

Examining the impact of “visible difference” on multiple marginalisation of Somali and Sudanese former refugees in Australia

Aparna Hebbani & Jayson McNamara

Aparna Hebbani's (PhD, Memphis) research projects include investigating the integration of Sudanese refugees in Australia, examining the state of academia for female faculty at Australian universities, and exploring the communication differences in the Australia-India business context. Her work is published in journals and books including *Intercultural Communication Studies*, *International & Intercultural Communication Annual*, *Case studies in organisational communication*.

Abstract

From 1998 to 2008, a total of 3,543 Somali and 24,447 Sudanese settlers came to Australia, most of them under the refugee status. This intake is, to some extent, reflective of Australia's most recent approach to humanitarian resettlement that has fostered a shift of policy priority, with approximately 70 per cent of all entrants since 2003 arriving from Africa. Hence, as a growing and visibly different minority group, many African arrivals have been a focal point in recent research about the impact of their racial visibility in discrimination. While subject to multiple forms of marginalisation as refugees and as Africans, many have also been stigmatised on religious grounds because of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and perhaps, more recently, due to some extremist activities in Australia. Therefore, this paper, which leans on the work done by Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2007), examines the role of racial, religious, and tribal visibility and the resulting marginalisation on the Somali and Sudanese former refugee communities now settled in Australia. We first discuss issues of visible difference for Somali and Sudanese Australians followed by the impact of their particular visible markers on employment. The paper concludes with a dialogue of the multiple layers of marginalisation that Somali and Sudanese refugees face in an employment context due to visible difference, which may also help explain the discrimination in the labour market.

In recent times, poor treatment of migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, has opened up debate about the impact of a changing demographic to Australia's outlook on multiculturalism (Anyanwu, 2009). There appears to be a growing trend amongst some members of Australian society to reject multiculturalism because of assumptions about welfare dependence or the access that minority ethnic communities have to the resources of a predominantly Anglo-Saxon nation (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Dhanji, 2009). This debate is particularly pertinent to the nation's growing refugee population as a marginalised and highly visible addition to Australia's social landscape.

There are two main visa categories through which refugees can enter Australia: (a) with refugee visas granted offshore; and (b) with Special Humanitarian visas offered by the Australian government according to sponsorship suggestions or requests from family/community groups in Australia (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2009c). Since 2003, Australia has granted over 80,700 visas to refugees through the Australian Humanitarian Program (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2009c). The government delivers services to newly arrived refugees through the

Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS), including on-arrival reception and initial orientation, information about and referral to other service providers and mainstream agencies, assistance with accommodation and basic household goods, as well as short-term torture and trauma counselling (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2009c).

From 1998 to 2008, there were a total of 3,543 Somali and 24,447 Sudanese settlers to Australia (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2008). This is in some way reflective of the country's most recent approach to humanitarian resettlement, which has fostered a shift of policy priority, with approximately 70 per cent of all entrants since 2003 arriving from Africa (Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, 2005). Thus, race, as a standalone concept, is pertinent to Australia's involvement in worldwide refugee resettlement, because as Colic-Peisker noted: "The ethnic and racial profile of the Australian population informs political concerns about social cohesion, which in turn influence Australia's immigration and refugee policy" (2005, p. 619). Political conservatism toward ethnic diversity has its roots in the White Australia policy of the last century (Jupp, 2002), though contemporary discrimination has continued to pervade in the form of such incidences as the rise of the One Nation Party¹ and the Cronulla race riots of 2005².

This provides an interesting point of reflection, in so far as the historical sources of racism in Australia (see Colic-Peisker, 2005) have in recent years been juxtaposed with of fears of immigration, ethnic diversity, and their combined impact on Australian social cohesion. As a growing and visibly different minority group, African arrivals have hence been a focal point in recent analyses about the impact of their racial visibility in discrimination (Colic-Peisker, 2005; Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2001). While subject to multiple forms of marginalisation as refugees and as Africans (Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2001), many have also been stigmatised on religious grounds because of the 9/11 terrorist attacks (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Tilbury, 2007; Tunnicliff & Tunnicliff, 2005) and perhaps, more recently, due to some extremist activities in Australia³.

Between 2001 and 2006, 83 per cent of Sudanese arrivals to Australia associated themselves to a Christian denomination and 12 per cent to Islam (DIAC, 2007). It is generally understood that most (if not all) Somalis are Sunni Muslim (Culturgrams, 1999; Middle East Policy Council, 2002). The predominantly Sunni Muslim Somali population in Australia and the predominantly Christian and tribal Southern Sudanese population in Australia therefore provide a stimulating point of comparison in measuring the impact of visible differences that are racial, tribal, and/or religious.

There are several visual markers that differentiate these two groups (including even men and women from within each culture), which reflect the socio-cultural variety within Australia's African community. More importantly, visual markers also categorise

¹ The One Nation Party was a political party active in both state and federal politics in Australia. Its former leader, the former member for Oxley, Pauline Hanson, led the party on an anti-immigration, protectionist platform (australianpolitics.com, 2009)

² The Cronulla race riots were a series of events in New South Wales involving racial violence between people of Middle Eastern and Anglo-Saxon descent.

³ In addition to several other foiled terrorist attacks, in late 2009 four men from different backgrounds were charged over allegations they planned to attack a military base in Melbourne, Victoria.

and differentiate African refugees by their race and religion amongst members of a predominantly heterogeneous, Anglo-Saxon society.

This paper examines the role of racial, religious, and tribal visibility on the Somali and Sudanese former refugee⁴ communities now settled in Australia. It is important to address the religious differential between Somalis and Sudanese refugee communities living in Australia because, as Colic-Peisker and Tilbury mentioned, discrimination based upon visible difference “. . . may be compounded for black African Muslims” (2007, p. 3)⁵.

In this paper, we lean on Colic-Peisker’s concept of “visible difference,” which refers to:

the ethnic characteristics that make immigrants distinct in the Australian (western, English-speaking) social context and among a predominantly white population. This can be based on race (skin colour, physical and facial features), or accent and publicly observable cultural differences, such as attire (often to do with religion, e.g. Muslim *hijab*). (2009, p. 176)⁶

We expand on Colic-Peisker’s (2009) concept of visible difference by looking at the particular markers of visible difference amongst the Sudanese and Somali former refugees of Australia, and the impact they impose on the employment outcomes of these communities. The relevance of visibility in terms of settlement is that it often marks out refugees (as well as other visible migrants) for differential, and sometimes discriminatory, treatment in the workforce and other societal domains of their host countries (Colic-Peisker, 2009). Colic-Peisker and Tilbury’s (2007) investigation into the effect of visible difference on employment found that African minority groups (from Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea) suffered high levels of unemployment based on race, religion, and ethnic origin, with multiple narratives reflecting racial discrimination in the workforce. Hence, in this paper, we first discuss issues of visible difference for Somali and Sudanese Australians followed by the impact of their particular visible markers on employment.

Issues of visible difference for Somali and Sudanese Australians

The settlement experiences of African refugees abroad are complex and varied. Recent analyses suggested that Somali society was a robust reflection of the effects of globalisation on ethnic groups (Ram, 2008; Sadouni, 2009), particularly those that are continually influenced by external pressures such as remittances, communication from abroad, and intense international attention. This condition is paralleled in many ways by the Sudanese community living abroad because of the intersection of values and social norms from both Australian and Sudanese origin. Mitchell, Kaplan, and Crowe noted that:

. . . the resettlement of the Dinka people from southern Sudan may mean the transition from a pastoral to an urban environment, from a communal to an individualistic culture, from a reliance on strong customary law and tribal traditions around marriage, children and family,

⁴ Most refugees enter the country as permanent residents and shortly thereafter, become Australian citizens. Hence, we use the term “former refugees” throughout this paper as we refer to this community.

⁵ ColicPeisker and Tilbury’s (2007) research funded by an ARC Discovery grant, collected data by conducting 150 questionnaire-based face-to-face interviews with refugees, in addition to a literature review, nine in-depth interviews, and 40 semi-structured interviews with employers.

⁶ Colic-Peisker (2009) explains the difference between “visibility” and “race” by noting that the term visibility is broader, less ambiguous, and less value-laden than the scientifically discredited notion of race.

to a diverse, multicultural society underpinned by values associated with individualism. (2007, pp. 282-283)

Both the Somali and Sudanese populations of Australia have been under scrutiny in recent years due to discussion about immigration policy and the subsequent portrayal of ethnic minority communities in biased, negative media coverage (Anyanwu, 2009). In January 2007, a Sudanese youth's party turned violent and one person was stabbed. The federal government announced a subsequent cut to the intake levels of African refugees, even though the incident was non-racial as it involved only members of the Sudanese community (Matareke, 2009). The Somali community was similarly targeted in August 2009 when four men were arrested in relation to a planned attack on a military base in Melbourne, Victoria. The men hailed from various backgrounds, though it has been alleged all had ties with the Somali extremist group, "Al-Shebab" (Rout, 2009). The event sparked mixed reactions in Australia. Some lawmakers urged a reduction in the intake of refugees from Muslim countries (Charley, 2009) while others, like the Victorian Police Commissioner Simon Overland, suggested that policy makers address negative stereotyping, social disengagement, and isolation within the established Somali community (Anonymous, 2009). In the last few months, Somalia has also been in the news due to heightened piracy in the Gulf of Aden and Arabian Sea (Balana, 2009) and because of an Australian journalist held at ransom in Somalia (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2008)⁷.

The social consequences of negative incidents in the media would appear to have marginalised the Australian Sudanese and Somali communities, the latter on par with an international trend to associate followers of Islam with extremism and hate (see Poynting & Mason, 2007). The incident involving Sudanese youth, which included political and media tirades about the incompatibility of Sudanese people in Australia, brought to the surface some underlying issues about the grounds on which refugee resettlement is criticised. Matareke said that the comments made were relevant to Australia's current social climate because

they highlight the constitution of the racialised Black Sudanese subjectivities, a feature that sways them from one form of marginality as the refugees towards the other form of marginality as "black other". (2009, pp. 136-137)

Markers of visible difference for Somalis in Australia

According to Culturgrams (1999), Somalis are identifiable by their tall, slender physique and narrow facial features. Somali women in the West have been known to wear variations of the *jilbab* (the Somali name for "hijab"), colourful Somali creations like the *garbasaar* or a Western style of religious dress with its smaller headpiece, the *masar* (Akou, 2004). The manner in which Somali former refugees dress is what Akou (2004) calls the projection of nationalism and collective identity through clothing, which has its roots in the resistance to British and Italian colonial powers of years past.

In regard to Somali men, the particular impact that religious dress has on employment in a Western setting is unclear due to a lack of substantial data about their experiences as visibly different African Muslims. Somali men tend to wear conservative Western dress (Akou, 2004) and are sometimes religiously identifiable because of the use of a

⁷ The release of Australian cameraman, Nigel Brennan in November 2009, after 15 months held at ransom, returned from Somalia to the forefront of media attention in Australia.

type of hat called the *koofiyad* (Culturgrams, 1999). Some Muslim men, including Somalis, wear facial hair in line with the preached grooming practices of the prophet, Mohamed (Harcet, 2008).

Somalis are highly visible as African Muslims and are thus marginalised according to discriminatory trends relating to skin colour and religion (see Valentine & Sporton, 2009). This paper hypothesises that the perceptions of Islam in the West have an impact on the significance of highly visible religious markers shown by Somali men because of associations made about extremism and a fear of Islam (see Poynting & Mason, 2007). In addition to certain African racial characteristics, religious clothing and facial hair, Somali women are also interpreted according to visual markers. We hypothesise that the use of the *jilbab* or *garbasaar* negatively exposes Somali women to Western interpretation of Muslim identity and prescribed gender values (Jelle, Guerin & Dyer, 2006).

Markers of visible difference for Sudanese in Australia

For members of the Sudanese population, physical and tribal characteristics render their community highly visible in Australia's predominantly Anglo-Saxon social landscape and also within the broader African community. The Dinka are an ethnic subgroup of Sudan known to practice ritual scarification, whereby keloid-forming cuts are made to beautify the face and/or other body parts (Hrdy, 1987). The scarification is often accompanied by earlobe stretching and is a method by which adolescent Dinka can claim stronger tribal and group ties (Hrdy, 1987). In the United States (Cerino, 2002; Willis & Buck, 2007), members of both the Dinka and Nuer tribes were also reported to have sought the replacement of their lower front teeth stemming from their prior removal during childhood. The act of teeth extraction is a tribal practice aimed at enhancing sound, beautifying the recipient and once again establishing tribal identity (Willis & Buck, 2007). It is not currently known how many Dinka in Australia (43% of the Sudanese population in Australia (DIAC, 2007)) bear tribal scars from their homeland or how many people from both tribes are missing their front teeth.

We suggest that tribal scarification and the extraction of teeth for some people within the Sudanese community in Australia adds an additional element of marginalisation, because it can trigger the fear of the unknown. To date there is no research about the impact of specific Sudanese tribal visibility in Australia that, in context, would appear to impede the resettlement experience of this community. However, Cerino (2002) noted that in the United States (where the Sudanese population is much larger compared with Australia) many Sudanese who felt that their missing teeth contributed to social and language barriers got dental implants, thereby trying to bridge the cultural divide. Court proceedings have taken place in the United States because of discrimination in the workplace relating to the tribal facial scars shown by a Sudanese man. In regard to that incident, Lewis and Jones said the man had a strong case for illegal workplace discrimination "when the court considers the irreconcilable conflict between Western and Sudanese values regarding beauty and self-worth" (2004, p. 158). The following section is a discussion of the impact of such visual differences on the employment context.

Impact of Somali and Sudanese religious visibility on employment in Australia

In recent times there has been a growing trend to question the presence of Islam in Australia because of the association made with terrorism and current global instability

(see Poynting & Mason, 2007). In a Western context, Koshen (2009) discussed how Somali Muslim families chose to live within a communal safety net caused by an apparent disengagement and isolation from the host society. Indeed, Muslim identity as a form of social “otherness” has intensified in recent times (Colic-Peisker, 2005; White, 2009) and its supposed incompatibility with Anglo-Saxon ideals used as a point of comparison when defining those same ideals. Casamiro, Hancock, and Northcote observed that:

It is unfortunate that the difficulties faced by Muslim immigrants tend to be used by critics against them as “proof” of some fundamental incompatibility with the “Australian” way of life. (2007, p. 68)

Generalisations about gender oppression in Muslim countries, as per the *hijab* and its variations, are perhaps the focal point of talk of social incompatibility in Australia. The stigma of this is revealed through the multifaceted marginalisation of Muslim women in resettlement, who “are most clearly the signposts of Islam . . . and hence have served as a ready target for attacks of racial abuse” (Casamiro et al., 2007, p. 67).

Impact of Somali Religious visibility and marginalisation on employment in Australia

The experience of Somali women is complex in so far as refugee women are considered the guardians of tradition (Liverage, 2009) and, in the case of Muslims in the West, a visual reference to the dichotomy between modern and traditional roles (Casamiro et al., 2007). Jelle, Guerin, and Dyer found that Somali women’s “highly visible religious clothing, prescribed gender interactions and traditional family roles have also been found to influence their employment status” (2006, p. 62).

Somali Australians have been included in talk of discrimination in employment based on shared physical characteristics with other African minorities (Correa-Velez & Onsando, 2009; Jelle, Guerin & Dyer, 2006; Torezani et al., 2008). Past research has focused on the double marginalisation of female refugees as females and refugees (Binder & Tosic, 2005), while other researchers such as Semlak, Pearson, Amundson, and Kudak (2008) have emphasized triple marginalisation in some cases because of the additional impact of being African.

We posit that Somali women in Australia face quadruple marginalisation as a result of being female Muslim refugees of African origin. Religion is an additional variable that needs to be understood as a result of the highly visible nature of Somali women’s religious clothing in a predominately secular social context. Research has shown that Somali women in New Zealand faced difficulties in gaining employment due to religious dress (Jelle, Guerin & Dyer, 2006), while other research has shown that Muslim women are subject to a daily sense of fear for being visually different (Casamiro et al., 2007), and suffer direct discrimination in the form of verbal vilification (Tilbury, 2007; Tunnicliff & Tunnicliff, 2005).

Somali Muslim men, however, are not exempt from the impact that visual religious markers have on their settlement, as Tilbury and Colic-Peisker discovered in their study about discrimination in the recruitment process:

In one of the few examples of a respondent providing specific details about disadvantaging characteristics, the same recruitment agent suggested that people from certain Middle Eastern countries like to have moustaches, but need to consider how these are perceived by employers. (2006, pp. 668-669)

Similarly, Colic-Peisker (2009) found that 22 per cent of Africans in her study felt they had been discriminated against in the job market due to religious customs; many of these were deducted from the experiences of Somali Muslims. We posit that religion adds an additional layer of marginalisation for Somali men because of their religious visibility as Muslims. Thus, they face triple marginalisation as Muslim African refugees due to specific visible religious markers such as religious clothing, facial hair and Islamic name, in addition to skin colour and refugee status.

Because most Sudanese in Australia identify themselves as Christian (DIAC, 2007), there is little evidence of the impact of their dress on employment. However, Muslim Sudanese women are known to wear the *hijab* and men, a long white robe called the *jalabia* (Culturgrams, 1999). Regardless of religion, many Sudanese people in Australia are highly visibly different because of tribal scarification to the face and teeth extraction, as explained below.

Impact of Sudanese tribal visibility and marginalisation on employment in Australia

Racial visibility is an important factor to consider in regard to Sudanese Australians because their dark skin colour and tall stature (see Bagnall, 2006; Glanville, 2007) render the Sudanese community highly visible in Australian society. There appears to be a considerable barrier to acculturation based on skin colour in Australia, especially when comparing the Sudanese resettlement experience with that of white Bosnian refugees in the 1990s (see Colic-Peisker, 2005). Similarly, in the United States, resettled Sudanese refugees (Lost Boys of Sudan) were able to assume a connection to a pre-established African American population, as well as gain an understanding of the historical significance of being black in the United States (McKinnon, 2008).

In an Australian context, many Sudanese settlers have been unable to successfully integrate into society. This underlines the racial pretext they face upon arrival to Australia, which is considerably unfavourable when compared to the non-issue of race for Bosnian former refugees in the local Anglo-Saxon Australian population or Sudanese former refugees in the local African American population of the United States. With regard to Sudanese refugees in Australia, we posit that some Sudanese men are additionally marginalised due to other publicly visible markers such as tribal scarification and missing teeth.

Given that a majority of Sudanese female refugees in Australia are Christian (DIAC, 2007), religious dress does not constitute a source of marginalisation except in the case of Muslim Sudanese females who wear the *hijab*. Scarification may still be a visible marker, resulting in the quadruple marginalisation of Sudanese women in Australia, as female African refugees with tribal scars or extracted teeth. Within the body of research about Sudanese refugees in Australia, we have yet to find any conclusions about the impact of scarification and/or teeth extraction on the employment outcomes of female Sudanese former refugees.

Discussion

We suggest that a range of important visible markers such as religious clothing, Islamic identifiers, and markings from tribal rituals, in combination with shared African characteristics, marginalises members of the Sudanese and Somali refugee communities. Such marginalisation may have a negative impact on employment

outcomes, especially if contrasted with those of more visually similar refugees (see Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007).

Religion is a particularly topical issue in contemporary Australian immigration policy as the Muslim population continues to grow. In Colic-Peisker and Tilbury's (2007) study, several Muslim participants were rejected as job applicants because of prayer requirements and dress choices, while some others suspected that their Muslim name was stopping them from getting interviews. One participant noted that in order to get employers to respond to his application, he would change his name from "Mohamed" to "M" on the cover letter (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007), highlighting what Tunnicliff and Tunnicliff (2005) explained as a hesitation by migrants to reveal their cultural or social backgrounds because of corresponding negative stereotypes.

Tilbury and Colic-Peisker (2006) studied the discursive devices used by Australian employers when interviewing or handling refugee or immigrants' applications, by suggesting that talk of racism was often deflected through their association of relevant and irrelevant issues with the rejection of applicants. Some employers did not recognise disadvantages other than those related to English language proficiency, therefore raising an important critique about the study of intercultural communication based on employer perceptions. This, according to Tilbury and Colic-Peisker (2006), is because racism is not a phenomenon that many employers deem necessary to address.

Likewise, it is also difficult to measure the impact of discrimination on employment through the use of unemployment figures for humanitarian settlers. Six months after arrival to Australia, 71 per cent of humanitarian settlers are unemployed, but that rate is reduced to 43 per cent after 18 months (DIAC, 2009b). Tilbury (2007) noted that in 2001, the unemployment rate of 19.1 per cent for Muslims in Australia was significantly larger than the 7.4 per cent national average, and that those Muslims practising daily religious acts or wearing Islamic dress were likely to report difficulties in finding work. Similarly, Foroutan (2008) discovered that communication skills had less impact on job attainment for female Muslims in Australia than any noticeable connection to Islam, such as religious dress or Muslim names. That author found that second-generation Muslim women in Australia were half as likely to attain employment as second-generation non-Muslim women from the same country, presumably all of whom were native speakers of English (Foroutan, 2008), and that second-generation Muslim women were half as likely as non-Muslim women born in Australia to be employed. This is important because the results could be seen to show the stratification of individual social disadvantages for refugees based on race and, even more so, religion.

Additionally, the above-mentioned result undermines the validity of talk about poor language skills and their impact on the long-term settlement prospects of ethnic minority groups. Although the Somali and Sudanese communities have grown rapidly in recent time, the presence of such communities in Australia dates back to over a decade (DIMIA, 2005). It would appear that, in the long term, visual differences will continue to transcend refugees' settlement in Australia, because race also reflects the stratification of an ethnically and religiously diverse, but predominantly Anglo-Saxon society, into levels of status. Colic-Peisker noted that:

Clearly, whiteness is not just about the skin colour, but also about class, status, language and other features of the individual that can be discerned in social interaction. (2005, p. 622)

Once again it is important to consider the severity of the African experience in Australia because past research (Colic-Peisker, 2005; Dhanji, 2009; Torezani et al., 2008; Correa-

Velez and Onsando, 2009) has shown that, even with tertiary education and advanced levels of English, African minority groups continue to suffer inflated levels of unemployment.

To address issues of visible difference is both a consequence of, and a solution to, the unstable relationship between marginalised groups and mainstream Australian society. The Somali and Sudanese communities of Australia are central to this struggle and are reflections of the meagre socio-economic prospects granted at the discretion of the level of marginalisation to which they are subject. The cycle of refugee adaptation and acculturation needs urgent attention in an attempt to avoid what Tom Calma, the National Race Discrimination Commissioner, explained as:

decreased feelings of safety and security in public and community spaces experiencing insulting, racially-based language, unfair treatment by police based on race unmet education, [and] health and employment needs. (Calma, 2009)

According to the 1975 Racial Discrimination Act, Australia's obligations under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination are to promote equality before the law for all persons, regardless of their race, colour or national or ethnic origin, and make discrimination against people on the basis of their race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin unlawful (AHRC, 2009). In relation to African settlement in Australia, Cox, Cooper, and Adepoju (1999) suggested that African minority groups may not be discriminated against entirely on racial grounds, rather because of the unknown and unfamiliar entity they represent in Australia's social landscape. Thus, we suggest that the multiple layers of marginalisation that may affect the Sudanese and Somali communities need to be closely examined to reduce the impact of such "unknowns" in a society that remains reactive to high visible difference.

Conclusion

The case of Somali male and female job seekers in Australia calls for more investigation in relation to the marginalisation they face as a result of gender, race, refugee status, and religion (Islam). Similarly, the case of Sudanese male and female job seekers in Australia should be more closely addressed in regards to the marginalisation they face as a result of gender, race, refugee status, tribal markings, and, in some cases, religion (Islam).

Misunderstandings brought about through a lack of knowledge of cultural differences, religious practices, and the representation of these differences in the form of various visible markers, may result in unemployment, reduced well-being, and low life satisfaction for refugees. The transparency of information about Australia's social climate and employment prospects for former refugees is henceforth crucial in preparing incoming refugees for their arrival to Australia. In Canada, Danso's study revealed that before arriving to Canada, "most respondents were confident about getting unhindered access to well-paid jobs, financial security, and abundant opportunities for self-improvement" (2002, p. 6). Similarly, anecdotal evidence from conversations with Sudanese and Somali community leaders indicates that prior to coming to Australia, very few were aware of the hardships they would face in gaining employment. Much of the information they received prior to their departure painted an optimistic picture of life in Australia, especially in relation to the ease with which they could find employment.

For employers, holding stereotypical and uninformed views about the “other” results in an overall reduction to the diversity of Australian organisations that will be increasingly required to service a diverse globalised marketplace and consumer base (also see Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007). Meanwhile, empowerment through knowledge for ethnic and religiously diverse minorities to access and be informed about their rights in employment is crucial to legitimising current legislation and curtailing acts of racism at their core.

While hard to fathom in a society that prides itself on multicultural values, the historic, modern and, at present, institutionalised forms of racism for which Australia is increasingly becoming known, will impede on refugees’ access to civil liberties as Australian citizens and will exacerbate the socio-economic problems currently faced by their communities. The multiple layers of marginalisation that Somali and Sudanese refugees face in an employment context due to visible difference may explain some discrimination in the labour market. Discrimination is a socially institutionalised barrier that African refugees alone cannot overcome. Overcoming marginalisation caused by discrimination will require support from the political powerbase of Australia and a more inclusive approach to multiculturalism, wherein visibly different minority groups can look forward to improved employment outcomes for themselves and their children.

References

- Akou, H. M. (2004). Nationalism without a nation: Understanding the dress of Somali women in Minnesota. In J. Allman (Ed.), *Fashioning Africa: Power and the politics of dress* (pp. 517-552). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Anyanwu, C. (2009). Socioeconomic benefits of migration: African migrants in Australia and media representation. In *Refereed proceedings of the Australia New Zealand Communication Association Conference, Wellington, July 9-11*. Retrieved from <http://anzca08.massey.ac.nz/massey/depart/cob/conferences/anzca-2008/anzca08-papers.cfm>
- Australian Broadcasting Corporation. (2008, August 22). *Australian journalist “abducted in Somalia”*. Retrieved February 8, 2010, from <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/23/2344652.htm>
- Australian Human Rights Commission. (2009). *Race discrimination*. Retrieved from http://www.hreoc.gov.au/racial_discrimination/index.html
- Australianpolitics.com (2009). *Pauline Hanson’s One Nation: Immigration, Population and Social Cohesion Policy 1998*. Retrieved from <http://www.australianpolitics.com/parties/onenation/immigration-policy-98.shtml>
- Bagnall, D. (2006). Out of Africa. *Bulletin with Newsweek*, 124(4), 6515.
- Balana, C. (2009, April 22). Somali pirates release 23 RP sailors, ship. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*.
- Calma, T. (2009, March 16). *Research hopes to offer insight into experiences of African Australians*. Retrieved from http://www.hreoc.gov.au/about/media/speeches/race/2009/20090316_African.html

- Casamiro, S., Hancock, P. & Northcote, J. (2007). Isolation and insecurity: Resettlement issues among Muslim refugee women in Perth, Western Australia. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 42(1), 55-69.
- Charley, P. (Executive Producer). (2009, August 10). Australian lawmaker urges immigration cuts to combat extremism. *Dateline* [Television broadcast]. Sydney, Australia: ABC TV.
- Cerino, V. (2002). *UNMC restore lost teeth in Sudanese refugees*. Retrieved from http://app1.unmc.edu/publicaffairs/todaysite/sitefiles/today_full.cfm?match=618
- Colic-Peisker, V. (2005). At least you're the right colour: Identity and social inclusion of Bosnian refugees in Australia. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 31(4), 615-638.
- Colic-Peisker, V. (2009). Visibility, settlement success and life satisfaction in three refugee communities in Australia, *Ethnicities*, 9(2), 175-199.
- Colic-Peisker, V. & Tilbury, F. (2003). Active and passive resettlement: The influence of support services and refugees' own resources on resettlement style. *International Migration*, 41(5), 61-91.
- Colic-Peisker, V. & Tilbury, F. (2007). Integration into the Australian labour market: The experience of three "visibly different" groups of recently arrived refugees, *International Migration*, 45(1), 59-85.
- Colic-Peisker, V. & Tilbury, F. (2008) Being black in Australia: A case study of intergroup relations. *Race and Class*, 49(4), 38-56.
- Correa-Velez, I. & Onsando, G. (2009). Educational and occupational outcomes amongst African men from refugee backgrounds living in urban and regional Southeast Queensland. *Australasian Review of African Studies*, 30(2), 114-127.
- Cox, D., Cooper, B. & Adepoju, M. (1999). *The settlement of Black Africans in Australia*. Melbourne: La Trobe University Department of Social Work and Social Policy.
- Culturgrams: The nations around us*. (1999). Provo, UT: Brigham Young University, David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies.
- Danso, R. (2002). From "there" to "here": An investigation of the initial settlement experience. *GeoJournal*, 56(1), 3-14.
- Dhanji, S. (2009). Welcome or unwelcome? Integration issues and the resettlement of former refugees from the Horn of Africa and Sudan in metropolitan Melbourne. *Australasian Review of African Studies*, 30(2), 152-178.
- Department of Immigration and Citizenship. (2007). *Sudanese community profile*. Retrieved from <http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/government-programs/settlement-planning/pdf/community-profile-sudan.pdf>
- Department of Immigration and Citizenship. (2008). *Settler Arrivals 2008-2009*. Retrieved from http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/settler-arrivals/settler_arrivals0809.pdf
- Department of Immigration and Citizenship. (2009a). *Annual report 2008-2009*. Retrieved from www.immi.gov.au/about/reports/annual/2008-09

- Department of Immigration and Citizenship. (2009b). *Fact sheet 14: Migrant labour market outcomes*. Retrieved October 15, 2009 from <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/14labour.htm>
- Department of Immigration and Citizenship. (2009c). *Fact sheet 60: Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program*. Retrieved from <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/60refugee.htm>
- Department of Immigration and Citizenship. (2009d). *Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS)*. Retrieved from <http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/government-programs/settlement-programs/ihss.htm>
- Department of Immigration and Indigenous Affairs. (2005). *Australia's support for humanitarian entrants 2004-2005*. Retrieved from <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/visa-entry/pdf/ashe.pdf>
- Glanville, B. (2007, January 16). Refugee settlement program grows in Toowoomba. *7:30 Report*. [Television broadcast]. Sydney, Australia: ABC TV.
- Foroutan, Y. (2008). Women's employment, religion and multiculturalism: Socio-demographic emphasis. *Journal of Population Research*, 25(1), 63-90.
- Hrdy, D. B. (1987). Cultural practices contributing to the transmission of human immunodeficiency virus in Africa. *Reviews of Infectious Diseases*, 9(6), 1109-1119.
- Harcet, M. (2008). Qur'an dress code as the basis of egalitarianism in Islam. *Etnološka istraživanja/Ethnological Researches*, 12(1), 191-211.
- Jelle, H.A., Guerin P. & Dyer, S. (2006). Somali women's experiences in paid employment in New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Employment Relations*, 31(2), 61-70.
- Jupp, J. (2002). *From White Australia to Woomera: The story of Australian immigration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Koshen, H. I. A. (2009). Strengths in Somali families. *Marriage & Family Review*, 41(1), 77-79.
- Lewis, D. & Jones, J. (2004). Culture shock in the workplace: The legal treatment of cultural behavior under Title VII. *Oklahoma City University Law Review*, 29, 139-163.
- Liverage, A. (2009). Life below a "language threshold": Stories of Turkish marriage migrant women in Denmark. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 16, 229-247.
- Matareke, K. (2009). Embracing the Aussie identity: Theoretical reflections on challenges and prospects for African-Australian youths. *Australasian Review of African Studies*, 30(1), 129-143.
- McKinnon, S. L. (2008). Unsettling resettlement: Problematizing "Lost Boys of Sudan" resettlement and identity. *Western Journal of Communication*, 72(4), 397-414.
- Middle East Policy Council (2002). *Arab world studies notebook: Muslim populations worldwide*. Retrieved from <http://www.mepc.org/workshops/popstat.asp>
- Mitchell, J., Kaplan, I. & Crowe, L. (2006). Two cultures: One life. *Oxford University Press and Community Development Journal*, 42(3), 282-298
- Pittaway, E. & Bartolomei, L. (2001). Refugees, race and gender. *Refuge*, 19(6), 21-32.

- Poynting, S. & Mason, V. (2007). The resistible rise of Islamophobia: Anti-Muslim racism in the UK and Australia before 11 September 2001. *Journal of Sociology*, 43(1), 61-86.
- Ram, M. (2008). Forms of capital, mixed embeddedness and Somali enterprise. *Work, Employment and Society*, 22(3), 427-466.
- Rout, M. (2009, October 10). *Jihad's motley crew*. Retrieved from <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/features/jihads-motley-crew/story-e6frg6z6-1225792580038>
- Sadouni, S. (2009). "God is not unemployed": Journeys of Somali refugees in Johannesburg. *African Studies*, 68(2), 235-249.
- Semlak, J. L., Pearson, J. C., Amundson, N. G. & Kudak, A. D. H. (2008). Navigating dialectic contradictions experienced by female African refugees during cross-cultural adaptation. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 37(1), 44-64.
- Terrorism? It's all our own fault because we're racists. (2009, August 10). *The Australian*.
- Tilbury, F. (2007). "Because of our appearance we are always suspect": Religious discrimination in the Australian employment market. In *Refereed proceedings of The Australian Sociological Association/Sociological Association of Aotearoa New Zealand, Auckland, December 4-7*. Retrieved from <http://www.tasa.org.au/conferences/conferencepapers07/papers/226.pdf>
- Tilbury, F. & Colic-Peisker, V. (2006). Deflecting responsibility in employer talk about race discrimination. *Discourse Society*, 1, 651-676.
- Torezani, S., Colic-Peisker, V. & Fozdar, F. (2008). Looking for a missing link: Formal employment services and social networks in refugees' job search. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 29(2), 135-152.
- Tunncliff, A. D. & Tunncliff, L. M. (2005). *Life is not filled with colour: A study investigating the demand for a family support worker for the culturally and linguistically diverse community of the Gold Coast*. Retrieved from <http://www.tunncliff.com.au/USERIMAGES/Life%20is%20not%20filled%20with%20colour%20report.pdf>
- Valentine, G. & Sporton, D. (2009). "How other people see you, it's like nothing that's inside": The impact of processes of disidentification and disavowal on young people's subjectivities. *Sociology*, 43(4), 735-751.
- Willis, M. S. & Buck, J. S. (2007). From Sudan to Nebraska: Dinka and Nuer refugee diet dilemmas. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 39(5), 273-280.
- White, R. (1996). Racism, policing & ethnic youth gangs. *Current Issues in Criminal Justice* 7(3), 302-313.
- White, R. (2009). Ethnic diversity and differential policing in Australia: The good, the bad and the ugly. *International Migration & Integration*, 10, 359-375.