degree of *threat*. What is observable here are the tightly wound links between essentialism and causal attributions in the formation of arguments. As Haslam et al. (2000) note, there are many similarities between attribution theory and the essentialist nature of social categories, in that both theories attempt to provide accounts for how the social world is structured. Importantly,

the constructed nature of social groups can, and does, provide information about where to attribute cause (dispositional/internal or situational), and therefore, where to attribute blame. Attributing cause to internal (inherent) factors can also explain how separate social events can be grouped together as reiterations of the same phenomenon. Indeed, the description of this collective as invariably tribal/factional infers that the violence witnessed by the caller in Adelaide is attributable to the same sectarian orientation that drove the ‘warring factions’ in Africa. In other words, there is an assumption of cause driving both phenomena, in Africa and in Australia.

However, the causal logic at the centre of this rationalisation seriously obfuscates classic attributional (e.g. Kelley, 1967) questions about what category, internal/external, people attribute cause to for behaviour and events. This extract seems to show that a predilection for violence, for this group anyway, has been inscribed on them via situational experiences, subsequently becoming internalised as an inherent, perennial attribute. The notion of a travelling, invariant sectarianism, then, encompasses *both* a situational and an internal (essentialist) dimension when deployed in talk to explain what is at the root cause of the violence.

For the host however, a deeply rooted proclivity towards violence is not limited to people from Africa, but also explains why people from ‘Croatia and Serbia’ still carry around ‘the hatred of different people’ (83). An inherent orientation to violence is causally attributed to conflicts such as the Kosovar War, and this evocative conflict is constructed to leave some indelible, pseudo-genetic mark on refugees who have escaped this conflict. An intergenerational ‘hatred’, akin to the distribution of a genetic inheritance, is passed down from parent to child, ‘and it goes through generations’ (82). Behaviours that are

deemed violent then, are thus explained to be manifestation of this latent trait that ‘still seems to drag around’ (80). For refugees from places of conflict, this essentialist formulation provides ready-made explanations for any behaviour deemed problematic. The implication being that any situational influence, any problem, material or political, that a minority group may be experiencing here and now, are thus subsumed under an assumption that these problems are pervasively ‘factional’, and the factional history leads to violence.

The ideological usefulness and dexterity of such an essentialist theory is clear: problems of limited resettlement support, direct and institutional racism, socio-cultural isolation, and other contextual influences can, when the rhetorical and political context suits, be conveniently glossed over as contributing factors. As I have argued elsewhere (Hanson-Easey & Augoustinos, 2010), discursive formulations that selectively deploy causal resources, building upon essentialist notions of intractable and invariant social and educational deficits, can be useful political justifications for punitive refugee policies. Refugee and immigrant representations that rely on essentialist arguments seem well fitted to their ideological aim: applying blame and skirting around alternative (contextual) and politically troublesome explanations, limiting the causes of phenomena to the minority themselves.

Cultural essentialism

Maykel Verkuyten (2003), in his examination of discursive essentialism amongst ethnic Dutch and Dutch minorities, clearly shows how participants deploy essentialist beliefs about ‘culture’ in various formulations to support a range of opinions and claims. In particular, Ethnic Dutch constructed culture as something that invariably shaped a person, and was intrinsically linked to

ethnicity. Interestingly however, some ethnic Dutch, arguing for assimilation of ethnic others into their own dominant culture, implicitly relied on the mutability of culture to advance their claims. Thus, if assimilation into a new culture was possible, and people can shed their old culture to take up with a new one, then a ‘de-essentialist’ notion of culture is possible and necessary (Verkuyten, 2003).

In the next extract below, the caller (Tom) is expounding his views on people who have come to Australia from societies ‘like the Sudan’, contrasting their potential adaption into Australian society with previously immigrated people with ‘European ancestry’.

Extract 4.

(2.45 removed)

19 TOM: I try to look at it with degree of um of- of coolness? .hh
20 it wasn't too difficult although it was somewhat difficult
21 for people of European um: ancestry .h Italians and um
22 (red) Lithuanians and other people to find a .hh niche for
23 themselves in: in Australia particularly as it was .h all
24 those years ago when we were a little less um easy to get
25 along with? .hh but its exceed- hh it's'gunna be very very
26 difficult .h for gentleman who have been ra- ra- raised in
27 these societies .hh like the Sudan and places of that
28 nature? .h to find it easy to settle in to places like
29 Australia?

Although ‘culture’ is not specifically mentioned in this extract, the caller’s deployment of ‘ancestry’ connotes a category similar to ‘ethnicity’ or ‘culture’ that like ‘sectarianism’ in Extract 1, travels with people contiguously from the homelands, remaining with them indefinitely, guiding their behaviours and perspectives. European ‘ancestry’, that is, ‘Italians and Lithuanians’⁴⁰, are

⁴⁰ During the aftermath of World War Two, the Australian government accepted displaced persons from countries such as Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, The Ukraine, Hungary and Italy. Whilst the infamous ‘White Australia Policy’ was still operating, it was being slowly dismantled in favour of an assimilationist policy. It is widely believed that selecting ‘Europeans’ of ‘Anglo

constructed to have, with some effort, ‘found a niche for themselves’ (22-23) in Australia. That is, they have ‘integrated’, and have done so at a time in history when ‘we were a little less easy to get along with’ (24-25). In contrast, and without furnishing this claim with any sort of justification, the caller posits that ‘it’s gunna be very difficult for gentleman who have raised in these societies like the Sudan and places of that nature’ (25-28). Why does the caller construct previous immigrants from Europe as having successfully fitted into the Australian polity in difficult circumstances, but argues that people heralding from Africa will not easily adapt and find their own ‘niche’ over time?

This account functions to anchor culture (‘ancestry’) as an inherent feature for both immigrant groups through time, endowing it with great influence over people’s ability to adapt to different social settings. Thus, this explanation tacitly suggests that the reason ‘Europeans’ have been successful in finding their ‘niche’ is because there is, and was, a culturally compatible ‘niche’ for them to slot into in the first place. That is, there is enough cultural overlap between Australia and Europe for the post World War Two, European Diaspora to allow this group to ‘settle’ unproblematically. In contrast, people from Sudan and elsewhere in Africa are assumed to have little socio-cultural capital that enables them to find a compatible ‘niche’ (see Hanson-Easey & Augoustinos, 2011, for a discussion on ‘human capital’ and Sudanese refugees).

At this point, I should make clear that I am not suggesting that humanitarian refugees from Sudan or elsewhere find ‘resettlement’ a straightforward process. Clearly, many humanitarian refugees who have fled their home country - often spending long periods in refugee camps before coming to Australia - are confronted with manifold psychological and material challenges

Celtic’ appearance still elided with the basic ‘cultural cohesion’ s of White Australia (Cope, Castles & Kalantzis, 1991).

resettling in Australia (see Donna & Berry, 1999). However, like all immigrant groups, humanitarian refugees can notionally be expected to navigate through this transition period and, if given fair opportunity, will come to participate in their new communities like any other social group. My chief point here is that essentialist notions of an underpinning ‘ancestry’, or culture, are treated in this call as if they have a differential consequence for these two groups. For those immigrants with a European ancestry, they are constructed as integrating, relatively seamlessly into the mainstream. In contrast, those with a Sudanese ancestry are treated as something all together more problematic in relation to their fit into Australian society. Rationalised in this way, it is this African ancestry that undermines this group’s ability to acculturate, and its influence is argued to be incompatible and continuous.

What is striking about this extract, and many more of a similar ilk in the corpus, is its brevity of explanation and justification. Arguably, in producing what could be heard as a broadly prejudicial and contestable claim about a social category - arguing that this group share some intrinsic ‘essence’ that limits their ability to engage in the Australian polity - this account’s ‘taken for granted’ status is instructive. I suspect that such an account can be intelligibly constructed with an economy of words (and be left unchallenged in interaction, in this instance) because its underlying assumptions comply with the commonsense of ‘new racism’ (Barker, 1981). That is to say, culture, or ‘ancestry’ is believed to be a salient and continuing influence in constituting *differences* between Sudanese Others and long-settled Australians.

In Extract 5 below, the caller is complaining about ‘immigrants’ and ‘refugees’ and their perceived lack of ‘integration’ into the community. Of particular note

in this sequence is the ‘de-essentialist’ challenge to the caller’s contention that the ‘Vietnamese’⁴¹ are bound to their own spatially bordered communities.

Extract 5.

(4.10 removed)

90 PETER: ...and then (.) the Viet- the Vietnamese I’m not picking on
91 the Vietnamese they’re- wonderful workers and every’thin
92 like that but they seem to have their own (0.4) (little)
93 community 0.6) and they stay in those communities bu- ()
94 tha- tha- they don’t sort’a .h venture out (0.8) integrate
95 with ya’know other people?
96 BOB: yeah well but- () like (.) the Italians and the Greeks
97 did that very much so in the .h in the f: late forties
98 early fifties when they first came out? they .hh they
99 tended to hang around .h in their own little groups and
100 specifically now I thin- I mean .h ya’know if I had to .h
101 by purpose of ya’know if a war came to Australia and we
102 had to go to Vietnam to live? .hh I would automatically
103 look around fo:r a group of people who were Australians?
104 .h and I’d go live near them?

The caller in this sequence deploys the ethnic/national social category of ‘the Vietnamese’ as an exemplar of a group who ‘have their own communities’. This characterisation needs some contextual backgrounding so as its ideological presumptions can be appreciated, and the host’s response can be contextualised.

When the caller speaks of the Vietnamese possessing their ‘own community’ (92), the caller is arguably orientating to long held social debate (worry) in Australia of the ‘ethnic enclave’ (see Castes et al., 1998). Claims that segregated ‘ethnic’ or ‘racially identifiable’ groups are forming concentrations in Australia’s cities are often linked with notions of threat, such as crime, poverty, drug use and with a destabilisation of Australia’s cultural identity (e.g. Blainey, 1993). Debates over ‘ethnic enclaves’ tend to be intermittent in Australia, but when they emerge in the political domain especially, they stimulate vigorous

⁴¹ I briefly digress from analysing Sudanese refugees in this extract, but I maintain that essentialist rhetoric, as this caller goes on to demonstrate in his talk about Sudanese refugees, cuts across immigrant and refugee groups.

debate and controversy. For example, Pauline Hanson, as a newly elected Federal (House of Representatives) member in 1996, made her view on 'ethnic enclaves' clear: 'They (Asians) have their own culture and religion, form ghettos and do not assimilate' (Hanson, 1996). Thus, the caller's orientation to ethnic enclaves is arguably drawing on discursive resources that deem concentrations of people from Vietnam and elsewhere as implicitly problematic.

For the current analysis of essentialist rhetoric, this formulation subtly constructs minorities like the Vietnamese as being imbued with a tendency to live and associate exclusively in selected areas. What is not stated (possibly because it is thought to be too obvious to warrant doing so) is the rationale for this congregation. Why do minorities gather together in their own 'communities'? The caller, vis-à-vis his categorisation of this group as a cultural/ethnic category (Vietnamese) is making this proposition based on this group *being* Vietnamese. In other words, it would be unintelligible to make a specific point about Vietnamese insularism if such behaviour was considered to be typical of all groups to congregate in clusters. Indeed, for the caller, 'staying in those communities' connotes that this sort of 'ethnic' clustering may be a discrete, unique attribute of 'the Vietnamese' themselves: some sort of inherent, cultural protectionism that manifests in segregation⁴². Alternative situational explanations, such as new immigrants taking indentured work in industries that required them to live near-by (the steel industry, for example), are not readily invoked here.

I make these interpretive claims about the caller's account largely because the host orientates to these utterances and challenges them as such. Notions of intractable, ethnic enclaves are not denounced as fallacy *per se*, but are

⁴² Or as Geoffrey Blainey (1994) warned, that the 'experiment' of multiculturalism could lead to Australia becoming 'a nation of tribes'.

undermined in relation to their historical invariance. They are re-constituted as short-term phenomena, as the host constructs the 'Italians and the Greeks' in past tense ('did that') as having 'tended to hang out in their own little groups' (98-99). By way of example, the host draws on common knowledge (but arguably, not hegemonic knowledge) in Australia that suggests that post World War Two European immigrants, such as 'Italians' and 'Greeks', have successfully integrated into the Australian community, moving beyond the spatially bounded communities that they were assumed to have congregated in after their immediate arrival. Thus, the caller's concern that Vietnamese immigrants are not integrating because they stick to 'their own communities', is weakened as a complaint, as it is inferentially rationalised as a contextually and historically contingent phenomena; not an immutable, dispositional one. This argument follows that it is the experience of immigration that draws people to culturally similar others, however, the urge to remain in close proximity becomes less important over time as a process of integration and acculturation makes it less of an imperative.

Interestingly, the host continues his argument by constructing a hypothetical narrative wherein he imagines himself in the role of refugee, fleeing a war-torn Australia to seek refuge in Vietnam. This formulation functions to further shore-up the 'naturalness' of seeking out others who share nationality/culture in a foreign nation, as the host suggests that he would 'automatically look around for a group of people who were Australians' (102-3). Although seeking culturally similar others to live close to is deemed 'automatic', it is not characterised as a historically invariable practice. People may orientate to cultural others on arrival in a new nation, but, as the 'Italians' and 'Greeks' have shown, these communities, in time, disperse into the wider community.

In psychological essentialist terms, it could be argued that culture (Vietnamese) in this instance, rhetorically functions as a mutable feature, losing influence in time to become diffused into the broader (dominant) socio-cultural system. Indeed, cultural identity, manifesting in a 'natural' orientation to ethnically identifiable 'enclaves', is negated as a threat through this historical narrative. As I have previously noted, essentialist features often come with attenuating caveats - limiting them in time and scope - and their ability to affect wider social systems and ingroup interests. Indeed, for the host in this call, watering down the essentialist (historical invariability) nature of ethnic enclaves, rendering them variable and thus less threatening, functions in talk as a resource for arguing against claims that some minority groups are maintaining separatist ideals and social arrangements.

Constructing and explaining differences between groups on the basis of invariant and discrete 'culture' categories can also function as a legitimating tool for politicians when attempting to explain policies to the media and their constituents. The following extract is taken from a 'doorstop' interview with Kevin Andrews, the Minister for Immigration in the previous federal government of Australia. To contextualise the extract, at this time in 2007, Andrews has just made public that he will significantly reduce the humanitarian refugee quota from Africa, most of whom originated from Sudan. His explication for the reduction sparked a debate over Sudanese immigration, and in the 24 hours after his statement, the media took up the debate vigorously, with *Media Monitors* reporting that the issue received 345 mentions on radio⁴³ (quoted in Topsfield & Rood, 2007). Part of Andrews' justification for the

⁴³ And also, 13 press articles, 26 television and 50 internet mentions (Topsfield & Rood, 2007)

reduction was based on ‘reports’ his department received about Sudanese refugees experiencing trouble integrating, forming ‘race based gangs’ and involving themselves in ‘family disputes’ (Andrews, 2007).

Extract 6.

85 Journalist: In what way have African refugees had more
86 trouble settling in than refugees from other
87 generations in the past?
88 Andrews: Well each generation comes from different
89 backgrounds. When you talk about refugees, for a
90 long time the major source of refugees to Australia,
91 if you go back to the beginnings of
92 this programme after the end of the Second World
93 War, many of the people who came to Australia as
94 refugees came as refugees from Europe, who came
95 from largely the same Western liberal democratic
96 culture as we share in Australia. They may have
97 spoken different languages, eaten different
98 foods, etcetera, but largely there was a sharing
99 of culture in terms of the people who came to
100 Australia. More recently we’ve had people from
101 parts of Asia, for example, in which there has
102 been some similarities, again, in terms of the
103 culture. Now this is not to denigrate or to
104 suggest that there is something wrong with
105 particular cultures, it’s just being realistic
106 enough to say that if we’ve got some challenges
107 then we ought to be clear-headed enough and we
108 ought to be sensible enough to say let’s look at
109 those challenges and let’s work in a way with the
110 people concerned to ensure that we can meet their
111 aspirations, meet the aspirations of Australians
112 general.

This extract illustrates the subtle, nuanced nature of political rhetoric when deployed to explain and legitimate controversial political policy pertaining to a humanitarian refugee group. In response to the question, ‘in what way have African refugees had more trouble settling in than generations from the past’ (85-87), Andrews formulates his answer by constructing a contrast between different generations of refugees cultural ‘backgrounds’, and the putative ‘fit’ of those backgrounds with a ‘Western liberal democratic culture as we share in Australia’ (94-96). Although refugees from Europe are constructed to not share all cultural attributes (i.e. ‘foods’ and language), certain aspects were shared: a

Western liberal democratic culture. In contrast to past generations of refugees, African refugees present ‘challenges’ (106) and, in the context of this historically indexed contrast formulation, ‘challenges’ can be read as constituting a dearth of ‘liberal democratic’ cultural qualities.

What might it mean to lack Western liberal democratic cultural attributes? And, how does this account invoke essentialist assumptions to function as a persuasive account? Firstly, the category term ‘Western democratic culture’ does important rhetorical work here as a gloss that signifies, in opaque terms, what cultural attributes African refugees do not possess, and what Australian culture is thus tacitly imbued with. That is, a stock of concepts and values that emerged out of the Enlightenment, including: representational government, the rule of law, rights of the individual, civil rights, due process of law, and so forth (Scruton, 1982). For this reason, what is imputed to be lacking in Sudanese refugees are many of the fundamental social and political values that structure the Australian polity.

Secondly, Andrews’ account constructs a ‘Western⁴⁴ democratic culture’- or more accurately, a lack of it - as a reified entity, akin to some ‘thing’ that a person may possess. Fowler (1991) writes that reification, by means of nominalisation (turning verbs into nouns) is such that ‘processes and qualities assume the status of things: impersonal, inanimate, capable of being amassed and counted like capital, paraded like possessions’ (p. 80). Thus, Andrews’ use of nominalisation does important rhetorical and ideological work which is worth examining in more detail.

What can generally be understood as ‘Western democratic culture’ (or a non-Western culture), its political structures, norms and practices, are, by means

⁴⁴ The deployment of the word ‘Western’ has a myriad of other connotations attached to it (e.g. Said’s (1978) conceptualisation of the discourse of the ‘Oriental other’).

of reification, reformulated into the abstract. A whole cache of practices can be respecified into one, abstract, nominal term, and this has the rhetorical effect of protecting Andrews' account from dispute, as his now rather vague claim that African refugees' lack a certain 'thing' is more difficult to pick apart. Arguably, if he had, by example, delineated the processes by which people actively engage their political culture, undermine it, manipulate it, reject it out rightly - describe it as a highly variable, conceptual system of practices, his argument would not function so persuasively (Billig, 2008).

We are now in a position to see how linguistic nominalisation and notions of essentialism are imbricated to explain how political culture is the reason for why African refugees are problematic. In short, if a political culture can be nominalised and transformed into an abstract entity, then it can also be employed as an essentialised attribute, divorced from the complex processes that are involved in how people relate to, and participate, in their polity. Similar to other formulations that point to culture as *the* problem - as if culture constituted a 'thing' that people are imbued with - deploying an abstracted, nominalised 'political culture' trope is fundamentally ideological. This is because it ignores the fact that a refugees' past socio-political context does not indelibly attach itself to inherently drive current and future behaviour. As I have previously noted, the political environment that refugees flee from is precisely the reason they seek refugee status in the first place. Positioning African refugees as lacking Western democratic culture, and utilising this as a causal explanation to justify a reduction in their numbers, speaks to the power of persuasion that essentialist rhetoric can impart.

Conclusion

In this Chapter, I have attempted to show how essentialist rhetoric is deployed in producing representations and accounts of minority group behaviour. I have argued that attributing some sort of deeply rooted - but often quietly imputed – inherent quality, or essence, plays an important role in rationalising minority behaviours. In accord with Yzerbyt et al.'s (1997) position on the role of essentialist categorisation, this study provides further evidence that when people are attempting to account for a social phenomenon they often draw explanatory, causal lines between inherent group features, and the social behaviour/event that this collective is attributed to be involved in. In this study, interlocutors were shown to essentialise Sudanese (and Vietnamese) Australians on cultural and ethnic dimensions, constructing links between intrinsic qualities and anti-social behaviours.

However, speakers were also observed to contest the stability of these formulations by arguing that essentialist influences are temporally limited, and thus variable. What this suggests, in consonance with Verkuyten's (2003) findings, is that essentialist talk is not necessarily either oppressive, or emancipatory; it appears contingent on the context it is used in, and the wider connotative meaning-systems it is rhetorically enmeshed with. Indeed, as Haslam et al. (2002) note, the association between essentialism and prejudice is a not a clear one. There are a number of potential moderating factors that play important roles in how essentialist beliefs constitute prejudice. The argument here is that the social context (dialogical and socio-historical) provides the 'repertoires of representation' (Hall, 1997) that speakers draw on in explaining current social events. Reifying 'essentialism' as an abstracted concept, without

analysing these factors, omits some important elements in discerning how essentialism functions in everyday social interaction and communication.

Moreover, this study demonstrates the abstruse nature of ontological categorisation, and the nuanced connotative work done by speakers in producing their accounts, and what they construe as ‘real’ differences between social groups and sub-groups. In making claims about the existence, or nature of groups, rarely did I observe explicit claims about the homogeneity of group members or, for instance, the naturalness or mutability of group essences. Arguably, these meanings *are* subtly communicated through narrative devices, contrast devices and representational imagery, i.e. ‘Tutsis’. If we are to gain insights into how essentialist beliefs are invoked in real situations when talking about social events and groups, the subtle and complex derivations of essentialist talk may fruitfully be analysed as it functions *as a situated practice in conversation*.

The present study has not endeavoured to comprehensively delineate the universal structure of psychological essentialism: its aim has been to show how members’ talk draws on discursive resources that signify ethnic/cultural differences in a particular context. This fine-grained analysis may be necessary to adequately inspect the nuanced discursive practices for developing focused, anti-racist strategies. I do not presume to discount the valuable findings of socio-cognitive psychologists. Their important insights have built theories that can be further operationalised in naturalistic contexts with a discursive approach, to understand how prejudice and racism are (re)produced. However, I do suspect that such findings may also be partially attributable to wider representational and sense-making regimes found across different discursive sites. As Verkuyten (2003) has argued, a discursive approach can usefully complement cognitive approaches in understanding how essentialist resources (‘beliefs’) may be used to

construct groups as different. Furthermore, employing a discursive approach in examining how people justify, represent, and modulate their talk while glossing collectives as inherently different on some essential dimension or another, opens up the analytical aperture to view complex 'racial theories' (see Reicher, 2001), instead of focusing on partial, singular elements of racial formulations. The complex and at times highly ambiguous characterisations of minority collectives, possessing inherent features that are *both* changeable and immutable, homogenous and particularised, has arguably muddied the waters for attempts to delineate the structure of essentialist beliefs. Not all is lucent and discernable as the theoretical constructs we build to explain human understanding and social practice. Indeed, as I have attempted to instantiate in this study, talking about other groups, differentiating them as pervasively other, is not a social practice without contradictions and dilemmas.

Clearly, this preliminary study is curtailed by the relatively small corpus, but further 'inter-textual' (see Hall, 1997) studies examining how ethnic others are marked as possessing a deeply set 'nature' - a specific quality that justifies their position in a society - may need to consider the considerable variation that these accounts are often inscribed with. These representations are central to legitimating oppressive practices, and are hence also highly relevant to constructing anti-racist practice. As Wetherell and Potter (1992) so lucidly argue:

From our perspective, then, an important part of anti-racist practice is identifying the form legitimation takes, and charting also the fragmented and dilemmatic nature of everyday discourse, because it is at those points of fracture and contradiction that there is scope for change and redirection of argument (p.219).

Anti-essentialism has long been a project for those who fight against racism. However, there lies a delicate dilemma at the heart of attempts to undermine notions of a fixed essence, attributable to certain 'races'. A tension exists between anti-essentialism and essentialism in that any emancipatory struggle concerning a 'racial' group implicitly relies on the deployment of essentialist categories. As Bonnett (2000) argues, 'it is the anti-racists who have tried to identify and celebrate racial struggles against dominant groups. And it is anti-racists who have mobilised terms such as, 'black people', 'white people', and so on in the service of equality' (p. 133). Indeed, outside academic debates, the unifying role of essentialist language is fundamental to the political fight that anti-racist activists are engaged in (Bonnett, 2000). Clearly, unifying, identity-preserving labels that ethnic minorities draw upon to champion their 'difference', are core to engineering resistance to calls for 'assimilation'. Hence, the strategy of deconstructing *all* essentialist categories deployed in the description and accounting of minorities may not be as productive as targeting those reified notions that are deployed in accounts that work towards illiberal goals.

However, somewhat dilemmatically, psychologists should be careful not to position themselves as arbiters of what are valid, or invalid, essentialist discourses to critique. Condor (1987) has argued that social psychologists must be cognizant of presupposing essentialised, racial categories as 'real' - as reified categories - independent of the observer, therefore constituting and reproducing 'race thinking'. The salience of behavioural or physical appearances is not independent of the perceiver, who 'reads off' information from the 'stimulus'. What makes a category a category, what constitutes perceived differences between social groups, and putatively explains their behaviour, are socially, discursively and contextually contingent (Condor, 1987). Taking for granted the

existence of essentialised, racial categories, outside of rhetoric, and locating these within the mind, as reflections of the world outside, is, as Condor argues, feeding into 'new racism'.

This Chapter, then, has hopefully done more than bemire the conceptual waters of psychological essentialism. It has shown how examining essentialist rhetoric as an element of situated interaction, within a broader socio-historical context, can facilitate our understanding of how such talk functions towards variegated conversational and ideological ends.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

In this concluding Chapter I will provide an overview of the core findings from the four analytic Chapters. I make suggestions for future discursive research to attend to the concept of 'citizenship' and the construction of minority identities. Further, I discuss implications that this research has for our understanding of how humanitarian refugee groups are treated in Australia. The status of discursive psychology, and its engagement with social psychology in general, will also be discussed. I conclude this thesis by suggesting that future research could productively focus on current debates on the status of 'multiculturalism', both here in Australia and in Europe.

In Chapter 3, I examined a collection of media interviews with the former minister for immigration, Kevin Andrews, as he provided explanations and justifications for his department's contentious decision to cut the humanitarian refugee quota from Sudan. My analysis shows that Andrews deploys very specific category terms in his description of this group, with attendant rhetorical upshots. Descriptive terms such as 'the Sudanese', as opposed to 'Sudanese refugees' or 'people from Africa' effectively represented the collective as a national group, omitting humanitarian connotations. Furthermore, gross descriptions of Sudanese refugees as being endowed with low levels of education, and being over populated with 'young males', were argued to characterise this group, essentialise them and differentiate them from other groups. Importantly, criteria that are normally considered consequences of *being* a refugee were transformed into justifications for cutting of the refugee quota. My analysis shows that Sudanese refugees were pervasively represented as establishing 'race based gangs'. The deployment of 'race' was a central feature of Andrews' rhetoric in

describing the ‘establishment’ of gangs, and this demonstrated how the term ‘race’ - often avoided in modern political talk - can nevertheless be embraced for political expediency when fashioning representations that connote threat.

Augmenting category descriptions in communicating difference, Sudanese refugees were constructed as having difficulty ‘settling’ because they did not share ‘a Western democratic culture’. A ‘culture as cause’ construction was observed in Andrews’ talk that functioned to attribute deficits and problematic behaviours, to an essentialised form of culture.

Further, I argued that culture, conceptualised as a static entity in this discourse, was deployed rhetorically in justifying the policy of reducing the humanitarian quota. This essentialised rendering of culture and its function in talk was further discussed in Chapter 6.

I also discussed in this Chapter, the adroit nature of talking about a humanitarian refugee group in a political environment where a policy decision has been contested as racist. Previous discursive work has primarily attended to how refugees and asylum seekers who arrive by boat are often perniciously represented in the media as threats (i.e. Pickering, 2001). Humanitarian refugees are not subject to the same modes of representation of those who arrive by boat; alternative accounts must be fashioned, that account for their humanitarian status. This analysis speaks to how causal accounting is deployed to defend controversial political policies by constructing links between Sudanese refugees’ backgrounds and problematic behaviours.

Furthermore, I posited that within the institutional setting of the news interview, causal narratives are robust to criticism. Although contradictory (and ironic), Andrews’ arguments to cut the Sudanese refugee quota drew on much the same reasons why refugees are provided humanitarian assistance in the first

instance. This is a new iteration of refugee rhetoric, and is an important finding for devising strategies that contest pejorative refugee discourses, and for constructing alternate representations of the Sudanese cohort. For instance, it may be useful to devise discursive strategies that communicate that because of the nature of the refugee experience, that these experiences actually prepare and motivate refugees to embrace educational, employment and business opportunities. These findings also resonate with the core argument made in Chapter 4 about widening ‘sympathetic’ representations of Sudanese refugees to include more empowering themes.

In Chapter 4 I examined how talkback interactants oriented to what I coin ‘sympathetic talk’. Displaying sympathy, an orientation normally associated with humanitarianism, care and tolerance, was shown to function in interaction as a softening device, working in tandem with a more pejorative message, managing the stake and identity of the speaker as fair, balanced and importantly - not racist. Much of the research introduced in Chapter 1 (i.e. Gale 2004; Saxton, 2003) examines how the media represented asylum seekers and refugees in a fundamentally pejorative fashion. Contrastingly, what my findings illuminate is that when people fashion accounts of humanitarian refugees in dialogue on talkback radio, they rarely avowed pernicious views straight-up, but rather, deployed sympathy devices, such as appreciating the aesthetic qualities of the Sudanese women, before moving on to deliver their complaints in earnest. Sympathy talk highlights the dilemmatic (Billig et al., 1988) nature of complaining about humanitarian refugees.

Furthermore, I argued in this Chapter that when speakers invoke narrow, humanitarian tropes in talking about Sudanese refugees, rendering them as holding little in terms of ‘human capital’, this has an ideological effect in that

they are subsequently positioned in subordinate relationships to other collectives, many of who enjoy a broader, socially functional representation. This argument resonated with Marlow's (2010) findings noted in Chapter 1. Marlow (2010) has argued that Sudanese refugees were being ostensibly marked as victims of trauma and essentialised by their ordeals in escaping their homelands to find relative safety in Australia. This argument resonates with the findings of Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2006), who show that African refugees are being discriminated against in the labour market, partially because they are considered 'troubled' by their refugee experiences.

These findings provide further support to my contention that categorising Sudanese refugees in narrow, 'sympathetic' terms, positions them as less than productive, and hence less than valuable members of society. This finding, in consonance with the analysis featured in Chapter 3, has implications for devising alternate representations to those disseminated in the mainstream media. Combating the 'victim of trauma' stereotype is necessary if Sudanese refugees are going to break down the sorts of systematic barriers that confront them in accessing meaningful employment, and engaging with mainstream social networks. Moving beyond a narrow discourse of 'sympathy' is an important element in achieving these goals. My findings in this Chapter suggest that 'sympathetic' representations of refugees should be inspected with caution for what ideological effect these forms of talk have in undermining how this group is construed in reference to their social value and status.

In Chapter 5, I examined the corpus of talkback radio calls and showed how speakers regularly used narrative devices in complaining about Sudanese refugees. These narrative devices included 'witnessing' devices that functioned rhetorically to manage epistemological issues, such as furnishing a description

with a sense that it was directly observed, as a real and trustworthy version of what happened. I also provided empirical examples of how speakers invoked contrast devices within a narrative structure, to differentiate Sudanese refugees as essentially different. I demonstrated that when callers deployed these narrative forms, they functioned to ascribe Sudanese refugees with a range of characteristics and attributes, without having to engage in explicit, straight-up pernicious blaming.

Again, this Chapter speaks to the nuanced constructions that speakers construct when avowing their complaints in interaction on talkback radio. Arguably, narrative structures are an especially complex form of rhetoric, in that they provide their own evidence for claims that Sudanese refugees are not integrating. That is to say, they constitute both a complaint, and the basis for that complaint, within the same formulation. Thus, narrative devices can be viewed as particularly powerful rhetorical and ideological tool from which the construction of 'ethnic' identities can be constructed and stratified. Everyday talk can be regularly observed to use narrative devices; when complaining about potentially sensitive matters such as neighbour relations and minorities, it is, then, unsurprising that pejorative messages find their way into such stories. The voicing of prejudiced talk with story telling, as demonstrated here, may constitute a feature of 'new racism' that future research could productively follow up and explicate further.

In Chapter 6, the final analytical Chapter, I engaged the concept of 'psychological essentialism' (Haslam et al., 2000). Psychological essentialism is conceptualised in the mainstream psychological literature as a belief in an inhering, underlying and generally unchanging essence that has some influence over a social category, making it what it is and differentiating it from other

categories. Little discursive psychological work (but see Verkuyten, 2003) has employed this concept to analyse how minority groups are represented in essentialist forms. Using empirical examples, I illustrated how speakers constructed a range of highly ambiguous, essentialist categories in representing Sudanese refugees as, for instance, 'sectarian' or 'tribal'. Specifically, I instantiated examples of talk where essentialist refugee traits were mediated, or hedged, as time limited, thus rendering them less problematic.

Further, I posited that these forms of essentialist categorisations are highly contingent, and thus made intelligible through: the interactional context, the current social context, including current and previous violent events, and the ideological history of how different social groups are positioned. I argued that the socio-cognitive approach to essentialism could usefully re-evaluate their theories in respect to how essentialist rhetoric manifests in actual talk. I also contended that not all essentialist talk, including racial categories, invoked to rally minority group members around a singular identity (i.e. the 'black' rights movement), were problematic. Rather, specific reified categories that were constitutive of accounts that advocated and legitimated prejudiced actions should be identified and challenged.

Little discursive work (but see Verkuyten, 2003) has attempted to construe how essentialist notions are deployed in talk about ethnic minorities. In this Chapter I reconfigured a fundamentally cognitive-psychological approach to understanding how individuals categorise and rationalise intergroup differences. It is my contention that in recent times, mainstream social psychologists have been right to pay attention to the structure of essentialist 'beliefs' and the function that these beliefs might play in sustaining inequality and prejudice. This Chapter highlights the need for critical discursive psychologists to also heed the

challenges that essentialism presents. Clearly, essentialism constitutes part of an ideological discourse that has the potential to mark minorities as inherently different (to the ingroup), no matter what their specific history or their particular individual qualities. The presence and consequence of essentialistic talk has a long and odious history⁴⁵, and I argue that it should not be ignored, no matter how it is conceptualised.

Further, this Chapter supplements the other analytic Chapters of this thesis. It is observable that essentialist rhetoric ties together many of the arguments that speakers construct when talking about Sudanese refugees. Obviously, when complaining about an individual, and then generalising this behaviour to all that comprise that collective, presumes that there is some quality that binds this group, allowing such claims to be made. Moreover, arguing that Sudanese refugees are presenting as problematic because of their culture, also relies on the presumption that culture bears a homogenistic quality that remains influential through time and across individual members of that culture. In other words, without essentialist, ideological assumptions, many of the arguments analysed in this thesis would not be sustainable.

⁴⁵ Any cursory look at how Nazi Germany perceived the Jews in relation to their inherent inhumanness will support this argument.

Limitations and resolutions

There are two limitations that I wish to address in this section, and these pertain to the nested concepts of how the various discursive constructions illustrated here actually play out for Sudanese refugees themselves; that is, what are their social and material consequences, and, how might this thesis's findings may be applied to ameliorating such consequences.

In this thesis, I have shown how speakers draw on an array of linguistic devices, resources and stereotypes, to construct Sudanese refugees as *different*. Although I have delineated these constructive processes, I have not appraised, especially in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, how these constructions go onto produce material consequences for Sudanese refugees themselves as they live their lives. I argue that the social and political implications of the forms of talk discussed here have already been felt by Sudanese Australians. Undoubtedly, if we view language as a shared, collectivised practice, then the pejorative characterisations illustrated in this thesis are not unique to a few talkback radio callers, or a former Ministers of Immigration. If we accept this assumption, then we can also deduce that Sudanese refugees themselves have heard such talk and have been affected by it. This contention is supported by the work of Marlow (2010), who found that Sudanese refugees were very much aware of how they were perceived as 'traumatised'.

Thus, the experienced consequences of prejudiced talk for Sudanese refugees highlights the importance of this thesis' findings, and the need for further research on how humanitarian refugee groups, in general, are being positioned. It would be profitable for future research to make inquiries about the particular mode of prejudice that is being experienced by Sudanese refugees.

Following Marlow (2010), future research could productively engage the Sudanese refugee community to investigate how the discourses identified in this thesis are experienced first hand, and importantly, how they are contested and undermined in these contexts.

This thesis has aimed to show how prejudiced talk is practiced in the situated contexts of radio news interviews and talkback radio in relation to Sudanese refugees. The ‘application’ of the studies’ findings is such that it augments the discursive body of literature that has rarely investigated how ‘race talk’ is produced on news radio, and talkback radio. The impact of the three published Chapters, and one unpublished manuscript, broadens our understanding of how racial categories, attributional discourse, ‘sympathy’ talk’, narrative devices and essentialist language are harnessed when speakers are speaking about one of the most recent social group to settle in Australia - Sudanese refugees.

In presenting research that shows in detail how speakers *do* prejudice, there is also an imperative to align such findings with strategies to reduce social inequality. Throughout this thesis I have struggled with questions about application, and how my findings may mitigate prejudice, and equalise social stratification. Again, as I have suggested, there are opportunities to engage with the problem of prejudice at the point at which it is felt by minorities. That is, there are research opportunities that link discursive findings to predicting future manifestation of such talk, and how these constructions are combated and subverted by Sudanese refugees themselves.

Finally, in reference to application, I have also come to see research as a tool for not only explicating how prejudice and talk are wound together in the service of legitimating unjust social and political conditions, but also as a tool to

inspire others about the importance of doing critical social psychological research, employing a qualitative approach. Language has been treated in this thesis as a pivotal social practice that achieves important things in the communities that we live in. My hope is that this research has allowed others to see how social psychology can move forward to address social problems, and to become part of the answer to re-moulding the shape of the social world.⁴⁶

Where to from here?

A discursive social psychology

A foundational theme of discursive psychology has been its critical engagement with ‘mainstream’ socio-cognitive approaches to social psychology (Augoustinos & Quinn, 2003; Augoustinos, Walker & Donohue, 2006; Billig, 1985, 1987; Edwards, 1993; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Rapley, 1998, 2001; Tuffin, 2005; Wetherell & Potter, 1992). Central to discursive psychology’s project has been the respecification of mental processing models of human reasoning and action; instead, focusing on how people in everyday interaction fashion their talk to attend to pragmatic, rhetorical and ideological concerns. Thus, there has and continues to be tension and debate between discursive psychology and other, broadly glossed ‘cognitivist-perceptual’ approaches in the domain of social psychology (see Corcoran, 2009, 2010; Potter, 2010a, 2010b).

This tension has also run a course through this thesis. I have drawn on and respecified various socio-cognitive theories that derive their understanding of how the social world operates from experimental and qualitative scales. For example, in the first analytical Chapter, I engaged traditional attribution theory

⁴⁶ I am indebted to Keith Tuffin (2005) here for reinvigorating my motivation for what critical social psychology can do to effect change.

(i.e. Hewstone, 1989) and treated this as a discursive, performative phenomenon rather than as a means of theorising about universal, cognitive attribution processes. Moreover, this Chapter analysed the deployment of category terms in reference to their situated, rhetorical context, and treated them indexically, rather than as manifestations of an omnipresent, schematic representational structure that ‘distorts’ perception (see Billig, 1985; Edwards, 1997). This, again is consonant with one of the tasks that discursive psychology has set itself: to critically reshape traditional, socio-cognitive models that treat discursive categories and talk in general as a window from which to view the inner, cognitive computations of the mind, or realist entities or phenomena in the world.

Although there are serious epistemological differences cleaving discursive psychology from social cognition - and for some scholars, there is no possibility of reuniting these domains (see Potter, 2010a) - there have been some moves within social psychology to integrate, or at least illustrate how a rapprochement may be formulated. For example, Reicher and Hopkins (1996) have argued that Self Categorisation Theory (SCT) (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987) can be usefully integrated with discursive psychology to address the taken for granted aspect of context (or, frame of reference) that SCT leaves as self-evident to perceivers (Reicher & Hopkins, 1996, 2001). For Reicher and Hopkins (1996), how individuals frame a social event - that is, what groups are part of this event and which are not, what issues are at play - are not simply perceived by individuals, but are contested and delineated in talk. Thus, the imbrication of SCT and discursive psychology considers the contents and boundaries of categories, and their effect on the mobilisation of people through the process of self-categorisation, as contingent on how speakers define the

context i.e. as inclusive as possible to the ingroup and exclusive of the outgroup audience.

What I wish to argue here is not that social-cognitive approaches ought to be rejected outright as constituting a misguided quest for the holy grail of cognitive mechanisms that produce prejudice and racism. Rather, I suspect that discursive psychology, especially in the domains of prejudice and social relations, has much to offer in affecting change to how social cognition goes about its work. As Reicher (2001) suggests, social psychology has some way to go before it can provide a better account of the social injustice that comes from the practice of racism, and this may be achieved with ongoing debate and potentially, the synthesis of some theoretical paradigms that might seem at first sight, irreconcilable. Discursive psychology has much to offer social psychology and its concern with the nature of social practices as they occur naturalistically. Indeed, its attention to the interactional, political and structural contexts in the world as it is lived and experienced is ostensibly, a foundational approach that orients psychology to the reality of prejudice.

A continuing dialogue with mainstream social psychological work is encouraging, but this engagement appears to be tentative, and on the whole does not seriously touch much of mainstream social psychology, where individualist, experimental and realist epistemologies still appear to be solidly entrenched. It seems that although social psychology concerns itself with the social and thus, from my perspective, must engage with actual social phenomena as they happen, there still seems to be some way to travel before social psychology takes up the challenge that critical, discursive social psychology has laid down.

The multicultural citizen

I mean they're as black as the ace of spades... and they must get ridiculed by people in the streets because Australians can be real bastards

Bob Francis

This thesis has illustrated how majority group members, using a range of rhetorical devices and ideological resources, talk about Sudanese refugees, effectively shaping and differentiating their identities in the domains of political praxis and talkback radio. What is discernable throughout the analytical Chapters is how Sudanese refugees are *provided* with a group identity that is worked up and contrasted against tacit, normative standards. As I have argued, representations of humanitarian refugees clearly differ from refugees and asylum seekers that arrive by boat⁴⁷. Humanitarian refugees are permanent residents and do not agitate debate over 'illegal immigration'. However, debates around Sudanese refugees, as this thesis has shown, do overlap with the problematics of integration, national identity and what it means to belong or not to a polity i.e. citizenship. Indeed, one of the tractable patterns running through these data is how speakers regularly attempted to construct explanations for why Sudanese refugees were not integrating into the Australian community. Causal theories, furnished with essentialised traits and violent proclivities, intractable educational deficits and cultural incompatibilities, were constructed to ultimately advance arguments that Sudanese refugees were not fitting in. Research on identity construction, observed in naturalistic domains, is one tack that could productively follow to augment our understanding of how minority identities are

⁴⁷ And cannot even be compared to the representations of those asylum seekers that arrive by plane.

constructed, and social psychologists are beginning to take more interest in how this is done discursively.

Hopkins and Blackwood (2011) have recently considered how British Muslims experience others' orientations to their religious and national identities in everyday interactions. Their study illustrates how others' (mis)construals, or mis-recognition influences how minorities feel about what they can say and do in social settings. For example, one participant recounted an instance where because she was essentially categorised as a 'Muslim', her opposition to the Iraq war was put down to her religion and no other reason (i.e. disagreeing with pre-emptive strikes against sovereign nations). This interpretation enforced a distinction between being a 'Muslim' and being 'British', where the interviewee made no such distinction: she just plainly didn't agree with her government's policy on Iraq (like many people with no religious affiliation) (Hopkins & Blackwood, 2011). Being heard to speak as a Muslim and not as a British citizen caused this respondent to feel as though her 'Britishness' was being questioned. In Chapter 1, I discussed the role of national identity in backgrounding refugee and asylum seeker debates. National identity, conceptualised as a resource for talking, is deployed as a normative 'touch-stone' from which minority identities can be contrasted to. Indeed, as Hopkins and Blackwood (2011) have noted, the mis-recognition, or weighting of one component of identity over another can seriously compromise an individual's ability to engage in their community on their own terms, with an identity fashioned by themselves.

As Susan Condor (2011) has argued, analytical work on discourses of citizenship, and how the construction of identities in talk position minorities in relation to citizenship, is an important domain for social psychology to give attention to. Indeed, as the notion of multiculturalism in Australia is currently

being (re)branded by the current federal Labour government, invoked in debates about what the contemporary, Australian social terrain looks like, these public debates will provide an apposite context for future social psychological research.

Social participation and recognition

To conclude this thesis, I want to outline some of the potential challenges that confront social psychological inquiry into citizenship, prejudice, 'race' and the revitalised debate on multiculturalism. Recently in Australia and in Europe especially, there has been a renewed stimulation of debate surrounding the benefits of the social policy of 'multiculturalism'. Although meaning very different things to different people, the notion of multiculturalism is now again being 'scrutinised' (Commonwealth of Australia, 2010).

The Joint Standing Committee on Migration has established an 'inquiry' into multiculturalism and its terms of reference, set out by the Minister for Immigration Chris Bowen, includes opaque references to, for example, 'the role of multiculturalism in the Federal Government's social inclusion agenda' (Commonwealth of Australia, 2011). It appears that at the hub of such an inquiry, of having a debate about the nature and 'benefits' of multiculturalism, is an implicit assumption that multiculturalism and, migration more generally, are potentially problematic in the first place. Ghassan Hage (1998) has cogently argued that central to the 'White nation fantasy', is 'that of all the worrying things happening in Australia, nothing is more worrying than the lack of integration of Third World-looking migrants into Australian society' (p.235). Thus, these types of debates problematise the very nature and sustainability of a society in which diverse cultures live side-by-side. And it is, by definition, the

White majority who are worried about *their* normative values being menaced, rather than minority groups problematising ingroup identities and calling for their ‘integration’.

Recently, in Germany and France, where the construct of multiculturalism has a very different genealogy and status⁴⁸, these debates reflect on the precarious status of immigrant groups, especially those represented as ‘Muslim’. Although there are clearly some fundamental principles that need to govern what it indeed means to be a citizen of a ‘Western Liberal democratic state’, such as upholding universal civil and political human rights, these values are not often held up as exemplars of non-integration. As I have attempted to illustrate throughout this thesis, it is often discursively constructed exemplars of ‘integration’ problems, such as unsociable or disruptive neighbourhood behaviours, that are deployed to connote deeper concerns about *difference*.

What is at the heart of these debates, including the rhetoric analysed in this thesis, is a struggle over identity representation. If we are to take lessons from the French immigration experience seriously, an experience that has generally seen new immigrants from Turkey and other ‘Muslim’ nations become alienated and increasingly excluded from mainstream French society and power, then we also need to take seriously the effects of ‘(mis)recognition’ (see Fraser & Honneth, 2003). In other words, when new immigrants are represented as inherently different, as having less to offer a local polity than any other generalised ingroup, as being the source of social problems and, as a

⁴⁸ Germany does not have any multiculturalism policy to speak of, and the German chancellor, Angela Merkel, has publically propounded that her country’s attempts to create a multicultural society has ‘utterly failed’ (The Guardian, 2010). David Cameron, The British Prime Minister has also attacked multiculturalism, stating that some Muslims were failing to endorse putative British values, such as women’s rights (Wright & Taylor, 2011).

consequence of this positioning, do not experience acceptance as full members of their societies, then there is, naturally, a consequence for this exclusion.

In essence, a cohesive society hinges on mutual recognition, and it is equally clear, as we have observed here in Australia, in France, and the United Kingdom, how misrepresentation can have serious implications for social cohesion and the rights of ethnic minorities to engage meaningfully in their communities. It is my sincere hope that these representational practices can be arrested and re-honed, and specifically, that discourses that position Sudanese refugees as problematically different, can be ameliorated. It is also my hope that Sudanese refugees, as they gradually lose the tag of refugees, are allowed to valorise their similarities to, *and* differences from long-settled Australians.

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Appendix

Jeffersonian transcription symbols

((sneeze))	Double parentheses contain the descriptions.
()	Empty parentheses mean the transcriber could not grasp what was said.
(hello):	Single parentheses with text in-guess at what was said.
(.)	A dot in parentheses indicates a tiny, just noticeable pause.
(0.7)	Numbers in parentheses indicate elapsed time in silence by tenth of seconds, so (0.7) is a pause of seven tenths of a second.
.hhh	A dot prefixed row of hs indicates the sound of inhalation.
hhh	Without the dot, the hhh indicates exhalation.
“words”	Speech contained within quotation marks indicates speech that was spoken as though reproducing verbatim a third person’s locution
<u>word</u>	Underlining indicates emphasis on that word or syllable.
<u>WORD</u>	Uppercase indicates especially loud sounds relative to the surrounding talk.
↑↓	Arrows indicate marked shifts into higher or lower pitch in the utterance part immediately following the arrow. Double arrows indicate a greater shift.
?	A question mark indicates a rising intonation, less pronounced than an upward arrow.
.	A full stop indicates a stopping fall in tone.
,	A comma indicates continuing intonation,
bu-	Hyphens mark the abrupt cut-off of the preceding sound.
We::ll	Colons indicate prolongation of the immediately prior sound.
><	signs enclose speeded up talk. Used in reverse for slower talk.
=word	Equal signs, one at the end and of one line and one at the beginning indicates no discernable pause between two speakers turns, if put between two sounds within a single speaker’s turn,

show that they run together. This is often called latching.

heh heh Indicates laughter.