

Runyararo Sihle Chivaura

# Blackness as a Defining Identity

Mediated Representations and the  
Lived Experiences of African Immigrants  
in Australia

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ISBN 978-981-32-9542-1                      ISBN 978-981-32-9543-8 (eBook)  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-32-9543-8>

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*If you are the big tree,  
Let me tell you that: we are the small axe  
Sharpened ready, ready to cut you down*  
—Bob Marley (1973)

# Preface

This book explores the gap between—how African immigrants living in Australia are represented in the media when contrasted to their lived experiences. African immigrants are currently considered by the Australian government to be a statistically significant population, yet very little research has been conducted into how they regard their social placing in Australian society. The challenge associated with academic research in Australia that has investigated African immigrants and the media is threefold. First, almost all research tends to be conducted through a content analysis of media sources. This presents numerous problems. Deploying content analysis does not provide the original data. Instead, it (re)organises texts crafted for a particular audience and for a specific purpose. Second, in conducting the content analysis, the main focus of all the studies conducted in Australia emphasised the Sudanese population. This displaces 99% of the African population. Third, there is a lack of critical investigation through the use of contemporary theory to better understand the consequences of the negative representations.

My original contribution to knowledge is to capture the media-related experiences of the wider African population as a frame to understand a racial, ethnic and cultural group. In delving into the group's everyday lives, I seek to investigate the roles the media and social perceptions play on how the group produces and regulates diasporic identities. In previous Australian research, Africans tend to predominately feature as objects of mediated representations. As objects, they occupy the part of the observed, in which they are positioned in social and political discourse that is bound in a particular ideological and social construction. They are written about and not for, thus removing them as participants of the discourse. Giving African immigrants in Australia an empowered position of a subject within discourse would allow the opportunity for the group to have a say in how they think they are positioned in society, what space they are offered and how this bears on their lives.

This study is situated in Cultural Studies, a paradigm that analyses how discourse and social contexts have an impact on the lived experience of an individual or group. This book engages with the theories of one of the pioneers of the field, the late Prof. Stuart Hall. The field of Cultural Studies allows for the use of varied

theories and methodologies to capture the experience of a social phenomenon. In this book, I have used three varied approaches to best conceptualise the African experience. The first of these was discourse analysis, I criticised the use of content analysis in the academic study of Africans. However, in this instance, I conducted a media analysis of how print media over a 12-month period represented African populations. This was marshalled to establish the social position Africans occupied and how language was used to achieve this aim. Stuart Hall (1987, 1990, 1996b, 1997c, 2000, 2013) maintained that language has the power to fix meanings that become associated with particular groups. Language is formed within a culture; therefore, it is imperative to look at language in its originating context as well as a tool of empowerment and subjugation.

The second study investigated how African immigrants in Australia used the media and the social consequences that the representations had on their social lives. I employed the use of a cross-sectional survey to cast a wide net on a range of respondents. This was in order to understand the individuals sharing their experiences, how they believed they were understood in society and how this impacted their lives. This was a novel research approach in the study of African immigrants in Australia. It provided a dataset of 101 unique responses that allowed some power to African immigrants; to share their experiences and become active participants in the discourse. This study also sought to recruit 10 interview participants for the following study.

The final study was based on the Oral History Methodology. This methodology was selected because I wanted to transform and agitate the power relations around African migrants. I wanted them to share their stories of their lives in Australia, their pasts, present and futures based on what meanings they derived from their everyday social interactions and media consumption. Again, this was another novel study method used for this particular group. It was imperative for me to give the participants the space to articulate their experiences, in their own words and create their own perspectives. They have long been a silenced group in Australian society and were not afforded the same space as other migrant groups.

Through this research, I found that there was resentment amongst Africans in how the group was represented in Australian media. The participants unanimously agreed that they were not treated the same as their peers in professional, casual or legislative capacities. What it means to be African within the media seemed to be lodged in colonial discourse. In this study, the participants showed that they were a contemporary, dynamic and intelligent group. They felt that they had the right to be perceived as any other ethnic group, however their skin colour carried a currency as to how much they were valued in society.

The pinnacle of this research is to track a shift in the dominating discourse surrounding Africans. Research into the African population in Australia seems to be based on trying to contain the group as primitive and inept. This type of research does not allow for the thorough investigation of the social and economic value that

this group brings. By engaging in Critical Theory, it is possible to uncover how African immigrants negotiate mediated discourse, the social context in which it is received and the lived experiences the group derives from it.

Adelaide, Australia

Runyararo Sihle Chivaura

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my families:

The Chivaura's, Victoria, Keith and Munya, we did it! Glory be to God.

The Paananen's Thank you for your kindness, love and support.

The Manhire's Thank you for guiding me along the way.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction: Why Cultural Studies? Why Stuart Hall?



**Abstract** This book provides a thorough and critical engagement with Stuart Hall's theories of media, discourse, race and ethnicity. It is my intention to present Stuart Hall's version of Cultural Studies, his significant contributions to the field, alongside some of the limitations that are present in his research theorisations. In my engagement with Hall, my intentions are not to highlight the superficial acclaims commonly associated with his physical and oratory attributes. Rather, my emphasis is placed on Hall as a product of colonisation, a British immigrant and a racialized subject suffering from a crisis of identity. In this book, Hall's experience as an outsider with an insider's perspective on a cultural phenomenon mirrors my own, as I seek to situate myself as both the researched and researcher. By having an African background as well as being a recent immigrant to Australia provides me a unique viewpoint in which I am placed in the Australian context. Stuart Hall's biography is useful in providing a 'roadmap' for conducting a 'significant analysis and understanding of the functioning of particular cultures'. It is through the conjuncture of the past and present theoretical perspectives that one can better understand the context of the lives of African immigrants in Australia.

**Keywords** Stuart Hall · Cultural studies · Representation · Media · Discourse · African immigrant · Immigrant · Cultural theory · African research

Thinking about my own sense of identity, I realise it has always depended on that fact of being a migrant, on the difference from the rest of you...the colonised subject is always other than where he or she is. Or is able to speak from Hall (1987, p. 44).

This book offers strong engagement with the theorisations of Stuart Hall, which forms the foundation on which I designed the research questions and methodologies. It is my intention to present Stuart Hall's version of Cultural Studies, his significant contributions to the field, alongside some of the limitations that are present in his research theorisations. In my engagement with Hall, my intentions are not to highlight the superficial acclaims commonly associated with his physical and oratory attributes. Rather, my emphasis is placed on Hall as a product of colonisation, a British immigrant and a racialized subject suffering from a crisis of identity. It is of paramount importance to locate these three factors as contributing to how Stuart Hall viewed the world. In a career spanning almost 50 years, he sought to bring a new way



of looking at cultures, ideological institutions, political and economic environments in which they took place. In his earlier and perhaps most thought-provoking work, Stuart Hall was theorising about a new set of challenges that were being faced by new immigrant groups around him (Alexander, 2009; Hall, 2000, 2002; Jhally, 2015; Lewis, 2000; Solomos, 2014).

If one takes a closer look at Hall's work on race, ethnicity, representation<sup>1</sup> and politics, it is clear to see that he was confronting the forces that were limiting his existence. His middle-class colonial upbringing had not prepared him for what he was faced with in England. As he revealed

'I knew England from the inside. But I'm not and will never be English (Chen, 2004, p. 490)'. This feeling of inclusiveness through colonialism had not broken down the barriers that had been put in place by politics, the media and the economy. Perhaps as a direct realisation by the state, that waves of colonised people were striking back wanting to claim a piece of what was rightfully theirs created an unbending and hostile British state (Hall, 1980; Swaine, 2009; The Telegraph, 2007). It was the understanding of this contextual background that Hall began to theorise the precarious nature of the non-white immigrant in England. Issues of race, ethnicity and ideology were beginning to be dissected with a cultural lens. Hall, however, was more modest in his acceptance of this ground breaking analysis, advocating that he was more at the margins rather than the centre of these ideas (Connell, 2014a, b). I disagree with Hall in his refusal to acknowledge his significant contributions to the field of cultural studies, particularly with regard to race and ethnicity. In his research on the representation of Black British and Caribbean immigrants, his position was to reflect and project their experiences almost from a viewpoint of having lived it – thus projecting himself in the centre position. My strong suspicion is that in wanting to be in the margins, Hall was attempted to reject the self-indulgent 'centre' label.

In his view of culture, he sought to view it as being comprised of two distinct factors. The first being 'something which is deeply subjective and personal' the second (and also simultaneously) 'as a structure you live' (Chen, 2004, p. 488). Culture is not commonly attributed as being an individual possession, but much rather a shared experience. However, in modern society, the communal definition of culture is being challenged by the multiplicity of cultural communities. It is now possible to belong to multiple realms of culture varying from the digital to real-life community and Hall viewed the individual as having autonomy of the selection. However, this autonomy did not go unchallenged, the structures that he discusses are ideological structures that seek to regulate society such as political, media and legal institutions. Under these

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<sup>1</sup>This term has received vast theorization (Abric, 2001; Deaux & Wiley, 2007; Hall, 1997a; Nunn, 2010; Saptefrati, 2008; Trebbe & Schoenhagen, 2011). Definitions of this term come from numerous fields of study such as psychology, media studies and politics. Thus, the meaning of the term can vary depending on its usage. For instance, representation could be taken to mean 'an accurate depiction of an object or person' (Ahmed & Matthes, 2016; Rasinger, 2010). Representation could also be 'the mirror of society and its core values' (Fabian, 1990; Gale, 2004; Shaw, 2013). Representation can also be the re-presentation of an object or person in the desired way that the producer of the message wants it to be read (Deaux & Wiley, 2007; Doise, Spini, & Clémence, 1999; Nunn, 2010). In this book, I am using representation to mean the (re)presentation of Africans. Representation is not intended to mean the depiction of African individuals but the composition of images, audio and ideas that depict these images. What are the active agendas being put forward and what informs these agendas?

institutions, social issues such as race, immigration and society are discursively and, in some cases, legislatively debated and ruled upon. Take for instance Australia's new Prime Minister, Scott Morrison's views on immigration and who deserves to be in Australia (Kwan, 2018) or immigrant groups that are not welcome in Australia (Karp, 2018).

## 1.1 Why This Book is Important

But this experience of, as it were, experiencing oneself as both object, of encountering oneself from the outside, as another – an other – sort of person next door, is uncanny

—Stuart Hall (Meeks, 2007, p. 269)

This book provides a thorough and critical engagement with Stuart Hall's theories of media, discourse, race and ethnicity. Stuart Hall is celebrated as a key figure in the field of Cultural Studies however in recent times this acclaim has tended to predominantly focus on the development of the field (Goggin, 2016). This omits critically examining and engaging with his theories and arguments. As a result, in the use of Hall as a key figure of cultural studies has been engaged with separate from the theory, Alexander (2009, p. 459) maintains

While this has given rise to innovative and important work that has taken Hall's insights to new times, places and people, too often this process has stripped the depth and complexity of the originals, reducing them to a form of conceptual shorthand or convenient, oft rehearsed and repeated epigrams that substitute for rigorous analysis.

This book seeks to resurrect and apply the theorizations of Stuart Hall. It is not a simple matter of highlighting the famous quotes, but engaging with their meaning, their utilisation as well as critiquing Hall's perspective on specific matters. This type of active interrogation is what I strongly believe needs to be revived in the study of culture particularly in the Australian context. It is through challenging the unspoken, critiquing the banal and exercising academic rigor that ideological phenomena can begin to be unravelled. Stuart Hall's work, unlike other theorists such as Bourdieu, Foucault or Baudrillard—did not take the form of mass book publications. Much of Hall's publications from the Centre of Contemporary Cultural Studies till his retirement from the Open University were joint efforts with other researchers. 'Such was Hall's intellectual generosity that, unlike almost every other leading intellectual working in the arts and humanities, he never published a monograph on his own. His ideas were there to stimulate and provoke; to join a conversation that others would take up' (Connell and Hilton, 2014).

Hall was, as Carrington and Back (2016) put it 'the last of the great public intellectuals' he was a prominent media personality, gave public lectures and most of his later work was written from interviews he had conducted with other researchers (Akomfrah, 2013; Connell, 2014a, b; Solomos, 2014). Hall was true and timely in

his research, through his career he seemed to have his hand on the pulse at significant moments. These moments were located in the study of what is now commonly known as everyday life (De Certeau, 1984; Goffman, 1959, 2012; Mackay, 1997). This field of study emerged from the early work of postmodernists and social psychologists analysing popular culture. Carrington and Back (2016) best capture Hall's enchantment with the popular—they stress, to Hall popular culture was not just an indulgence of the superficial but rather it was layered with 'public political issues passing as banal triviality'. It was in the workings of everyday life that Hall found meta-narratives/ideologies of politics, economy and culture intertwining with the ordinary. In his analysis of the working class, immigrants and political figures, it was how ideologies were being made to pass as being the normal functioning of life when in actual fact they demanded intervention and critiquing. In reference to Stuart Hall, Alexander (2009, p. 459) quotes Grossberg (2007, p. 99) remarks on Hall's work as being 'theoretical work of a seemingly loose and, porous but not without rigor'. Hall's theorizations were in sync with the specifics of 'concrete' moments. This approach of keeping his hand on the pulse of cultural movements made him part of the experience. Theorising at the moment and being part of the event provided a unique perspective that other earlier Cultural Theorists could not offer. What makes Hall's relevant to this book is the way in which he managed to capture the issues concerned with new immigrant groups particularly those of non-white backgrounds with particular emphasis on their location in themes of politics, economy and the media. Carrington and Back (2016) maintain Stuart Hall had 'an understanding of the black experience in British culture and politics of the postcolonial society'. In *Policing the Crisis* (Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke, & Roberts, 1978, 2013), despite Hall not being the lead author, there is a sense of urgency created through attempting to capture the uncertain climate that was emerging in Britain. This sense of inclusive research is replicated in *The Young Englanders* (1967) as well as in *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices* (Hall, 1997a; Jhally & Hall, 1997). Hall's migratory history against the colonial background that he lived in Jamaica provided key ingredients for him to place himself in these phenomena. He was positioned as an insider based on his colonial background; he understood what it was to be British. However, by the colour of his skin and migratory background, his body symbolised his outsider position.

In this book, Hall's experience as an outsider with an insider's perspective on a cultural phenomenon mirrors my own, as I seek to situate myself as both the researched and researcher. By having an African background as well as being a recent immigrant to Australia provides me a unique viewpoint in which I am placed in the Australian context. Similar to Hall's experience with the West Indian community in 1950s Britain, I am situated as both the insider but with and outsider's perspective. My task in this introductory chapter is to highlight how Stuart Hall's theorizations on immigrants, the media and the socio-political discourse intersect race, ethnicity and belonging. It is through the understanding of the how these themes have functioned in the past in other geographical regions and political times that we can begin to understand some of the 'forces at play' in the present. These include 'discourses surrounding policing evidenced in *Policing the Crisis* (Hall et al., 1978, 2013). The

manifestation and dissemination of political ideologies maintained in Thatcherism: *A New Stage?* (Hall, 1980). How the understanding of race, nationhood and globalisation function in postcolonial times echoes through a majority of Hall's publications (Akomfrah, 2013; Hall, 1992, 1996a, 1997b, 2000). Stuart Hall's biography is useful in providing a 'roadmap' for conducting a 'significant analysis and understanding' of the functioning of particular cultures. It is through the conjuncture of the past and present theoretical perspectives that one can better understand the context of the lives of African immigrants<sup>2</sup> in Australia. As evidenced, Hall's ideas are pivotal because they emerged from examining the day-to-day lives of social groups in real-life situations. This is what makes these theorizations powerful in capturing the real (Alexander, 2009; Rojeck, 2003).

## 1.2 Political Engagement and Cultural Studies

Perhaps one of the chief reasons that continues the relevance of British Cultural Studies, as opposed to work that has been carried out in other geographical locations such as the United States and Australia; is the ability of British Cultural Studies to locate and underpin social phenomena in the macro and micro-narratives of politics, power and the people. Expertly linking the relationship of particular political ideologies (Gilroy, 1990, 2007; Hall, 1980; Rule, 1991) and areas of unrest and angst in society (Hall, 2013; Lawrence, 2004, 2007). In the championing of British Cultural Studies, it is not to undermine the contributions made by other Cultural Theorists globally. My aim in this book is to critically demonstrate the importance of utilising British Cultural Studies in the study of race, politics and social relations. Chen maintains

This is a problem in so far as it seems the internationalisation of Cultural Studies has somehow tended to undermine its political edge...in the process of institutionalisation in the academy, cultural studies can easily lose that 'edge.' (Chen, 2004, p. 395)

In response to Chen's comment on the problems associated with the internationalisation of Cultural Studies, Stuart Hall maintains (diplomatically) that he does not regulate what is and what is not Cultural Studies. Instead, Hall advocates that even though the tradition started in Birmingham, England, he does not own the rights or does he want to police how it is applied to differing contexts internationally. In Turner's (2012) disdain for what he terms the colonial following of the British Cultural Studies particularly in the Australian context, he highlights one of the core issues impacting the field. Cultural Studies in most institutions in Australia tends to bring up laughable remarks (Brabazon & Redhead, 2016). It is a field that has

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<sup>2</sup>In this book, I am using the term African immigrant as an inclusive term of all Africans in Australia. I acknowledge that there are different entry pathways into Australia such as through work visas; student visas and marriage, asylum. Some of the African population have become Australian citizens. The use of the African immigrant is being used to reflect that this African population is not indigenous to Australia.

been replaced by pseudo studies of culture without the rigor of critical theoretical and contextual analysis. Turner (2012) attributes the decline of Cultural Studies in Australian Universities to

University funding regimes, changes in the positioning of the humanities and liberal arts within these regimes, as well as a neo-liberal tendency towards either medical-izing or commercialising the preferred models of research practice – especially in state-funded university systems. (Turner, 2012, p. 138)

In their podcast entitled *Cultural Studies and its Futures*, Brabazon and Redhead (2016) emphasise there has been a drastic decline in the research and instruction of Cultural Studies from the early 2000s, Cultural Studies seemed not to move on with the times. After the global financial crash, there seemed to be a crisis in how the arts came to understand this phenomenon. The lack of critical and contemporary conceptualisation seemed to mark the new standard of watered-down Cultural Studies and have become blended in larger more established and conservative departments particularly media and communication studies and other sociological departments. Brabazon and Redhead (2016) maintain that this caused the loss of political, economic and social analysis in the study of everyday life. This move seems to undermine why the field was established initially, Grossberg (2006, p. 2) maintains that ‘Cultural Studies seeks to embrace complexity and contingency and to avoid the many faces and forms of reductionism’. This is the major criticism that I have faced with the undertaking of Cultural Studies in Australia and in the United States, there is a loss of the critical application of theory to real events (Ang & Stratton, 1998; Gatt, 2011; Goggin, 2016; Nolan, Burgin, Farquharson, & Marjoribanks, 2016). Instead, there tends to be a *laissez-faire* approach to conducting cultural analysis, one that is not based in theory or critically focusing on a particular social or political context. Hall (1996b) maintains that in the undertaking of Cultural Studies one requires ‘rigorous application of ...the premise of historical specificity’ (Hall, 1996b, p. 50). This is the fundamental reason why I chose to utilise British Cultural Studies in this book. In Hall’s analysis of cultural phenomena, he always maintained *the object’s* or individuals’ role and function in the grander scheme of things. This is particularly captured by his arguments about race and ethnicity, ‘I have never worked on race and ethnicity as a kind of subcategory. I have always worked on the whole social formation which is racialized’ (Hall, 2001, p. 30). In relation to this book, the biggest missing part that dissuaded me from using Australian Cultural Studies was the lack of racial and ethnic theorisation being embedded in the larger context of social issues. There tends to be a siloing in terms of research focus whereby cultural issues are argued without a cultural basis (Matereke, 2009; Nolan, Farquharson, Politoff, & Marjoribanks, 2011; O’Doherty & Lecouteur, 2007; Windle, 2008, Majavu, 2017). Issues related to the challenges facing my multiculturalism (Ang & Stratton, 1998; Hage, 2008; Poynting & Mason, 2008), race (Due, 2008; Spencer, 2006; Williams, 2015), or immigration (Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2015; Durham, 2004; McGuire, Casanova, & Davis, 2016; Nolan et al., 2011) are often investigated outside social and political contexts. This provides an analysis that is not grounded in any particular context which (in some cases) can trivialise or make the investigation seem like a one-time

occurrence. In this book, despite my advocacy for the use of British Cultural Studies, I also critique some of its applications. There are areas of contestation that I provide and propose. I offer points of difference that I feel challenge the traditional British way of analysing culture and race in proceeding sections.

### 1.3 My Original Contribution to Cultural Knowledge

In the task of conducting a Cultural Investigation, it is not a task that lends itself to a simple linear method but rather varied and diverse methods and methodologies. Previous research undertaken in Australia regarding African immigrants has tended to use content analysis as the chief research method. In the heavy adoption of this method, other themes and realities that exist within the culture and ethnic group continually go untheorized. In this text, I propose to use the Cultural Studies research field as a platform on which to build a new type of research practice into Africans living in Australia. Cultural Studies is interdisciplinary in nature; thus it lends itself to the implementation of diverse methods to arrive at a clearer answer. My original contribution to Cultural knowledge, in this text, is applying Cultural Theory with emphasis on the ideas of Stuart Hall and other poststructural injections in examining how Africanness<sup>3</sup> is constructed in the Australian context and how this differs from the lived realities of African-born individuals. This topic is of paramount importance because Africans are an emerging migrant group in Australia and numbers have been steadily increasing since 1996 when the group became a statistically recognised population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008; Hugo, 2009). Currently, (before the full publication of the 2016 Australian census data), there is an estimated 250,000 Africans residing in Australia, however, this number is based on 2006 Australian census data (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008). Some analysts estimate the number of Africans in Australia to be closer to 500,000 (Mercer, 2010). It is also crucial to investigate this group because of their economic contributions to the Australian society. In 2015, it was reported that Africans (notably Zimbabweans and South Africans) were the third- and fourth-biggest economic contributors in Australia (Masanauskas, 2015). Albeit, Africans rarely feature in the media, when they do feature there tends to be an overrepresentation of particular nationalities involved in certain types of negative discourse.

In analysing how the Australian government and media interact and respond to African immigrants, there is a focus on what Alexander (2009, p. 471) phrases as 'framing ideologies of national and racial crisis'. Established research has shown that commonly in the representation of ethnic minorities there tends to be a homogenisation of different groups (Van Dijk, 2000, 2015). The saliency of these mediated

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<sup>3</sup>I deploy the term 'Africanness' to refer to a bundling of media political and social discourse (Biliuc, McGarty, Hartley, & Muntele Hendres, 2011; Hier & Greenberg, 2002). The term Africanness to a degree is *loaded*, in that its definition is not stable (Cohen, 1994; Helms, 1990; McIntosh, 2015; Windle, 2008) and is subject to interpretation by the user and the reader.

representations after a while can become *common knowledge* or a stereotype of what it means to be a member of this group. In this regard, no care is taken into delving into individual life stories or isolating particular events as being individualistic. Rather, in this instance in the representations of Africans, they become objects within the discourse. As objects of discourse, Africans are written about and not to. In this, the concept of being African becomes abstract. Without the provision of a space to respond to the representations or offer an alternative response to their pasts, present and futures are told and retold for them. Hall, Williams, and Thompson (1967, p. 3) maintain that in the media race is depicted as a collective concept:

Essentially, race relations are relations between groups of people rather than individuals, relationships the personal exchanges between individuals are mediated though and affected by the whole body of stereotyped attitudes and beliefs which lie between one group and another.

This analysis from Hall is still accurate to the Australian context. I want to objectively examine the function of media in informing the public about new groups in Australia, in this case, African immigrants. Whose agenda do the media place as most important? How is information about Africans in Australia reported? What role does this group occupy? How do the African immigrants in Australia respond to these images? It has long been established that increasingly people come to learn about themselves and those around them through mediated discourse (Hier & Greenberg, 2002; Mautner, 2008; Van Dijk, 2014; Hilde, 2017; Bennett, 2018). However, it is not just the media that aids in shaping public opinion. Politics plays a pivotal role in disseminating messages of what the people ought to think. Australian politics has been riddled by a long history of key figures and laws that stigmatised non-white groups (Butler, 2016; Kuhn, 2009; The Age & Abbott, 2015). In recent times this phenomenon is no longer restricted to Australia, instead over the past 3 years (2015–2018) there has been a remarkable shift to more conservative ideologies and nationalist politics. Lewis (2000, p. 196) points out that

Ideological practices have become understood politically as an attempt to fix meanings, yoke together in particular ways diverse facets of social life and thus assume authority to determine, and indeed authorise, that which is understood to be real.

What does this mean for ethnically and racially different people? In the dissemination of these ideological practices, language is used as a tool of power and subjugation in defining the spaces available to certain groups. It is through a critical analysis of the types of language used and in regard to whom that researchers can start to uncover the relationship between nationhood, race and power. Multiculturalism in Western countries at large is now being seen as diluting the white grip on the structural power of governance, ‘We are living through a profound transformation in the way the idea of “race” is understood and acted upon’ (Gilroy, 2007). This has been seen in countries such as the United States with the election of Donald Trump as President, Australia with the challenging of the Prime Ministerial position by right-wing Peter Dutton and Scott Morrison and the re-election of the right-wing Australian nationalist party One Nation, in in the United Kingdom with the continuing aftermath controversial

Brexit vote. The race is now being viewed as something that has to be preserved and fiercely defended akin to 1930s Germany, which poses a great danger, particularly in a time, where the manufacture of hatred of others is steadily rising. Stuart Hall (1979, p. 16) maintains that the

Radical Right does not appear out of thin air. It has to be understood in direct relation to alternative political formations attempting to occupy and command the same space.

Political discourse, regarding the dislike of the visible other, has been ongoing, drawing from examples from our recent history it seems certain ideas that were thought to be anti-multicultural are coming to fruition. Kovel (1984) argues that:

the more abstract the language that is used to describe minorities in society, the more alienated and dehumanized they are, the easier it is to control the types of discourse that they occupy.

The next stage is examining the research that has been conducted about ethnic groups residing in Australia.

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## Chapter 2

# Research into Individuals of African Heritage in Australia



**Abstract** In pursuing research that aims to capture how media representations facilitate ideologies, how individuals consume these representations, and the role these representations play on the formation of particular identities, requires research that is inclusive of the observed group. As well as how the group perceives and utilizes these aspects as part of their everyday lives. The core themes of this book are in the research of media representations, media consumption and identity production and regulation. These four themes can be regarded as a sequential chain of events or *moments*. As stated in the introductory chapters, the core emphasis of this research is obtaining first hand perspectives of how the dominant discourse surrounding Africans in Australia impacts their private and public selves. It is therefore pivotal to break-down this dense analysis into sections that would prove useful in the analysis of such cultural phenomena. The first point of call would be analyzing how Africans are represented in Australian media. What dominant cultural narratives are present in these representations? What space is afforded to this migrant group? What sort of societal perceptions and expectations are presented to the audience? Conversely, how do the African immigrants consume the media and representations of themselves? This type of analysis will form a more integrative study that presents the participants as the main focus of the study. The research seeks to provide new knowledge on how immigrants create and negotiate diasporic identities, how these are influenced by their representation in the media as well as how they are perceived socially.

**Keywords** Identities · CCCS · Circuit of Culture · Consumption · Regulation · Production · Representation · Identity · Ideology · Encoding · Decoding · Language · Images · Symbols

Academia is one of the places that ethnic minorities have been provided a space in which to be researched and offer their experiences for investigation. Countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada, with long histories of migration, have long-standing academic traditions studying these groups. Theorists such as Stuart Hall, Frantz Fanon, W.E.B DuBois have contributed vastly to the field of ethnic and race studies within their respective countries as well as worldwide. In the case of Australia, this has not been so; in the analysis of research conducted about Africans living in Australia, there seems to be a similar pattern as that observed

in the mediated representations of the group. Most of the research conducted into Africans living in Australia tends to be that of the Sudanese population (Baak, 2011, 2019; Due, 2008; Gale, 2004; Gatt, 2011; Hatoss & Huijser, 2010; Hatoss & Sheely, 2008; Majavu, 2016; Nolan, Burgin, Farquharson, & Marjoribanks, 2016; Nolan, Farquharson, Politoff, & Marjoribanks, 2011; Nunn, 2010; Warriner, 2007; Windle, 2008). This research limits the space in which diverse African identities are researched. Considering that Africa has 54 countries this cuts out 99% of the population. Another similarity between the mediated representations and the academic work that has been carried out is of all the studies carried out with the exception of Baak (2011) who briefly noted first-hand commentary, all the other research is based on second-hand commentary. Data from studies was provided through content analysis of newspapers and media reports. For an entire ethnic and cultural group to be studied through one country (Sudan/South Sudan) and through content analysis severely limits the scope and understanding of the group. Instead, it presents a heavily filtered version of reality shown through a highly focused lens. By studying a group through content analysis alone, it presents an inflexible dataset that has already been collected to achieve a specific goal. This data does not offer a detailed knowledge of the studied group nor does it examine the subject in relation to the complex relations they have with different bodies outside the context of the representation (Bray, 2008). In the use of journalistic discourse, the message is designed and aimed to control the perceptions of the readers. Meaning is solely derived from the context of that message and is not viewed in the context of the whole system of the culture in which the representations reside. This being said, it is essential to initially establish how a group is perceived in the society in which they reside. As mentioned previously, the data analysed by (Baak, 2011, 2019; Due, 2008; Gale, 2004; Nolan et al., 2011, 2016; Windle, 2008) notes how the Sudanese are represented in Australian media, however what about the rest of the African population? Through this, it is observable that there is an extremely limited focus on the diverse range of Africans living in Australia. The fact that the vast amount of research has been conducted into a group of Africans that have not been well received in Australia (Brook & Palin, 2016; Dobbin, 2016; Mills & Booker, 2016) could be regarded as an extension of the exclusionary politics and mediated representations of the group.

## 2.1 Research Practice: Methodologies and Methods

In this section, I want to present the transparency of the research that is presented in this book. Overall, I implemented three varied forms of inquiry—Discourse Analysis, Purposeful Survey and Oral History Interviews. I will proceed to outline why I chose these methods and the methodology behind them. It is essential when conducting a ground-breaking study to clearly outline the rationale and the purpose of data collection and its intended use. How does it contribute new information to the field? and second, how can these new approaches change how data was previously collected?

## 2.2 Original Study One: Discourses Surrounding Africans in Australian Media and Society

In the first data collection chapter of this book, I present a discursive analysis study. This section is intended to capture the discourse that Africans in Australia occupy. The data for this chapter was collected through a purposeful content analysis, which I used to evaluate how the discourse surrounding African immigrants in Australia was created. This was achieved through a content analysis of media articles ranging between the periods of May 2015 and May 2016. This period is specifically selected because this is the period in which the book was being written and research participants were being contacted to take part in the study. In compiling this new data, my intention was to include the other 99% of Africans that were omitted from previous studies into African immigrants. Second, it presented an up-to-date dataset for the study, a lot has changed since the previous studies about Africans in Australia notably the European migration crisis and the increase of African immigrants residing in Australia. The content analysis section of this book is aimed to achieve three specific goals.

1. Recording what types of representations Africans featured in Australian-mediated discourse.
2. What positions Africans occupy within Australian mediated discourse.
3. How perceptions and generalisations of Africans were created based on these representations.

In this analysis, African immigrants in Australia occupy the object position. Up to this point, the content analysis that I collected does not seem to offer any new insights into the experiences of the African population in Australia apart from possibly including the other nationalities that were left out in previous research. This may seem to be the case; however, this section of the research sought to provide a foundation on which to build on the other chapters of the book. By achieving the three goals set for this section of the research; I believe I successfully fulfilled my intentions to

1. Update data about mediated representations of Africans in Australian media.
2. Identify the dominant discourses about Africans in Australian-mediated discourse.
3. Seek to highlight which groups are included or excluded from the representations.
4. Identify the effect of this inclusion and exclusion of Africans in Australian discourse.

This approach significantly builds on previous Australian research into this diverse ethnic and cultural group and provides a more detailed scope of understanding. In doing so, I was not simply just detailing the *what* of the representation, but the *when*, *who*, *why* and *how*. In this context even though Africans are still studied as the objects of discourse, the subject of Africanness is not just floating within the analysis. Instead, in this type of analysis, the strategies and intentions of these mediated representations are observed. The causes and effects of these representations can be monitored, the implicit and explicit agendas of these representations can be analysed to see how Africanness is being sold to the *general Australian public*.

### 2.3 Original Study Two: Surveying the Demographic

The first study of this book was premised on constructing a foundation for the following chapters. Earlier in the book, I stressed that I needed to compile an extensive dataset of published media of Africans living in Australia. This was essential so as to attain an accurate gauge of how other non-Sudanese Africans feature in mediated, political, social and economic discourse. I strongly believe one cannot represent the whole continent through a single country; it would certainly be laughable if one were to represent the whole of the Asian continent with Qatar. In this second research chapter, I wanted to engage with African immigrants and get brief insights into their media use and mediated perspectives. In this second original study into Africans living in Australia; I implemented a cross-sectional survey as a research tool. This marks the first section in the book where the opinions of Africans living in Australia are collected. I sought to compile an extensive database of the participants' media usage ranging from the frequency of use and favoured platforms to access the media. Their attitudes to how they were represented in particular media as well as insights into why they believed this was the case. Finally, I wanted to garner how the participants believed particular representations had an influence on how they were perceived by the larger society. In doing so, I wanted to critique the favoured/traditional method of conducting studies into a particular culture or ethnic group through content analysis. My concern with this method was how it would be possible to adequately research a culture without understanding the fundamental workings of the culture first hand, as well as having tangible evidence on how the culture is perceived in the wider society? How could everyday experiences be captured, recorded and understood from content analyses without engaging with the culture first hand? In this respect, the previous studies into Africans living in Australia seemed to be tokenistic in the sense that the research was superficial. Huth (1983, p. 159) stresses that 'the uses and functions of media in connection with minorities cannot be discussed without particular reference to the minority group or groups in question'.

As I noted earlier in this section, in the writing about Africans in Australian media as well as academia, the opinions of Africans were almost always omitted. Instead their experiences were written for them, the effects were felt for them and the long-term impacts were not realised. In this section of the book, I compiled original first-hand data which positioned Africans in Australia as subjects. To capture this data, I implemented an online cross-sectional survey in which Africans were able to share their opinions. The intention of the survey was to get the real opinions of Africans living in Australia; responses on their media usage, mediated representations and how they thought this led them to be perceived as. This is an original contribution to knowledge because this type of cultural and ethnic investigation was one that had not been done in the Australian context. This begins to carve a space for Africans to share their thoughts and their experiences thus placing them in the subject position. As subjects, the African immigrants were contributing to knowledge about the group, knowledge that had to that point gone unattained. This type of enquiry placed them in a position of power in which their opinions were an essential part of the research.



In this approach, the group was not simply being written about; rather, they were contributing to how they were researched and *how* and *why* they thought they are regarded by Australian media and society in a particular way. One of the reasons this study is being carried out online was in order to cast a wide net on the demographic and geographic makeup of the respondents. In these digital times, people are spending more time online (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016–17) and social media has been proven to harness the biggest pool of users. By disseminating a hyperlink to the survey, I managed to generate a rich dataset of diverse survey responses. I was aware that conducting a study solely online could have limiting impacts on potential participants who were not computer literate. As a precautionary measure, hard copies were offered to every African society group I contacted. The key objective of this survey was to start to generate insight into how Africans felt they are perceived in the media and how this channelled down to the wider society. By analysing how the participants perceived the media to function as an information source, it became possible to analyse the significance and power-mediated representations had (Ahmed & Matthes, 2016; Durham, 2004; Rasinger, 2010; Silverstone & Georgiou, 2005) on how Africans were perceived in society. Ways in which these messages function in the participants' everyday lives and what impacts they have as a consequence is an area of research that is novel in the Australian context. This research section created space for Africans to start having a voice as subjects of the discourse.

This research component required detailed analysis of the data compiled and an understanding of the experiences of the racial, ethnic and cultural group. Saukko (2003) maintains prior to undertaking the task of studying a culture one must successfully answer the following three questions:

1. Can you do justice to this culture?

I have the capabilities to undertake the study into African immigrants living in Australia, as I am not only a researcher of this group, I belong to it. The management of this 'insider/outsider' status is a key node of discussion in this book. The shared experiences, insider knowledge as well as academic qualifications have enabled me to reveal information that would not be available to a researcher with a different identity.

2. Can you critically analyse the culture?

In the study of cultures, numerous methods, methodologies and theories have been devised as suitable ways of obtaining required research data. Take, for instance, ethnography which involves the researcher observing the group in question. Surveys that aid in showing data from a cross section of participants. Poststructural theory<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Poststructuralism marks a definitive shift from structural thought, which was based in the categorization of binary oppositions and sign systems. This is particularly characterised by the rejection of meaning being founded in social agreements. The foundation of poststructuralism is quite recent (1960s), initially the field was about deconstructing messages and meanings (Caputo, 1997; Ryan, 2001). Over time, the field of poststructuralism started to include the agent (individual) I as active in the way in which they understood the roles of language and cultural signification (Barker & Galasinski, 2001; Cap, 2017; Hatoss & Sheely, 2008; Jhally, 2015) which are fundamental to the understanding of individual experience.

shows how discourse and ideological institutions are sources of power in society. These are all techniques that could be used in trying to understand a culture.

### 3. Is culture the most important topic to investigate?

In the case of African immigrants living in Australia, they are largely excluded from research in other fields such as higher degree research, economics, science and literature. Therefore, a foundation must be built in order to understand the group, their ways of life, challenges, discourses amongst other issues. Hence culture is a pivotal starting point for this book.

## **2.4 Original Study Three: Oral Testimonies of Africans Living in Australia**

The final stage of this book is compiling the original and detailed testimonies of African immigrants living in Australia testimonies through oral history interviews. This was another original contribution to research that has been conducted in Australia about African immigrants. This section of the book is sought to create space to enable the Africans' social and personal experiences to be recorded in the participants' own words. This viewing of the African immigrants as a rich information source and contributors to their own stories had never before been conducted in the Australian context. From the first research chapter, it is evident that I increasingly provided enlarged space for African immigrants to become part of the discourse in each subsequent chapter. This was a space that had to be forged starting from an almost lack of presence until a point in which the researched group was the dominant feature. In this third research chapter, I sought more detailed insights from the participants. The response database compiled from the cross-sectional survey offered the initial space and opportunity for the respondents to voice their opinions in a concise manner. Surveys are a research tool that offers a snapshot into the participants' experience but do not afford the space to really explore and engage with deeper issues. In this book, I have ensured that the participants are at the heart of the very investigation that I have carried out. I strongly believe it is through listening to the voices of others that one can obtain the truths of certain matters. This section's purpose was to challenge the dominant narrative of what is commonly thought of Africans in Australian media and some parts of society (Due, 2008; Nolan et al., 2016; Nunn, 2010). If Africans in Australia have voices, then why are they not allowed to share their experiences first hand? Is there a fear that they might say something damning about Australia/ns? Or is it because their voices are made not to matter?

## 2.5 Why the Authentic Voice Matters in Research

Brabazon and Chivaura (2016) highlight the fact that the authentic voice<sup>2</sup> has been steadily losing place and space in academia. Theoretical perspectives are heralded as being more important than people's voices and views of their own lives. It is essential for Cultural Studies to go back to its grassroots of locating the researched groups as agents of power (Brabazon, Chivaura, Gatwiri, & Redhead, 2016; Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke, & Roberts, 1978, 2013). It is a simple task to write about identity, representation and marginalisation without having to be in touch with the researched group. However, this only serves to shrink the originality of ideas and the space afforded for the study of true culture. This type of 'random stabbing in the dark theorization' will never yield a considered theorization of the agents that are going through the experience. It is a delicate balance in attempting to place equal importance on theory and lived experiences, however if done right, this creates a truly holistic study. Brabazon and Chivaura (2016) draw on the battle between E.P. Thompson and Althusser in terms of the struggle between theory and cultural investigations. Regarding Althusser, they maintain that there was a kind of imperialist or modernist way of arriving at a predetermined truth. Althusser is argued to simply move characters around to fit into a script that was already written (Althusser, 1984, 2014). His work tended to place more emphasis on the macrostructures of politics and human existence, to some degree a similar critique can be placed on some of Hall's contributions. On the other hand, E.P. Thompson took more care in listening to what his research groups had to say and allowing them to construct the play of their lives (Thompson, 1963, 1971). In this book, my participants were empowered agents in reclaiming ownership of their knowledge. Despite my belonging to the cultural and ethnic group, I did not interject or try to express their views for them, in the oral history interviews I wanted to present their true and unadulterated views. Capturing the voices of the participants was imperative. I do not want this study to be yet another investigation that put the role of the researcher ahead of the participants. This has been one of the criticisms of ethnographic research that the researcher's interpretations and assumptions of what happens in the field are set up by the researcher and relies on a large number of generalisations. Hammersley (2013, p. 12) maintains that in ethnographic research the

Qualitative analysis reifies social phenomena by treating them as more clearly defined and distinct than they are, and by neglecting the process by which they develop and change.

In this part of the book, I sought not to make assumptions of what the African participants would interpret their situations to be or how they would tell their stories. Instead, in the bid to capture that authentic voice, I wanted them to share their opinions

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<sup>2</sup>The term 'authentic voice' is taken to mean the articulation of the experiences as authentically as the African immigrant recalls them. There is no definite way of verifying with certainty the complete truth in these testimonies (Clary-Lemon, 2010; Finnegan, 2007; Grele, 1998; Portelli, 1998). The fact that the information is coming from the subjugated subjects of media and social representations provides alternate perspective that are based on personal accounts rather than general observations.

in their own voices, without provocation or translation. In my line of questioning, my intentions were concentrated on asking the participants questions that provoked responses into how they perceived their identities in the context of their Australian lives. This questioning was based on how the participants were presented in the media and in the larger society; the objective of this was in a bid to comprehend how the media which functions as dominant discourse functioned in their day-to-day lives. It was not my aim to capture the participants' whole life histories but rather to capture those moments they felt were significant and relevant to their life story.

I implemented the use of digital audio recordings for oral history interviews. Capturing the interviews onto a digital format eases the process of storing large sound files on multiple formats. This capturing of the interviews digitally was the closest readers of the book have to sharing the participants' thoughts, views and insights on the subject matter and almost experience being present with the interview participant at that moment. This was the first time in the academic study of Africans living in Australia that their experiences have been physically included as being the fundamental element of knowledge created. The research participants became empowered subjects through the sharing of their personal and intimate stories as well as offering a glimpse into their lived experiences. With no inference from the researcher, their accounts captured how they perceived themselves, at that moment. This made for powerful testimony that no level of theorization could ever fully capture in its entirety.

It is evident through the detailed explanation of the methods and methodologies that are being implemented in this research that this project depended on the knowledge of the group in question, the insider knowledge of the researcher and the thorough understanding of how to undertake a cultural study. In this book, it was my aim to utilise (and critic) Cultural Theory as a foundation of my investigations. From this foundation, I structured the first-hand data that I collected through the cross-sectional surveys and oral interviews. In the subsequent chapters, I will delve in detail how theory and lived reality intersect and how in some cases further theorisation is needed to fully understand new cultural groups. Lastly, through the conduction of this research, I aim to showcase the Africans living in Australia have more to offer on their lived realities than those hypothetical realities that are imagined for them by the media, politics and other ideological institutions.

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# Chapter 3

## Discourses Surrounding Africans in Australian Media and Society



**Abstract** In the study of discourses, particularly discourses surrounding dominant and subordinate groups, it is useful to establish how power is held and how others are made to occupy less empowered positions within this. This study seeks to investigate how African immigrants are positioned ideologically and discursively in the Australian context. The same questions that Hall was asking about 1970s England are the same questions that should be asked about the dominant institutions in Australia and their relationship with the African population. The media is the primary focus, since the media is an institution that allows the *general population* to have tools to understand cultures and the cultural discourses that surround them. It is essential to analyse what discourses they use to achieve this goal. In most cases of discourses surrounding ethnic and cultural differences, theorists often note that common assumptions or stereotypes are what is represented of these groups (McIntosh in *Ethnic Racial Stud* 38(2):309–325, 2015; Rasinger in *Media Cult Soc* 32(6):1021–1030, 2010; Sohoni and Mendez in *Ethn Racial Stud* 37(3):496–516, 2014). Quite often, these groups do not get the chance to voice their opinions or views on their representations. In their work, O’Doherty and Lecouteur (*Aust J Psychol* 59(1):1–12, 2007) define this type of exclusion as ‘new racism’, Brabazon (*Lumina* 4:49–58, 1998, p. 53) terms this specific type of media marginalisation as ‘journalistic ventriloquism’, whereby the people involved in the discourse are denied their voices thus the media maintain their ‘coercive maintenance of power’. By employing discourse to analyse people’s lived experiences, it offers more insight and cause and effect relationships can easily be identified and rationalised. This technique presents discourse in action, rather than a stagnant analysis that does not exist in an applied context.

**Keywords** Reception theory · Policing the crisis · Visible difference · Dominant institutions · Discourse · Stereotypes · Content analysis · Database · Power

### 3.1 Introduction: Discourse and Race

This chapter is not being written as a tokenistic discourse chapter that does not serve a real, solid and profound intellectual purpose. The intention of this chapter is to provide the context of a historical moment, which will be captured in the proceeding

research chapters. The media sources that will be gathered and reviewed in this chapter are of key significance in the participants' oral histories and how they offer recollections of events in their past.

In the study of discourses, particularly discourses surrounding dominant and subordinate groups, it is useful to establish how power is held and how others are made to occupy less empowered positions within this. In *Encoding and Decoding* (1999), Hall maintained that it was the role of media producers to encode or create messages to be transmitted and received by the decoders. In the receiving of the carefully designed message, there are multiple ways in which the audience member/s could establish meaning. Stuart Hall coined this *Reception Theory*. The focus of this theory is based on revealing the relationship between the media content and the receiver of the content. Emphasis is given to how the receiver uses and makes meaning of the messages provided, Hall (1999) argues, in doing so, there is no one way of understanding a message. Hall maintains, there are two forms of discourse, the first being, what one ought to think—which is the encoded message. The second is what one thinks—after decoding the message.

In the creation of discourse, ideological institutions such as the government, the justice system and the media inform the production and presentation of certain ideas. The predominant way in which larger society gets to experience this system of ideals is through the media. It is through this transmission of information that audience members create an understanding of the matters at hand. In his work, Hall used discourse to understand how power is held by certain groups and taken away from others, (Hall, 1997b, 1999; Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke, & Roberts, 1978, 2013) in these examples of his work, his focus is primarily on the relationship between media and political institutions and certain groups specifically the working class and ethnic minorities. Hall is not the only theorist to tackle issues of discourse and the media others such as Wodak (2008, 2009), Wodak and Chilton (2005), and Wodak and Meyer (2008a, b) whose orientation lays in corpus studies of discourses in texts. Neumann, (1999, 2002, 2008) pays particular interest in European identities, particularly after *The Cold War*. Van Dijk (1987, 1988, 1991, 2000, 2011, 2013a, b, 2014, 2015) emphasises the significance of news reporting on ethnic minorities. These scholars have significantly contributed to the field of media discourse analysis. What makes Hall's approach compelling, is the lens which he uses to analyse how "culture and political interests or class and social interests interlock. Not just by which the people are dominated by a system, but by which they come to invest in themselves" (Jhally, 2015). It is this last point of how the audience value themselves after being portrayed in a certain way that makes Hall's approach appropriate for this study.

Stuart Hall's work on discourses operating in society, particularly in his early work, focused on how the macrostructures or institutions had a bearing on how power is articulated and demonstrated in society (Hall, 1979, 1980; Hall & National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants, 1967; Lumley, McLennan, & Hall, 1977). Political and economic ideologies seemed to have a significant impact in Hall's early work particularly in his publications for the *New Left Review* amongst other interviews and lectures that were given whilst he was at Oxford University. There,



however, is a noticeable shift in Hall's theorisation from when he started his post at the Birmingham University's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (Connell & Hilton, 2014). His research started developing more inclusion of the audience. The key text that will be of importance and a key reference point in this section, is his ground-breaking 1978 collaborative work in *Policing the Crisis* (1978, 2013). This text marks the first instance in Hall's extensive work that race, politics and policing were explored through the discursive analysis of the media. In an interview with Jhally (2015), Hall emphasises that this was one of the "first moments in Cultural Studies when the questions of race and culture came to the fore" (Jhally, 2015). Ideologies encircling blackness (Brabazon, 1998, p. 49), were presented as being the source of the ongoing 'moral panics' in society. Things such as violence, crime and the decaying colonial British identity were being channelled and represented as having been caused by non-Europeans. In this regard, Connell (2014, p. 3) maintains 'Race... became the prism through which the 'crisis' was viewed. Anxieties about permissiveness, economic decline and youth were transposed onto the figure of (a) black "mugger".' It was through this channelling of blackness, of colonial migration, of high numbers of visibly different people that became attached to moral panics. Instead of seeing the positive of the West Indians providing labour force for post-war Britain, they were viewed as a visible and symbolic attack to the crown.

### 3.2 Policing the Crisis and Significance in Studying Representations of African Immigrants in Australia

What makes *Policing the Crisis* particularly important in this study, is the concern that is paid to questions of subjectivity, culture and identity. The shift from broad ideology to specifically focus on race most notably visible difference, makes *Policing the Crisis* a relevant guide and reference. Brabazon (1998) argues that certain

Cultural qualities, like *black = problem*, are embodied as a physical presence. Representational logics imagine another place in a way that fits into familiar knowledge systems. For a person or community to be situated in discourse means that they must be depicted in the terms of that discourse, transforming the other into the same. West Indianness, or blackness, must be performed within the white/colonial regimes of value. (p. 53)

This study seeks to investigate how African immigrants are positioned ideologically and discursively in the Australian context. The same questions that Hall was asking about 1970s England are the same questions that should be asked about the dominant institutions in Australia and their relationship with the African population. The media is the primary focus since the media is an institution that allows the *general population* to have tools to understand cultures and the cultural discourses that surround them. It is essential to analyse what discourses they use to achieve this goal. In most cases of discourses surrounding ethnic and cultural differences, theorists often note that common assumptions or stereotypes are what is represented of these groups (McIntosh, 2015; Rasinger, 2010; Sohoni & Mendez, 2014). Quite often, these groups

do not get the chance to voice their opinions or views on their representations. In their work O'Doherty and Lecouteur (2007) define this type of exclusion as 'new racism', Brabazon (1998, p. 53) terms this specific type of media marginalisation as 'journalistic ventriloquism' whereby the people involved in the discourse are denied their voices thus the media maintain their 'coercive maintenance of power'.

O'Doherty and Lecouteur (2007, p. 44) demonstrate how categorisations in discourse are used to further agendas. They argue 'Categorisations are used for particular purposes in particular contexts'. O'Doherty and Lecouteur (2007) point to the fact that if specific discourses are constantly repeated in the media, they can soon become 'taken-for granted categorisations'.

In essence, the repetition of representations of certain groups brings rise to the production of stereotypes of those groups. For instance, when you type Australian stereotypes, Google Australia (The most commonly used search engine in Australia with 16,903,000 users in 2015 (Roy Morgan Research, 2016) image search engine (20 April 2016) This is the order of the first row of images:

1. An image of a man in a cork hat holding up a sausage.
2. An image of the stereotypes and Australian perception of certain ethnic and cultural groups.
3. A joke card of what some colloquial sayings 'Aussie Gentlemen' use and what they jokingly could be taken to mean.
4. The translation of some colloquial phrases that Australian women or 'Aussie Sheila's use.
5. A man riding a kangaroo past the Opera House steps and Sydney Harbour Bridge.

I proceeded to type French stereotypes; this was the order of the first row of images:

1. A man in a striped shirt, a red scarf, black beret, two baguettes, a bottle of red wine and a *curious* moustache.
2. A man in a striped shirt, a black scarf, red beret, three baguettes, a glass of red wine and a *curious* moustache.
3. A poster of French clichés and whether they are true or false.
4. A poster of the two types of French Chef.
5. A man in a striped shirt, a red scarf, black beret, two baguettes, a bottle of red wine and a *curious* moustache.
6. A stick figure of a French man, in a striped shirt, a red scarf, black beret, a baguette, a bottle of red wine and a cigarette on his lips.

The next search that I did, was to type in, 'stereotypes of African people'. Readers may—rightly—critique that Africa is not a country, but as mentioned in the Chap. 1, this study provides a multidimensional perspective of how Africans regard the media and Australian society. This is the order of the first row of images:

1. A woman holding a piece of paper reading "I am Liberian not a virus".
2. A boy with the following words superimposed on his face AIDS, war, primitive, illiterate, victim, famine, violence, poor, slave.
3. A boy with the following words superimposed on his face AIDS, war, primitive, illiterate, victim, famine, violence, poor, slave.

4. A man in a t-shirt reading “Stereotype me! Society does.
5. A boy holding a machine gun.
6. A woman holding a sign reading “Do you speak African?” You know that’s a continent, right? And you question my presence here?”
7. An image of a 23-year-old man named Benard, he is a third-year Clinical medicine student.

For interest’s sake, I decided to type in stereotypes of Nigerians. This was an arbitrary selection. This is the order of the first row of images.

1. An animation of a female African warrior and a smiling male playing a talking drum.
2. A man painted in the Nigerian flag colours standing at attention and saluting.
3. Three smiling girls with their faces painted in dotted patterns.
4. A map of South America with the outlines of countries roughly drawn with stereotypical descriptions of the countries.
5. A meme of a man holding a large stack of money, the caption reads, “I will burn my money, those white people never answered my emails”.

There are many points that can be raised about each of the four stereotype groups presented. For now, I will present a nutshell commentary of each of the four groups.

1. Australians = The Australian culture is very laid back and Australians have kangaroo transport.
2. The French = All male with a specific fashion sense and love baguettes and wine.
3. Africans = Some serious perceptions and misconceptions of Africans.
4. Nigerians = A happy, patriotic and philanthropic country and a Map of South America.

The reason why I wanted to present both Africans as a whole and a particular country’s stereotypes is to see the difference in what the distinction was between the grouping of Africans and that of a single African country. In the stereotype images of Nigeria, I would say apart from the meme (picture 4) of the *fake?* Nigerian Prince willing to donate part of his wealth and the map of South America, Nigerians are shown to be happy and patriotic. When researchers move to the stereotypes of Africans in general, the image is grim. Africa is stereotyped as Ebola, war-torn, violent, primitive, illiterate, starving, poor and still in captivity as slaves. If I compare this stereotyped image of Africa and compare it to the Australian and French stereotypes there is a difference. With the Australian and French stereotypes, they are laughable, might be annoying but will not dissuade people from wanting to find out more about the countries (as mentioned earlier the same applies to the Nigerian stereotype).

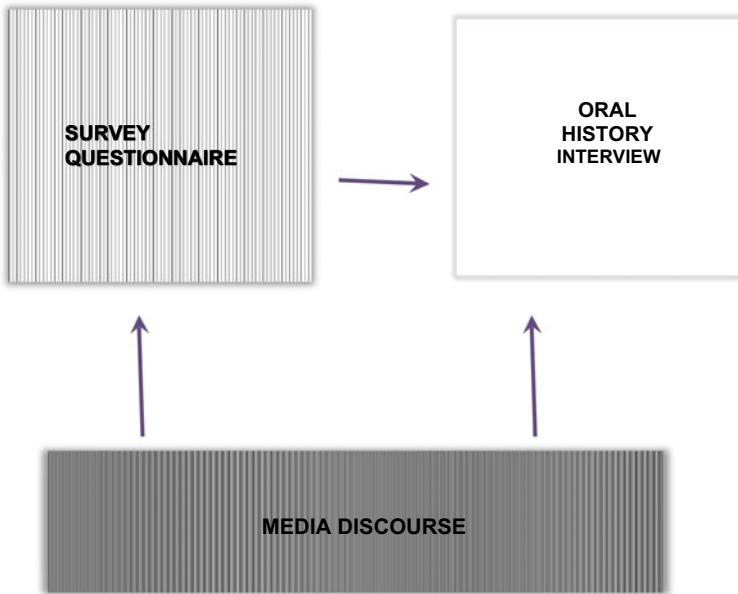
Hall took interest in institutions that defined what is normal and abnormal behaviour in society, (Hall, 1992, 1997a, b). Meticulous research interest was paid to who defined and protected meanings of ‘normality’. In *Policing the Crisis* (1978, 2013) blackness was viewed as being dangerous and unpleasant, the same can be inferred by the Google Australia search of the term African people. Although it can be argued Google search results can be influenced by a range of factors, including

popularity, location algorithms and most searched terms. To have a better understanding of how African immigrants are represented in the Australian media, it would be better to conduct a media search. In this media content analysis, my intention will be to see the types of discourse that African immigrants feature in. By viewing the discourses surrounding them, one is able to determine positive, neutral or negative positions in the reporting.

### 3.3 Representation of African Immigrants in Australian Media

The study of discourse surrounding African immigrants in Australia is imperative to this book as it provides a real picture of how Africans are perceived by dominant ideological institutions such as the media. The discourse analysis component of the book was conducted on Australian media produced between 26 May 2015 and 26 May 2016. These dates have not been chosen arbitrarily, these dates are specifically chosen because this is the timeframe in which a clear majority of participants were submitting responses to the survey questionnaire as well as sharing their oral histories in interviews. It is important to capture this moment in time because this will aid in providing the contextual backdrop to some of the experiences that the research participants draw on in informing their answers about how Australian media and society regard African immigrants. Unlike other discursive studies, which solely look at discourse as a standalone study, I am trying to locate its effects in the wider scheme of social application. By employing discourse to analyse people's lived experiences, it offers more insight and cause and effect relationships can easily be identified and rationalised. This technique presents discourse in action, rather than a stagnant analysis that does not exist in an applied context (Fig. 3.1).

For my search, I used the *ProQuest Australia & New Zealand News Stream* database (formerly known as Australia & New Zealand Newsstand). This is a comprehensive database of Australian and New Zealand print, online and screen media, to date, it is the largest database of current affairs in Australia and New Zealand. Other databases such as *Trove* or *Google News* could have been used, however, they contain other material that is not necessarily current affairs but because of the keywords could be classified as such and produce tens of thousands of non-Australian news/information sources. Another database that I could have considered is *Infomit News & Current Affairs Database Collection*; this is another comprehensive database, however, it only provides results of dates between 1995 and 2009. This makes it unsuitable for this study. The search that I conducted was based on the following keywords in an advanced search, **African, immigrant/migrant and Australia**. Upon entering these keywords 614 results were generated; however not all these results concerned my research. Some of the results only contained one keyword, for instance, *migrant* but did not relate to Africans. Another example could be *African American in Australia*, so this result will not be counted in the final



**Fig. 3.1** Model of inquiry in this text

tally. Only results with African, immigrant/migrant and Australia will be regarded. I acknowledge the *ANZ News Stream* is not a perfect search database and there might be omissions of some media, however to date, in Australia it is the most reliable and comprehensive database to use. In the types of sources that I targeted, I included the following sources:

1. Newspapers including front page/cover story, features, editorials, letters to the editor, articles, commentary, correction/retractions.
2. Government and Official documents.
3. Magazines.
4. Wire feeds.

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# Chapter 4

## Critiquing the Literature



**Abstract** This chapter marks the first data collection chapter of this book. This chapter seeks to explore how race is presented and (re)presented in Australian society. How does the dominant population come to know of the visibly different other? To aid me with this I will be drawing from examples from data from the content analysis that forms the research element of this chapter. This will assist in providing current presentations of the African body and the symbolic meanings that surround that imagery. I seek to coin the phrase *Semiotic Violence*. Using this term, I will be exploring how blackness is presented as a defining identity (Brabazon et al., Tara brabazon podcast, 2016). I will be arguing how visible racial difference is a defining moment for Africans living in Australia. Blackness is loaded with many connotations before the individual gets a chance to present themselves. Lastly, I will be delving into how particular representations of Africans further reduce the space made available for this already subjugated group.

**Keywords** Data collection · Australian news · Representations · Moral panics · African crime · Refugee · Racism · Data analysis · National identity

### 4.1 Literature Review Organisational Framework

In pursuing research that aims to capture how media representations facilitate ideologies, how individuals consume these representations and the role these representations play on the formation of particular identities require research that is inclusive of the observed group. As well as, how the group perceives and utilises these aspects as part of their everyday lives. These are rich and dense topics that straddle numerous research fields and theoretical perspectives. In the earlier sections of this book, I maintain that I want to pursue a line of research that aims to place Africans not only as objects of this research but chiefly as subjects of this research. In doing so, I outlined that my theoretical perspectives are influenced by the field of Cultural Studies through the theorizations of Stuart Hall. In the presentation of theories and ideas that have developed the field of Cultural Studies, one must be thorough and vigilant but very clear in revealing the gap in knowledge they wish to contribute to. In this sense, it becomes imperative to organise the literature in a way that best



showcases and structures the argument in a persuasive and compelling manner. The core themes of this book are in the research of media representations, media consumption and identity production and regulation. These four themes can be regarded as a sequential chain of events or *moments*. As stated in the introductory chapters, the core emphasis of this research is obtaining first-hand perspectives of how the dominant discourse surrounding Africans in Australia impacts their private and public selves. It is, therefore, pivotal to breakdown this dense analysis into sections that would prove useful in the analysis of such cultural phenomena. The first point of call would be analysing how Africans are represented in Australian media. What dominant cultural narratives are present in these representations? What space is afforded to this migrant group? What sort of societal perceptions and expectations are presented to the audience? Conversely, how do the African immigrants consume the media and representations of themselves? Hasford (2016) draws on the work of Hall (1990) on how colonisation altered the way blacks viewed themselves through a white gaze ‘colonization forced blacks to see and experience themselves as other, ...this process is sustained in modern times through “regimes of representation” in the media’ (Hasford, 2016, p. 169). For most African adult immigrants coming to Australia directly from Africa, they have lived against this backdrop of colonisation. This way of viewing themselves as ‘other’ is not imaginary but has been a lived reality. Thus, it is through these regimes of representation that this group comes to know and understand how they are perceived in Australian society. The reverse is true for Australians, who have never encountered anyone from Africa. They first get to know about this group usually through the media, hence, the study of how these representations, social understanding and response are pivotal. The third essential site to study is identity—both its production and regulation. The study of identity is complex and has multiple ways that it can be analysed. In this book I will be focusing on what types of identities are presented in the representation of Africans in Australian media. Second, what messages do the immigrants derive and utilise in their day-to-day lives. These areas of research are dense and the literature that informs these fields is vast. For the purposes of this book, I want to present a review of the literature in a way that is logical and sequential. As such, I intend on using a befitting structural framework to present this data.

As noted previously, the essential areas of study that I will be analysing will be representation, consumption and identity. Du Gay, Hall, Janes, and Mackay (1997) devised a model that studies cultural phenomena entitled the *Circuit of Culture*. Du Gay et al. (1997) maintained that for a cultural artefact to be adequately studied it must first pass through the five *moments* of the circuit which are representation, identity, production, consumption and regulation. The authors contend that objects are *encoded* or embedded with desired meanings and culture, thus, in order to fully establish and understand their meaning they have to go through the five moments to be adequately analysed. Du Gay et al. (1997) stress that all five moments of the circuit are in constant *communication* with each other, some at different moments and some simultaneously with no beginning and no endpoint (Fig. 4.1).

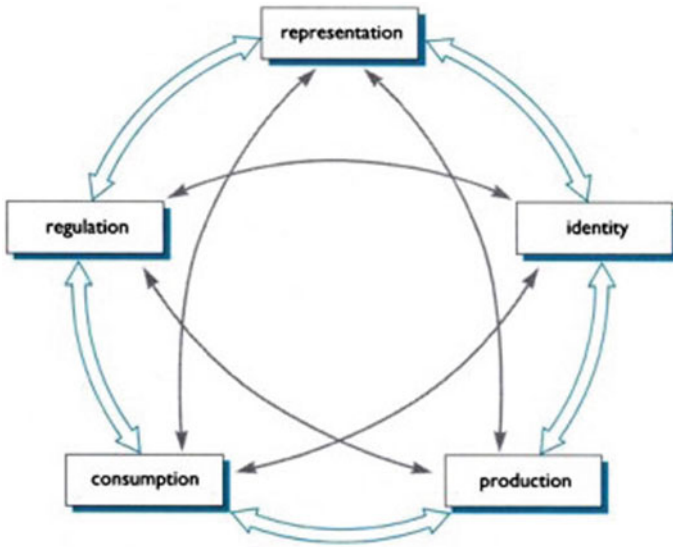


Fig. 4.1 The circuit of culture (Du Gay et al., 1997, p. 3)

In their use of the Circuit of Culture, Du Gay et al. (1997) capture how a physical artefact (The Sony Walkman) could be analysed through the five moments. In this book, the *Circuit of Culture* is not being applied to a tangible object but instead to capture the African immigrant experience which is an original application of the Circuit. This presents a slightly more complex analysis, with a tangible object, meaning can be bestowed on the object, but the object itself cannot create its own meaning. With the human experience, meaning can be created internally based on how certain groups are *represented* and what representations those people *consume* and what *identities* they *produce* and in turn *regulate*. This analysis positions the African immigrant as a subject within the moments of the Circuit. On the other hand, in the human experience, meaning can be created externally, the media carries *representations* in which certain *identities* are *produced* and *regulated* for mass *consumption* this view aligns with positioning the African immigrant as an object within the moments of the Circuit. In this regard, the *Circuit of Culture* presents an ideal framework in which to analyse how African immigrants are positioned both as subjects as well as objects in Australian discourse and society. The Circuit of Culture is utilised to ‘provide a shared cultural space in which meaning is created, modified and recreated. There is no beginning or end in the circuit; the moments work synergistically to create meaning’ (Curtin & Gaither, 2007, p. 38). This provides an opportunity for in-depth analysis of each moment and how resistance and incorporation of social processes and power relations are never complete. This type of analysis will form a more integrative study that presents the participants as the main focus of the study. The research seeks to provide new knowledge on how immigrants create and negotiate diasporic identities, how these are influenced by their representation in the media

as well as how they are perceived socially. I intend on using the Circuit of Culture as an anchoring point of this literature review section in which I will utilise the five stages to the Circuit to examine and structure the literature. Despite Du Gay et al. (1997) arguing that in the circuit there is no beginning or end and that the moments are in constant communication, this is not conducive to writing a literature review section. I am investigating how one moment can influence the next to successfully present my argument. The structure of the literature review section will be as follows: representation, consumption, identity, production and regulation.

## 4.2 Representations of Race, Culture and Ethnicity in the Media

Culture can be understood as shared meanings or symbols that produce meaning. Hall (1996a) argued that shared meanings are spread through language in its operation as a representational system. In this analysis, it is apparent that language is a key tool in cultural formation and meaning-making. Stuart Hall amongst other cultural theorists maintains language in representations is one of the dominant tools of power. It is through its use that meaning is fixed and becomes naturalised (Barker & Galasinski, 2001; Hall, 1997b; Rasinger, 2010; Saptefrati, 2008; Warriner, 2007). Hall (1999) maintains the media encode messages with desired meanings. Encoding being the process in which certain messages are produced drawing on what the media think are society's dominant ideological values. Through this process, representations carry certain meanings that inform particular discourse Hall (1999). Representations could, therefore, be viewed as encoded devices through which society creates meaning (Hall, 1997a, b). From this perspective, identity within representations is set in an originating moment and there is a true authentic fixed set of characteristics that belong to a particular group. These characteristics range from language ability, social status or even assumptions about race and ethnicity. Therefore, representations can be seen as being a constructed reality, Hall maintains, the media function to present these characteristics as being shared by all members of its group (Hall, 1997a; Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke, & Roberts, 1978, 2013; Jhally & Hall, 1997). In this, the meaning becomes naturalised and over time meaning does not become contested. Certain characteristics are presented in ways in which they do not change across time, thus, gradually become shortcuts of understanding particular groups, more commonly known as stereotypes. Stereotypes can be understood as limited definitions of groups that are commonly silenced in the production of these images (Hasford, 2016; Lawrence, 2007; Van Dijk, 2015). From these constructed views, the public are provided with materials from which they can choose to construct their own meanings in relation to issues such as race or nationality and which subject position they occupy, dominant or submissive [Kellner (2003) in Orbe and Harris (2008, p. 74)]. The presentation of images is constructed to reflect societal values and ideas of certain matters as well as reinforcing or shaping widely shared ideals in terms of

what is defined as normal. Through this, ‘media culture helps shape the prevalent view of the world and its deepest values’ (Kellner, 2003, p. 1) through the use of images and the language of representation.

### 4.3 The Ideology of Blackness

The subject of race is one that has had some controversy regarding how particular groups are thought of as being or how they ought to be documented. Recently, we have seen the extremely racist caricature of Serena Williams at the U.S. Open drawn and published by Australian media. However, according to The Herald Sun and the Cartoonist, Mark Knight it was not racist because Australia does not share the same racial history as the United States, thus the Jim Crow/Sambo-esque image should not have been offensive to African Americans or Australia’s black community (Bednall, 2018). This is extremely offensive considering Australia’s racist history and continual treatment towards Indigenous Australians and those of non-white backgrounds (Nichols, 2008; Elder, 1999).

In the introductory sections of this book, I outlined how the subject of African immigrants has been documented and theorised. This is only a sliver of how race, culture and ethnicity exist in the grander narrative. The media is a powerful ideological institution that has managed to position itself as an authority on what national belonging and identity are (Altschull, 1994; Cover, 2012; Miranda, Young, & Yetgin, 2016), thus forming an imagined community<sup>1</sup> (Anderson, 1983). In this particular context of imagined community, insider and outsider groups are created which help construct what Jhally and Hall (1997) term a social barometer. Meaning, the ways particular groups are represented or not represented begin to shape what society’s common-sense views on national belonging are Lawrence (2004, 2007). These common-sense views are created through discursive messages in the form of language of inclusion and exclusion, as well as through the symbolic representation<sup>2</sup> of the groups in question. Hall (1992, p. 298) maintains, in doing so, the media presents itself as a ‘structure of cultural power’. This meaning what the audience comes to know of a particular group or subject will already have been carefully handpicked to achieve a specific goal. This is commonly known as the Encoding/Decoding model (Hall, 1999). In his argument, he maintains that the media function as the encoders of society; this means the messages individuals consume are carefully selected and provided

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<sup>1</sup>Imagined Community is based in the definition provided by Anderson (1983) of communities created through colonisation and empire. In the digital age, mediated representations can be seen to offer a type of community based on images, discourse and ideas (Fielding-Lloyd & Blackshaw, 2010) that might be based in nationhood, patriotism and consensus. In the audience acceptance of these mediated representations they become part of this imagined community .

<sup>2</sup>Stuart Hall uses the term Symbolic Representation to define an object symbol that represents an idea or concept (Hall, 1992, 1997b; Jhally, 2015; Jhally & Hall, 1997). An example of this is the flying of the Australian Flag represents nationhood and belonging and those who are not Australian will have a different definition of the flag.

with desired meanings. In this, representations are embedded with particular messages that are created with specific intentions. These intentions are constructed to establish identification between the message and a particular target group. This is achieved through the use of images and language (Cottle, 2000; Durham, 2004; Miranda et al., 2016). Images play a large role in presenting a way of viewing a particular subject, both physical and metaphorical (Fig. 4.2).

Australia is facing a *crisis* of national and cultural identity (Australian Associated Press & Kwek, 2011; Bolt, 2015; Due, 2008; The Age & Abbott, 2015). For the first time in its short history, the dominant white population seems to be feeling threatened by the steadily increasing *non-white* population. This begged the question of what does it mean to be Australian and how do Australians protect it from outsiders? This has become part of the dominant discourse. Due to recent events such as terrorism, the European migration crisis and large numbers of refugees seeking asylum, multiculturalism is slowly being deemed to be a failure (Ang & Stratton, 1998; Boese & Phillips, 2011; Cover, 2012; Nolan, Farquharson, Politoff, & Marjoribanks, 2011; Poynting & Mason, 2008). This particular type of uncertainty comes with suspicion of anyone or anything that does not conform to the *traditional Aussie* identity (Anglo/Celtic, white and English speaking) is viewed as a potential threat (Australian Associated Press & Kwek, 2011; Cover, 2012; Due, 2008; Gale, 2004). The hot topics at present are Muslims, Muslim immigration, Sudanese crime, influx of terrorists; loss of the Aussie culture through multiculturalism, the list goes on. There has seen a sharp increase in fraction right-wing groups emerging such as Reclaim Australia, The Australia First Party and Australian Nationalist Movement. In this book, I want to specifically focus on the issues related to African immigrants in Australia, how is their visible difference represented in Australian media and regarded by

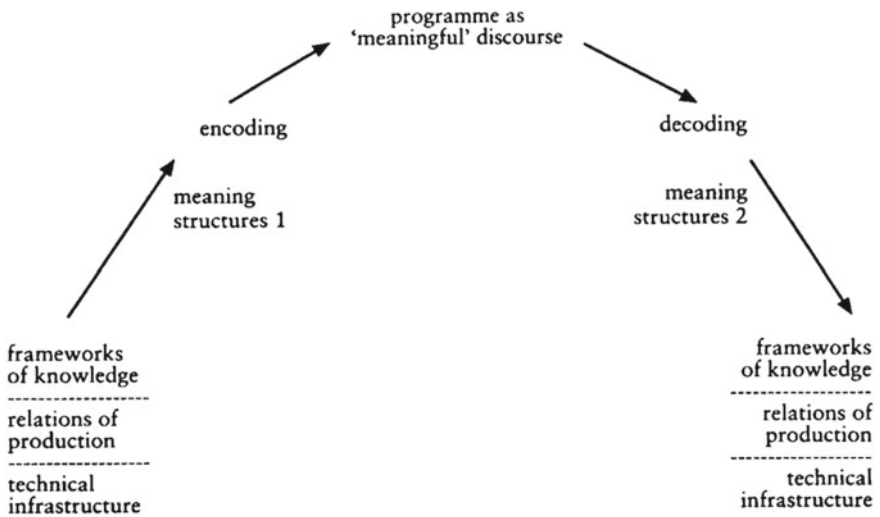


Fig. 4.2 Encoding, decoding model (Hall, 1999, p. 480)

the Australian population. In this work, I am not arguing that the whole of Australia is against immigration of non-whites, however, I want to highlight the *space* afforded to African immigrants in Australia.

#### 4.4 Language as a Representational System

According to Hall (1999), decoding is a process through which audience members have a *meaningful understanding* or meaningful exchange of what the message is. Hall (1999) maintains that unless the encoded message produces the *intended* meaning with the audience it is not completely understood. In the previous section, I introduced the idea of the role of images within mediated messages. These to a degree have a role in the creation of meaning structures, however, the way the reader interprets them may vary. This type of thinking is linked with the work of Ferdinand de Saussure and the field of Semiotics. Saussure maintains that how we come to know 'something' or a *sign* is through a signifier and a signified (Fiske, 2010).

For example, if someone were to say water, there are multiple ways of calling to mind what water is. It could be the spelling of the word water; it could be an animated blue pool, a chemical symbol or a bottled drink. In this instance, there is no one way of conceptualising the meaning of water. What images or ideas come to the readers mind are varied and could be multiple. However, if the word water was above a bottled drink then the correct intended meaning is achieved. This limits the level of confusion and thus the intentions of the encoder are achieved because the decoders can have a meaningful exchange. The work of de Saussure was marked as the linguistic turn in Communication Studies (Fiske, 2010; Hall, 1999) although texts are unable to police meanings that can be decoded from them, by carefully constructing the intended message this limits the margin of the message of being misunderstood by the intended audience. The work conducted by theorists such as Hall (1997b, 1999); Jhally and Hall (1997), Fairclough, Mulderrig, and Wodak (2011); Fairclough and Wodak (1997) Van Dijk (2011, 2013, 2014), Wodak (2009) and Wodak and Meyer (2008) emphasise that language functions as a source of power in society. This forms the basis of poststructural study in which power is maintained and controlled by elite or dominant institutions with the positioning of particular groups within the discourse being the key concern. Going back to the Encoding/Decoding model (Hall, 1999), how the audience receives the intended message is referred to as decoding. Hall (1999) maintains that the audience utilise varied ways of decoding a text, hence the meaning derived from the message is not always the same for each audience member. Hall emphasises that there are three ways in which audience members can interrogate the text, the first being the dominant reading. The dominant reading of a text is when the audience accept the encoder's message as they intended. Second to this is the negotiated reading, in this, the audience largely accept the message, but may modify the message to suit their own position or interests. The third is the oppositional reading, whereby the audience members reject the message provided by the encoder. It is imperative to understand these three

types of readings in the study of discourse. Primarily in the study of discourse, the main concern is to study the power of language and its effects on the objects of discourse (Baker et al., 2008; Mautner, 2008; Neumann, 2008; Potter, 1996). In this type of analysis, there can only be one type of decoding of the text: the dominant reading. In discourse, it is assumed the audience members will always read the text in an intended way and feel dominated or relate to the discourse. Barker and Galasinski (2001, p. 2) emphasise that discourse plays a role in cementing meaning at least temporarily ‘though meaning is formally undecided, in formal practice it is regulated and temporally stabilised into pragmatic narratives or discourses’. In critical discourse analysis, often oppositional readings of a text are not sought. In this book, I want to explore how African immigrants as subjects, consume their representations as objects in Australian mediated discourse. How do they respond to how they are thought of discursively and what impact does this have on their personal and social lives? Second, how do particular discourses shape how certain races and cultures are perceived in the dominant society? Although texts are unable to police meanings that can be decoded from them neither is the way in which we come to experience the other through representations. The other is never simply given, never just found or encountered but made through representations (Fabian, 1990, p. 755). Through discursive analysis, we observe that dominant and subversive positions are constructed through the language of representations, which is used as a weapon of subjugation and discipline. Doise, Spini and Clémence (1999) offer a different perspective in which they argue for the reflexive nature of the consuming individual. They state that although the organisation of representations offers a common or preferred reading of an object or subject, this organisation of readings does not imply common positions. Different individuals can attach varying levels of significance to aspects of what they are presented with. Therefore, not all texts will be read or utilised in the same way, the consumer has autonomy over what they choose to accept and ignore—in any case meaning is still created. This argument moves forward from Hall’s (1999, p. 508) decoding argument, where he states that ‘If no “meaning” is taken, there can be no “consumption”. If the meaning is not articulated into practice, it has no effect’. Representational meaning and consumption still takes place even if the message is not accepted in its entirety.

The argument from Doise et al. (1999) seeks to highlight that representations are not always the primary tool of identification with all groups. How individuals interpret and consume the message depends on a range of factors such as their social power positions or how they relate to the message. This view contrasts the structural view of social representations in which meanings are organised around a central core that is consensual and wherein variations are formed only in peripheral elements that are not fundamental to shared meaning (Abric, 2001). The representation of racial difference, the writing of power and the production of knowledge is crucial to the way in which they are generated and function (Hall, 1997a). In this book, I maintain it is imperative to include the study of discourse in order to understand how Africans are perceived and discussed in Australian media and society. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Cultural Studies are rooted in the study of language as a source of power. In the inclusion of CDA in a cultural study, it is my aim to

provide an understanding of how the media help shape how the general population understand African immigrants and how their culture and way of life is constructed and regulated through representations.

#### **4.5 Consumption of Mediated Representations as Objects and Subjects of Discourse**

In this book, the moment of consumption within the circuit is aimed to analyse how mediated representations of Africans are consumed by the Australian general public as well as the African immigrants themselves. This section seeks to explore the techniques that individuals' employ in discerning how they chose to consume mediated representations as well as social behaviours. The moment of consumption encompasses how the public make sense of a cultural artefact, 'in their everyday lives and form new meanings around it as a consequence of its use' (Curtin & Gaither, 2007, p. 138; Du Gay et al., 1997). Through this description, the consumers are considered to be active producers of meaning, this is true to a degree. For a person who belongs to the dominant culture that is responsible for the representation they hold an empowered position as a producer of meaning. Conversely, if someone who is new to the society, they are seldom empowered producers of meaning within mediated discourse as they are often portrayed as objects in their representation (Mackay, 1997). It is during the moment of consumption that desired messages are extracted from mediated responses and those conscious choices made within the moment are a component to how part of a group's identity is constructed in the mind of the audience member (Spencer, 2006).

The Cultural Circuit suggests meaning-making is an ongoing process, it does not end at a preordained place (Du Gay et al., 1997, p. 85). In this regard, mediated representations of a group are just one way of seeing them, thus present a limited perspective into the group in question. On the other hand, for the African immigrant, it is during the moment of consumption that they consume representations of their ethnic/cultural group. As objects in these representations, they get to experience how they are portrayed and what social positions are ascribed to them in the encoded representations. During this experience, the individual decodes or interprets the mediated message to come to an understanding. Understanding of the message is achieved when the individual imparts their 'experiences and beliefs' (Du Gay et al., 1997; Hall, 1999, p. 510) in deriving meaning. Hall (1999) conceptualises this as the 'reproduction of meaning', at which point meaning will have transferred from the encoded message through its decoding by the individual. In the moment of consumption, the individual negotiates their representation and how they feel they are perceived. This view is drawn from multiple perspectives such as the culture in which one resides as well as within the internal workings of the self where meaning is constructed and reconstructed (Sreberny, 2002, p. 218).



Consumption is a moment in which certain meanings and messages are appropriated and/or resisted (Curtin & Gaither, 2007, p. 139). During the 'reproduction of meaning', there is no one way of decoding a message. The practice of consumption means that different individuals create different meanings but the point to note is that the meanings they attach to the representations they consume are not random instead they are carefully devised and articulated (Baudrillard, 1988). Baudrillard (1988) argues that meaning resides not only in an object but in how the object is used by consumers. This take on consumption empowers the individual, in the fact that they have a choice in what they choose to appropriate into their everyday lives as well as those other aspects they choose to discard. This viewpoint counters the views put forward by De Certeau (1984) when he argued that consumption always takes place within the bounds prescribed by production, this is not the case if we look at the participant as an active agent. The active selection and negotiation of meanings produced during the moment of consumption, how they are used in the individual's everyday life and what consequence and significance the person gains from this usage are key points of analysis. Du Gay et al. (1997) maintain that not all meaning that we form is of our own choosing; instead, some of the meanings that we form are due to social structuring created by the media as sources of the dominant discourse. It is this pull of the media that I will be seeking to get commentary on from my participants. The media is consumed to fulfil specific needs, which can be multiple. In this, we see that consumption plays a significant role in what the audience come to know about the world around them and how they are perceived. Meaning constructed during the moment can be utilised by the individual to fulfil their public (social self) or private (conscious being) lives. The second aim of this research is to learn how the audience incorporate meanings from their media consumption into their everyday lives (Curtin & Gaither, 2007). The desired result is not a consensus but balancing and absorbing the competing meanings that inevitably arise during the moment of consumption.

## 4.6 Identity of the African Immigrant Individual

During the moment of consumption, individuals gain consciousness and identity. Their representations are mediated. In this section, the argument of the role of mediated representations and its effect on the individual are explored further. In the moment of identity, I seek to investigate (a) how individuals negotiate meaning, (b) how they put these meanings to use in their everyday lives and (c) how they choose the meanings that they put to use and those that they discard. In this instance, media representations provide a pivotal reference point from which consumers come to learn who they are and what they are not through inclusion and sameness as well as exclusion and difference. During the moment of consumption, the audience is constantly bombarded with mediated messages from which they must construct meanings from different, intersecting sources that are always in the process of transformation. After decoding the messages, the audience start to devise strategies in

which they negotiate meaning. In this process, the audience is influenced by the discourse in which they participate (Leitch & Neilson, 2001, p. 138). This discourse arises from the personal, national and cultural influences on which they refer to in the creation of their identities.

Identity like meaning is never complete, Hall (1996a, pp. 2–3) argues that identity is always under construction, it is never final but instead is always in process. In order to form an identity, Hall maintains that one needs ‘material and symbolic resources to sustain it’ thus the moment of consumption might influence the construction of identity from the ideas the audience forms from it. Material consumption of the media might influence how one perceives themselves in that moment or for an extended period of time. In the moment of identity configuration, one of the main objectives is questioning how identities are produced and taken up through the practices of representation and consumption (Grossberg, 1997). Within Cultural Studies, there is a tendency to heavily rely on theories that situate identity as being influenced by the culture one resides in as well as how one is positioned discursively (Ang & Stratton, 1998; Cheryan & Monin, 2005; Clary-Lemon, 2010; Shaw, 2013; Song, 2003). Orbe and Harris (2008, p. 69) suggest that scholars need to analyse the individual’s identity negotiation through another means to present its fragmented multiplicity.<sup>3</sup> They recommend that the study of identity should be conducted twofold, first through traditional Psychology in order to place identity as an individual entity but to also use Social Communication Theory to view identity as being relational. Cultural Studies, particularly through poststructuralist inflections, focuses on contextual factors in identity development. In following Orbe and Harris (2008) in their recommendation to use psychology (specifically social psychology), the African immigrant’s identity can be viewed as being subjective and not contingent on the encoded representations. Rather, the African immigrants’ personal meanings and conclusions are brought to the fore for analysis. The individual, however, is not bound to these definitions of identity negotiation, within the personal and cultural influences people are constantly creating identities that are ‘self-activated and self-defined’ (Leitch & Neilson, 2001, p. 138) these negotiations are constantly being constructed and reconstructed. Symbolic interactionist Ervin Goffman provides theatrical metaphors to attempt to explain how identity is constantly in flux. Goffman (1959, 2012) likens identity to a performance in saying individuals present

a selected display of behaviour that cannot go on continuously and which must, to some extent must consciously and unconsciously be planned and rehearsed. (Meyrowitz, 1985, p. 29)

Thus, within identity, one actively and continuously selects aspects of their self that they wish to present to the public and these decisions are carefully controlled. From this position, we observe that the meanings one takes on to help build their identity are in part created to achieve strategic goals. Goffman suggests ‘people are constantly

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<sup>3</sup>In defining the term fragmented multiplicity, Stuart Hall maintained that meaning was never complete and never singular. Meaning is always subject to translation, transformation and contestation. (Hall, 1992, 1996b).

mobilising their energies to create socially meaningful impressions'. Through this marking of difference, we signify our difference and power positions.

He terms this 'impression management', which he argues is done to serve as a 'social shortcut through which people identify themselves and provide expectations about their behaviour—both to others and themselves' (Meyrowitz, 1985, pp. 29–30). This type of assessment privileges the discerning individual in that identity is regarded as something which is personal and can be regulated to achieve specific aims. This explanation of identity from a symbolic interactionist perspective ties into what Stuart Hall theorises on identity. Hall (1996a, p. 14) contends that we 'are in a constant agonistic process of struggling with, resisting, negotiating and accommodating, the normative or regulative rules' in which we strategically regulate our identities. In this regard, conceptualising identity is not a simple experience but rather one which is learned and rehearsed.

## 4.7 Production of Identity

In the moment of identity, I discussed that not all meaning arises from discursive practices. Instead, the meaning is also influenced by ones' social interactions, which Du Gay and Hall (1996), Hall (1996a) and Goffman (1959, 2012) maintain aid in the formation of symbolic meaning for the individual. This, in turn, could make mediated discourses contradict with the symbolic meanings created by the individual. Scholars who belong to the poststructuralist school of thought have tended to stress the significance of the external factors that implicate the production of an individual's identity. Arguments within this school have relied strongly on looking at power relations and the effect of language in positioning the individual as either dominant or subordinate (Hall, 1996a; Jeffres, 2000; Trebbe & Schoenhagen, 2011). As previously discussed in the moment of consumption, in this type of analysis the individual is always positioned as the object of discourse. Without the inclusion of the individual having an active part in the discerning of mediated representations, they will always occupy the subordinate object position. In Hall et al.'s work on representation, identity, consumption and culture (Du Gay & Hall, 1996; Du Gay et al., 1997; Hall, 1996a, 1997a; Mackay, 1997) through the discursive perspective there is a tendency to 'decentre' the self by relocating or dispersing the self within a large set of structures and forces, most notably discourse and power (Dunn, 1997; Tusting 2005). Discursive theorists discuss issues of identity and express that people are always trying to negotiate between notions of themselves and cultural meanings (Akomfrah, 2013; Cottle, 2000; Mainsah, 2009). However, within this analysis, the concept of identity or the self is overshadowed by external factors such as the discourse of ideological institutions that can limit certain groups from occupying empowered positions. Hall maintains, if identity is always in negotiation, the individual is always in a constant process of understanding social and cultural codes as well as notions of self. What one consumes and chooses to appropriate to their everyday lives and identity is then based on what they want to become. This can be

understood as both a conscious or unconscious decision (Bauman, 2004; Denzin, 1992; Goffman, 1959, 2012). Within this negotiation there is ‘complex hybridity’ (Akomfrah, 2013), this is due to the varied social and cultural meaning-making that one is constantly a part of through their perceived representation and in what they actively consume. This sociological inflection in Hall’s theorisations can be thought of as shedding away some of the rigidity of poststructural theorisations. For the contemporary individual, to a degree, the seeking of meaning within social interactions is becoming limited. Currently, people derive their information from alternative sources such as the media and the Internet (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014, 2016–2017; Diehl, Weeks, & de Zúñiga, 2015; Miranda et al., 2016). The digital age has made it so that in particular regions certain demographics and cultures base most of their ‘social interactions’ via non-physical human-to-human interaction, this type of digital learning suits the postmodern analysis of identity formation (Gubrium & Holstein, 1995; McRobbie, 1994). Identity production is something is in constant development and fluid (Baudrillard, 1988; Bauman, 2004; Hall, 1990, 1992, 1996a; Mead, 1967, 2003). Identity is not something that is organic to the individual but rather a process of social experience. From this standpoint, identity production is a reflexive process whereby external as well as internal influences, conscious as well as non-conscious are in a constant process.

## 4.8 Identity Regulation, Identity in Action

In the previous section, I maintained that identity is produced through external (discursive mediated messages) and internal (psychological) influences. This position privileges the agent or individual as they negotiate techniques of how they are going to regulate their differed identities. Hall (1990, 1992) maintains that this negotiation of identity is informed by two factors. The first being what the individual believes to be their representation in society. This is based on the images and language that inform the dominant discourse (Fowler, 2007; Potter, 1996; Van Dijk, 2014). Second, what perceptions of self the individual has based on what they consume in the media (Deaux & Wiley, 2007; Fabian, 1990; Trebbe & Schoenhagen, 2011). The moment of regulation can be understood as the moment in which we manage our various identities and what we choose to reveal to others about who we are. Hall (1997b) argues that it is within the moment of regulation that issues of culture and power are at the forefront. The key investigation aim for this section is to explore how the regulation of identity is influenced by social interactions and mediated representations and to what effect within the individual?

The premise that identity is fluid or liquid (Bauman, 2004; Hall, 1996a, 1997b) and is constantly under construction and negotiation echoes the fact that within the Circuit of Culture (Du Gay et al., 1997). The moments are concurrently instable, constantly in flux, interminably creating and recreating meaning (Curtin & Gaither, 2007, p. 52). The processes of consumption of representations, production and regulation of identity do not work independently. Instead, the reference points a researcher utilises to understand and establish that meaning are constantly under construction.

The moment of regulation, therefore, presents itself as a type of identity control, in which certain elements are hidden and revealed in varied circumstances, to achieve specific goals. This illustrates the reflexivity of identity, as that which can be influenced by internal and external factors. Within the poststructural strand of theory, the internal workings involved in the production of identity are often negated, as the focus tends to lay in the workings of power institutions around the individual (Altschull, 1994; Gatt, 2011; Staples, 2011). This objectifies the individual; instead, if we view identity regulation through a more sociological influenced perspective this enables the individual to be placed in the subject position. The study of interactions within the sociological perspective is usually linked with symbolic interactionism, in this field, the understanding of identity is rooted within symbols (Denzin, 1992; Rousseau & Cooley, 2002; Sohoni & Mendez, 2014). Symbols represent objects in our minds and thus, language is pivotal to this connection, without which we could not access the symbols necessary for thinking and acting (Elliott, 2011, p. 25; Jenkins, 1996). This chimes into the ideas presented by Hall (1992, 1996a, 1997b) that it is crucial to study cultural processes discursively in order to find to whom power is given through the use of language. Without the intention of combining these differed schools of thought, it is imperative to highlight points where they intersect.

#### **4.9 Circuit of Culture and African Immigrants in Australia**

In this section of the literature review section, I strived to illustrate that in order to research a cultural/ethnic group there is no linear way of going about it. The lives led by the intended research participants are varied, dynamic and unique to their individual experiences. It would be adopting a position of superior knowledge on the group should one believe they fully understand the phenomenon of everyday life (Brabazon, Redhead, & Chivaura, 2015; Hammersley, 2013; Saukko, 2003). Research into ethnic minorities, particularly from a poststructural perspective tends to emphasise how the media represent and alienate minorities in its reporting (Mainsah, 2009; McIntosh, 2015; Van Dijk, 2000, 2015). There is a gap in knowledge about ways in which ethnic groups interpret and use these representations in their everyday social lives, without necessarily being powerless victims in their depictions. This is the gap in knowledge that I seek to contribute to. For an immigrant of African descent who enters society in which race is a dominant discourse, a major task is come to an understanding of the societal representations of race and negotiate the meaning of one's identity within that context (Tormala & Deaux, 2006, p. 141). By first understanding how and what African immigrants consume from their mediated representations and their positioning within society, researchers can better understand the influencing factors into (a) how these African immigrants negotiate meaning, (b) how they put these meanings to use in their everyday lives and (c) how they choose the meanings that they put to use and those that they discard. The way different ethnic minority groups view and distinguish themselves in the diaspora is often negotiated and influenced by the new culture in which they inhabit. How they come to negotiate their identity to

a degree is shaped by what ideologies are regulated by the media. Just as changes in the media, identities could be considered as social constructions ‘emerging from discursive practices, that they form in relationship to something else’ (Curtin & Gaither, 2007, pp. 168–169). Hall (1996a, p. 4) states through media representations, one can either adopt the identity that they are represented as being or conversely, reject this identity the media presents, in the way one chooses to represent themselves. In this he argues, we come to see that ‘identities are constituted within, not outside representation’ (Hall 1996a, p. 4). It is, therefore, essential to study African immigrants’ use of the media from both object and subject positions. In their placing as objects within mediated representations, the immigrants experience themselves as echoes of the social group from which they belong to (Doise et al., 1999; Fabian, 1990; Willis, 1993, p. 34). In their consumption of the media, African immigrants are exposed to the attitudes of other individuals towards (themselves) within a social environment or context (Mead, 1967, p. 138). Linguistic poststructuralists such as Hall (1996a, 1997b) and Van Dijk (1987, 1988, 2000) would argue that this is enforcement of social control through discursive messages. In this case, the media provides a ‘version of reality’ of how the African immigrants are regarded in society, thus a version of the African identity. The mediated representations seek to present the ideologies of Australianness. In these mediated representations, the African immigrant is positioned as an object.

As a subject, the African immigrant consumes the social attitudes that ‘confront the group’, based on this; the individual may start developing ways and strategies of producing and regulating their identity. In poststructural linguistic work, the immigrant individual is hardly discussed as an active participant and occupies the object position. As a subject within mediated representations, this places the African immigrant in a position of power as they actively discern what they choose to use in the production of their identity. In allowing African immigrants the space to position themselves as empowered participants in the discourse this allows the researcher to observe how African immigrants learn about themselves through their mediated representations. From this, do immigrant individuals learn a new way of presenting themselves in their everyday lives in order to create a distinctive appearance to satisfy a particular audience? (Schaefer, 2012). Goffman (1959) suggests that many of our daily activities involve attempts to convey impressions of who we are—in which we learn to present ourselves socially (Schaefer, 2012). Thus, performance then becomes an essential role in the regulation of identity within social contexts. This perspective of looking at the individual as a subject would create an explorative pathway to investigate how African immigrants monitor their impressions based on how they are represented and how they want to be perceived. This framework of the production and regulation of identity provides a rounded perspective to my research, which seeks to investigate the individual as a subject and as an object within mediated representations. This affords an all-inclusive and credible argument in the pursuit of theorising how identities are produced and how the individual later regulates them.

## 4.10 Research Questions and Concluding Remarks

Having established the value in understanding how African Immigrants utilise what they consume in their mediated representations as a basis to produce and regulate their private and social identities, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. What is the discourse surrounding Africans in Australian media and Society?
2. How do Africans in Australia appropriate the media in their everyday lives? What consequence does this have on their social lives?
3. In their own words, how do Africans living in Australia articulate their experience?

This literature review chapter has presented the scholars that will form the anchor of this research project. It is through the use of the Circuit of Culture as an anchoring framework that I have examined the core themes of this book, which are, representation, consumption of representations, identity production and identity regulation. Using the Circuit of Culture in the study of human life instead of a tangible object offers an original and unique approach of utilising the Circuit. It is through the design of its five key moments that make it a holistic tool for analysing cultural phenomena. It is through these moments that I have showcased some of the critical thinking that will be explored in greater depth in the proceeding research chapters. In these chapters, there will be a practical application of theory to the issues that I will be challenging and contributing new knowledge to. In this book, I set out to revive engaged cultural studies and study an emerging racial, ethnic and cultural group through a critical lens. In the proceeding chapters, I will be contributing to original knowledge about African immigrants in Australia through the methods and theory that will be utilising. My aim is to provide a foundation on which to build on the study of African immigrants in Australia that is informed by first-hand research and original input by the African immigrants themselves. The following research chapters will provide evidence of this original contribution to knowledge.

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# Chapter 5

## Race and (Re)Presentation



**Abstract** The next stage in this study is to evaluate how race is ascribed meaning in Australian media. I will chiefly be using Stuart Hall's theorisations of how language is used as a representational system (Hall, 1997a, c; Jhally & Hall, 1997) as well as criteria of how moral panics are created in society (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994). In any discursive study, it is essential to study the use of language in a text, a text in this instance is taken to mean written and spoken language as well as images. Hall (1990, 1997a, c, 2000) highlight that the study of language is important in Cultural Studies as it creates and frames meaning. I have coined the term symbolic violence to mean discourse or deeds that villainise or demonise particular groups in society, through the way that they are presented in discourse. It is particularly important to consider how language plays a role in fueling moral panics and stigma of particular persons and groups. I will be drawing from articles that I collected from the media content analysis study initially and broadly then discussing specific articles in depth. Discourse analysis and Cultural Studies align as their chief focus is establishing how power is maintained and demonstrated through language analysis. The interrogation of texts and images is seen as a way of revealing how dominant institutions want to shape society's understanding of specific groups and themes. When certain images are repeatedly presented time and time again, they start to become familiar. These items and symbols aid in building a common-sense understanding of a group. Thus, in the reader's interrogation of the texts, *common-sense* identifiers and comprehension of certain groups is easily achieved. Common sense is a term that has been heavily contested because it does not specify to whom the sense is common to.

**Keywords** Moral panic · Discourse analysis · Race · African male · African female · Violence · Refugee · Common sense · Content analysis

### 5.1 Data Collection Process

The data collection process began by entering the keywords in the advanced search, which resulted in 614 results. The method of collecting the data that was useful for my study was implemented by recording the date on which the article/media was published. This was followed by the name of the news/media source and what type

of media it was published in. For example, The Sydney Morning Herald: Newspaper. The title/headline and the main message of the article came next. The argument from the article was determined via the key points that related to African immigrants. In the end, my data collection sheet looked like this

**19 May 2016**

Perth Now: Newspaper

Title: Brazil-type Zika confirmed in Africa

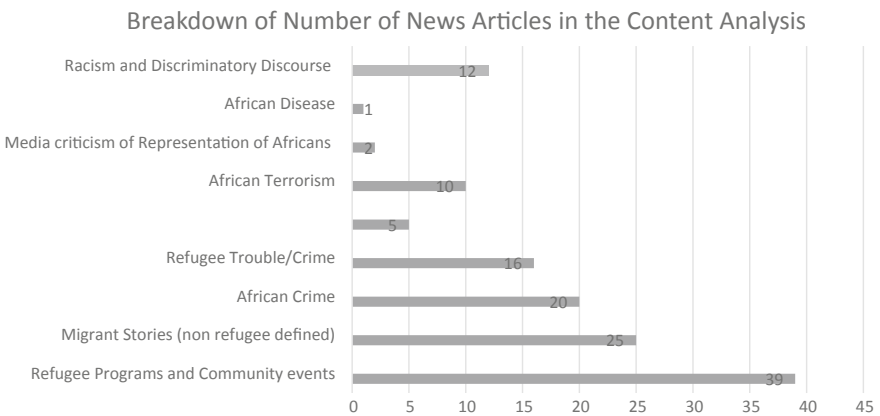
Main Message: Tests have shown that an outbreak of Zika virus on the African island chain of Cape Verde is of the same strain as the one blamed for birth abnormalities in Brazil, the World Health Organization says.

I started my data collection from 26 May 2015 to 26 May 2016.

**Shaping the Data**

The data collection took 3 working days to complete and yielded 198 results from the initial 614 compiled by ANZ News Stream. The articles amassed were varied and covered events within Australia and abroad. I chose to include the events that were happening abroad that included African immigrants because as they were presented in Australian media these articles contributed to the understanding of what it means to be African. Another reason why I chose to include these results is that some of the participants would have been privy to these discourses and they might have influenced some of the answers that they provided.

In order to have a better understanding of the results, a method of reviewing the data in a more manageable manner had to be devised. With the aid of the workbook in Microsoft Excel, I decided to pictorially depict the different news stories in a chart. This was a preliminary way of categorising the data to visually illustrate the different categories of stories that had been covered over this 12-month period. The next stage of data analysis was to tally each of the results of the different categories (Fig. 5.1).



**Fig. 5.1** Breakdown of number of news articles

From the illustration above, the large majority of coverage concerning African immigrants was from the Migration Crisis in Europe, closely followed by refugee programmes and Community events then Positive immigration stories (that did not include people identified as African refugees). It is important to note these various categories because when I was conducting the oral interviews with the research participants (Chap. 9) some of the participants gave examples from media that was produced from this 12-month period in reference to how they think Africans are perceived in Australia. Without trying to blanket cause and effect results, the fact that certain categories are represented frequently in the media and the participants identifying them as being issues they encounter in their everyday life, does show a relationship between the two. It is, therefore, imperative for this book to have a chapter on discourse analysis of Australian media because it helps to provide context to the survey and interview participants responses and attitudes to how they are perceived socially based on how they are depicted in Australian media.

## 5.2 Probing the Representation of Africans in the Media Using Policing the Crisis as an Analytical Lens

*Policing the Crisis* is powerful through its imperfections (Brabazon, Chivaura, Redhead, & Gatwiri, 2016).

### **Strengths and Shortcomings of *Policing the Crisis***

In my use of *Policing the Crisis*, I acknowledge that it has been 39 years since its original publication, with a reprint in 2013 to mark its 35th Anniversary. The book has received praise and criticism for its content and theorisation. Perhaps one of the under-discussed facts is that the book was written over a 6-year period and the vast majority of the content was written as the events occurred. In this sense, having five authors writing over 6 years is revealed in some of the chapters where arguments tend to jump from different time periods which make reading the text quite challenging at times. In an interview with Connell (2015), Chas Critcher admits that writing the book was prolonged and difficult. As the book was written as the events that inspired it took place, this did not leave time for the ideas being presented to marinate and be developed before publication. This is the nature in which the authors intended to present the book 'Our aim has been to examine "mugging" from the perspective of society in which it occurs'. (Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke, & Roberts, 1978, p. 327). Meaning it was more important to capture *the moment* with less emphasis on the development of theorisation. The inclusion of Hall as a lead author (perhaps) lifted the book to higher acclaim, however, 35 years later in an interview, Chas Critcher let in on the fact that 'Hall's position as the first named author of the book carried a particular symbolic resonance' (Connell, 2015, p. 279). By way of having an acclaimed cultural commentator and head of the Centre of Contemporary Cultural Studies as lead author perhaps added to the power and significance of the book within the field of cultural studies and criminology. However, it can also be seen as a

tokenistic association. Apart from Hall, the other four authors are all white. Through the inclusion of Hall, this could be seen as a way of presenting a book that discusses issues of racialisation, criminality and marginalisation have the approval of a black male (through his life Hall had confictions of what his race was he never really disclosed where he felt he belonged (Akomfrah, 2013; Connell, 2014) in a study in which black males were being persecuted by the state and the media.

Another criticism of *Policing the Crisis* has been the underdevelopment of theory in particular sections of the book for instance theorisations of hegemony are criticised by some academics as being ‘hegemony 101’ (Brabazon et al., 2016) and some of the criminology theories have since been further developed and others contested. The chapter that I am particularly concerned about in *Policing the Crisis* is *The Politics of ‘Mugging’*. This is the section in which the case of the crisis in England of the criminality of immigrants is examined at length. This is perhaps the most journalistic chapter in the book, as examples of that 6-year period are presented but there is little to no theorization as what the causes or impacts of this type of reporting and police response could be. Connell (2015, p. 278) presents two key examples in which the disjuncture of the chapter is evidenced.

There were problems with this methodological approach. One reviewer of the original edition of *Policing*, for instance, thought it was clear that the authors were ‘lacking in full agreement’ and felt that much of the book appeared to be ‘transitional’ and ‘provisional’, particularly the final section (*The Politics of ‘Mugging’*) which—as Hall recently admitted—was the most speculative part of the book.

For this reason, this is why I have decided to do a full content analysis of this period, as well as devise a method of analysis that can easily be followed and replicated in future studies. *The Politics of ‘Mugging’*, provided a rough blueprint from which discursive studies could be conducted. Yes, the fact remains that the chapter is perhaps difficult and not presented in a coherent manner, the essence of what the researchers were trying to achieve is still evident and is perhaps one of the reasons this book still holds great value, particularly in the field of Cultural Studies. Despite all these shortcomings listed in the above paragraphs, *Policing the Crisis* still presents the first instance in British Cultural Studies whereby a case study of race particularly of immigrants was seriously studied. What makes *Policing the Crisis* particularly the last chapter, *The Politics of ‘Mugging’*, integral to my study are two key points. First how ‘moral panics’ of visibly different immigrants were fuelled and perpetuated by the State and the media. Blackness became synonymous with danger, criminality and *mugging*. Through my content analysis of media discourse over a 12-month period, a similar pattern can be observed in the reporting of African males in Australia. The second reason why *The Politics of ‘Mugging’* is valuable to this chapter is the way in which it presents perceived criminality and non-belonging of particular groups. In this chapter, I seek to coin the phrase *Semiotic Violence*. Using this term, I will be exploring how blackness is presented as a defining identity (Brabazon et al., 2016). I will be arguing how visible racial difference is a defining moment for Africans living in Australia. Blackness is loaded with many connotations before the individual gets a chance to present themselves. Lastly, I will be delving into how particular representations of Africans further reduce the space made available for this already subjugated group.

### 5.3 Moral Panics: Look! A Negro! White Gaze

I cast an objective gaze over myself, discovered my blackness, my ethnic features, deafened by cannibalism, backwardness, fetishism, racial stigmas... I was responsible not only for my body but also for my race and my ancestors. Fanon (2011, p. 424)

Since the arrival of the first fleet of ships from England to Botany Bay New South Wales in 1788, Australia has since been in a battle (both physically and symbolically) of categorising who belongs and who doesn't. This was initially marked by the categorization of the visible difference between the English Roses and the English thorns they brought with them against the black Indigenous population. This way of thinking of whiteness being superior did not start then, it had been had been proclaimed in literature, religion and history. To this day, issues of race and Indigeneity largely remain unresolved in the Australian context. There have been some acknowledgements of wrongdoing by the Australian people such as The Commonwealth Electoral Act (1918) which was republished by the Australian Electoral Commission in (2016).

National Reconciliation Week (Australian Government, 2016c), Mabo Day (Australian Government, 2016b), Formal apology to Australia's Indigenous peoples 2008 (Australian Government, 2016a). However, Indigenous people are still not constitutionally recognised in Australia. There is a host of other issues that can be discussed in regard to the treatment of Indigenous population of Australia but for the purposes of this chapter space and time do not allow.

Emigrating as a visibility different individual against this historical backdrop resurrects some past tensions within Australia. Race and more recently religion and sexuality are pressure points in society and flair up at different points and contexts. With race being the visible marker of 'non-belonging' (Mainsah, 2009; McIntosh, 2015; Van Dijk, 1988, 2015), this chapter seeks to explore how race is presented and (re)presented in Australian society. How does the dominant population come to know of the visibly different other? To aid me with this, I will be drawing from examples from the content analysis that I discussed earlier on in the chapter. This will assist in providing current presentations of the African body and the symbolic meanings that surround that imagery.

For an immigrant of African descent who enters society in which race is a dominant discourse, a major task is come to an understanding of the societal representations of race and negotiate the meaning of ones identity within that context. (Tormala & Deaux, 2006, p. 141)

In this statement, Tormala and Deaux (2006) were discussing black immigrants in the United States. However, the same argument applies to black immigrants arriving and residing in Australia. One must understand the historical as well as the current definitions and debate surrounding Australian national identity. The dominant media discourse alone is a clear example of who is included and excluded in the images of national identity. Take, for instance, the content analysis that I conducted from May 2015 to May 2016 out of the 198 articles and news publications, 116 of those were negative presentations of Africans in Australia and abroad. I will proceed to briefly expand on these articles by the categories they fell under. The category titles have been highlighted in bold and centred for emphasis.



### **European Migration Crisis = 58 Articles**

The number of articles and media in this section could have been much larger than the 58 articles; however, I had to be strict with the articles that I compiled. I chose not to include the articles that had references to different nationalities/ethnicities such as ‘North African or Syrian’ as it was not definitively clear as to which group the individual/s belonged to. All of the articles compiled in this section fell under the negative categorization; the vast majority were of the mass migration of North Africans to Europe via the Mediterranean Sea. Particular emphasis was on the thousands who had drowned or were saved from capsized boats. Their fate past this largely went unreported (Brennan, 2015; Pollard, 2015a, 2015b; The Canberra Times, 2015). The second popular topic was the European Union’s response to the immigration crisis. Emphasis was placed on what European leaders were doing to stop the migrants coming into Europe, this was further fuelled by the influx of African immigrants seeking economic asylum, which was being viewed differently from those seeking physical asylum. Countries such as Italy and Israel were forcefully detaining Africans whom they deemed to be economic migrants but there was little to no coverage as to the legality and the fate of these detained persons (Illawarra Mercury, 2015; Porter, 2015). The then British Foreign Secretary was quoted saying ‘Millions of African migrants heading to Europe are endangering the continent’s living standards and social structure’ (Morris, 2015).

### **African Crime = 20**

This category covered crimes or alleged crimes that had been committed by Africans in Australia and abroad. African migrants involved in the European migration crisis were not counted in this category. The most populous coverage of African crime came from the media reporting of an African man kidnapping a toddler in Melbourne (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2016; Galloway, Hurley, & O’Rourke, 2016; Palin, 2016). A couple of days later the mother of the toddler was remanded in custody and later charged for the murder of her daughter after a full confession. However, the reporting of a drunk, shoeless African man continued to be recounted despite the fact the murderer had been charged (9News, 2016; Australian Associated Press, 2016c; Cheer & Beers, 2016; Deery & Hosking, 2016; Mills & Booker, 2016; Young & Koubaridis, 2016). The second populous coverage of African crime was the trial of Oscar Pistorius, the South African Paralympian. In all the reporting of the negative articles dealing with Africans published in Australian media, Oscar Pistorius is the only white African to feature in negative reporting.

### **Refugee Trouble/ Crime = 16 Articles**

Again, for the section, I decided to split it from the African Crime categorization. For this category, these were criminal misconducts/allegations carried out by ‘identified’ individuals, who hold refugee or humanitarian visas in Australia. The stories reported in this category identified Sudanese males as the dominant perpetrators of violence

and crime (Brook & Palin, 2016; Cook, Dow, & Jacks, 2016; The Age, 2016b). In the articles sourced, there were letters submitted to the Editor, as well as the comment section alleging a cover-up operation by the government and the police about the level of crime that was being committed by African humanitarian visa holders (The Age, 2016a; The Bendigo Advertiser, 2016; Vanstone, 2016). In the articles, there was no explanation of how the reporters assessed how the people involved in the incidents were Sudanese or gang related. Nor was there provision of the psychoanalysis report that evaluated that the criminality was directly related to the environments that they had been raised in Africa. These comments and assumptions were made as ‘common knowledge’ of this group.

### **Racism and Discriminatory Discourse = 12**

In this category, I was targeting stories that carried particular stereotypes and negative attitudes towards Africans. These were predominantly articles and media coverage whereby white Australians were giving their viewpoints on certain matters that could be classified as discriminatory discourse. The articles ranged from defence for using black face (Eddie & Tran, 2016; Ward & Cherny, 2016). Pauline Hanson’s discriminatory speeches (Kirkpatrick, 2016) and the fear of black students in schools (Jacks, 2016). These are not particularly new discourses in the media; however, their setting in the present context helps to us understand some of the anxieties surrounding Australian national identity. In saying this, it is not to say the majority of the Australian population have these views; nevertheless, it is interesting to see the rhetoric between official media institutions and comments written by users in the comment sections beneath the articles/media.

### **African Terrorism = 10**

With the spread of Islamic State (IS/ISIS) globally, some of the people suspected of belonging to this group are African. In the compilation of articles, there were instances whereby the suspects were described as being Syrian, Iraqi or North African. In these cases, the ambiguity meant I could not consider this to be an African related story. In the production of media that directly linked Africans with terrorism sometimes Africans were ‘doubled named’, for instance, ‘The Algerians and Africans accepted into Parisian society are all potential IEDs...’ (Bolt, 2015; Paris, 2015). This implies that there is a difference between Algerians and Africans or that they are two separate groups. Recruitment and fighting of IS militants is also reported as a growing concern (Barker, 2016; Porter, 2016; Spyer, 2016).

### **African Disease = 1**

There was only one mention of the disease in the 12-month period that I analysed (Miles, 2016). My content analysis came after the declaration that Ebola had been predominantly eradicated in Africa, prior to this the Ebola discourse had been in the media for a period of over 48 months.

### **Refugee Programs and Community Events = 39**

In this section, there were a range of topics covered, the dominant one was of African refugees and their stories of how they came to Australia and how grateful there were of the opportunities provided by the migration (Brown, 2015; Fairfield Advance, 2015; Maribyrnong Leader, 2015). The second most common coverage in this category was that of refugee activities run to bring these groups together as well as help them adjust to the Australian way of life (Comment News, 2015; Mani, 2015; Seeney, 2015; Stokes, 2015). The third most common representation was that of community arts and crafts groups, music and theatre run by and largely for African refugees (Campbell, 2015; Capone, 2015). The bulk of the stories from this category came a few weeks before and after Refugee Week (14–20 June 2015).

### **Migrant Stories (non-refugee descript) = 25**

I chose to keep the categories of identified refugee and other migrants whose migration pathways to Australia were undisclosed. I did this to see the types of media coverage the different emigrating groups receive and the discourses that circulate around these. One could argue that there is an over-representation of African refugee stories in the media and less of other African immigrants that came via alternative pathways. This could be seen as a way of pushing the idea that African = Refugee due to the over-representation.

This category yielded 25 articles of which the larger majority were sports related (particularly male sport) (Houghton, 2015; Jervis-Bardy, 2015; Turner, 2015; Whitehorse Leader, 2016). Coming second to this were reports of migrant successes in different communities this included Africans setting up business ventures (Stafford, 2015; The Morning Bulletin, 2015), financial contributions to the Australian economy (Claridge & Lohberger, 2015; Masanauskas, 2015; Ostrow, 2015) and arts and music projects (Bodey, 2016; Edmistine, 2016; Frankston Standard Leader/Hastings Leader, 2016).

In the content analysis, there were two categories that I could not place as either being positive or negative. These were Sport and African politics; the articles had positive, negative and neutral standpoints and thus made it challenging to align with a definite outlook. Take, for instance, Sport, there were a total of eight articles altogether, four of which can be categorised as being negative, FIFA and the South African Football Association corruption (Feneley, 2015). Tensions over the South African and Australian cricket teams over the Adelaide day–night test (Lalor, 2016), the ignorant comment of Netball Australia Chief Executive Kate Palmer, that Jamaica is a country in Africa (Australian Associated Press, 2016d). Two of the articles could be classified as being positive, a South African golfer winning a Texas University tournament (Tucker, 2015) and a Sudanese refugee fulfilling the family dream of playing for the Sydney Swans (Lalor, 2016). The last two can be grouped as being neutral as do they do not lean one way or another. Former South African cricketer wants the position of full-time bowling coach (Australian Associated Press, 2016a) and lastly South Africa could have the chance to host the next World Twenty20

(Fox News, 2016). In this regard, half of the articles could be considered to be negative and the other two quarters being neutral and positive, respectively. In this analysis, it is hard to miss that there is an over-representation of South Africa in sports reporting.

### **African Politics = 5**

This section shares the same sentiments as the previous one. There wasn't a clear way of categorising the articles in a positive, negative or neutral category. There were a total of three positive articles. Presidential talks to try to resolve and end the Burkina Faso coup (Australian Associated Press, 2015), Guinea-Bissau forming a new Government (Australian Associated Press, 2015) and Alassane Ouattara being re-elected as president of Ivory Coast (Australian Associated Press, 2015). In the neutral category, I identified one article, South African President, Jacob Zuma surviving an impeachment vote (Brock, 2016). The negative category also had one article of a brawl erupting in the South African Parliament (Australian Associated Press, 2016b). An obvious observation that can be made in this section is that all apart from the last article were stories generated through the Australian Associated Press Newswire (AAP Newswire). The AAP Newswire is an independently run news-gathering service that compiles short news articles as they happen, media institutions can then use these brief stories to develop a longer piece if there is interest. The lack of such publication of the other stories meant there was no interest from media producers.

## **5.4 Analyzing the Data**

The rationale of providing descriptions of content from each of the categories is to highlight how race and ethnicity are represented in Australian media. This content analysis is from a 12-month period from 26 May 2015 to 26 May 2016. In viewing the data, the categories that relate negative aspects of *Africanness* seem to dominate media coverage. This offers another reason why *Policing the Crisis* (1978) is a pivotal text to read and theorise from for this chapter; based on the similarities in racial vilification. If we replace the word African with West Indian for most of the categories (perhaps excluding terrorism and disease) similar parallels can be drawn from what was happening in 1970s Britain and Australia today. This is one of the many reasons why Hall's theories are essential for this study, they may be regarded as being old but in many ways, they capture a moment in time that can be used to trace the looping of immigration anxieties. In the 1950s–70s, it was the presence of visibly different bodies (black bodies) in the British Isles that caused a lot of national and immigration anxieties Enoch Powell's *Rivers of Blood Speech* (The Telegraph, 2007) and Lady Thatcher's anti-immigrant views (Marks, 2013; Swaine, 2009). Similar sentiments can be deduced from these Australian media articles as

well as political discourse (Australian Associated Press & Kwek, 2011; Farr, 2016; Kuhn, 2009). The dominant institutions' preoccupation of national identity could be seen as reinforcing colonial ideologies of what it is to be African (Czajka, 2005; Said, 1978). Again, going back to the context of the 1960s–70s England, we can see Brabazon's (1998) summation of black = bad, Hall et al.; black = dangerous mugger (Hall et al., 1978). In the Australian media context, it seems being black (African) is commonly associated with being a Refugee and/or criminal. In saying this, I am not arguing that this experience is unique to Africans, other waves of migration to Australia have also fallen victim to exclusionist discourse. The Irish, Greek, Italians, Lebanese, Chinese, etc., have all been met with resistance but after a while have managed to *blend into* a degree into the national fabric. However, the angst surrounding *blackness* has persevered. Some theorists would view this as the media creating *moral panics* in society to further demonise or create folk devils of particular groups (Cohen, 2011a, b; Erjavec, 2003; Martin, 2015). The term moral panic first came into use when it was coined by (Young, 1971), in his work he used this term to describe the panic in society caused by drug takers. The term is now more commonly associated with the work of Cohen (2011a) in which he theorises that moral panics in the twentieth and twenty-first century are catalysed by three prominent bodies (a) media representation, (b) public perception and interaction and lastly (c) political action. S. Cohen in (Martin 2015, p. 306) describes the most important sites of moral panics being

Anything connected with immigration, migrants, multicultural absorption, refugee, border controls and asylum seekers.

In this regard, he defines Moral panics as being episodic or periodic, in terms of just as they quickly flare-up by and also die down quite quickly. In his work Martin (2015, p. 307) begs to differ from this position. He argues that in the Australian context the

Societal reactions to asylum seekers...depart from the conventional meaning of moral panics because... the response is premised and persistent of recurring fears and anxieties.

Martin (2015) argues that in the Australian context groups that are considered as posing disturbances to the 'normal' society's values and way of life never actually die down. Instead, they make constant resurgences in the media, public and political arenas. Martin (2015) maintains that issues of immigration never completely go away instead they are 'suspended until resurrected at suitably opportune moments'. Such opportune moments could be during election campaigns, periods of economic uncertainty or criminal flare-ups. These are the times in which the *undesirable others* are 'demonised by the mass media and societies moral custodians'. (Cohen, 2011a, p. 1) These arguments mirror the same anti-immigration sentiments that were present during the writing of *Policing the Crisis* (Hall et al., 1978; Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke, & Roberts, 2013). The growing numbers of non-white others were reported as bringing decay and disorder to the British Society. Enoch Powell, the then Conservative Shadow Secretary of State for Defence attributed 'mugging', which was then generally categorised as a black problem as 'criminal phenomenon associated with the changing composition of the population of some of Britain's larger cities' (Hall et al., 1978, p. 327). In the Australian context, the same sentiments can be seen

coming from political leaders. Blackness is created as an undesirable, savage and unAustralian trait. The visibility of this difference has a strong impact on how images and discourse surrounding blackness are produced. The construction of blackness in Australia can be visualised in Fig. 5.2.

I created this diagram to demonstrate the positioning of blackness in the Australian context. Aforementioned, Australia has a long and largely unresolved relationship with race and Indigeneity. I have taken the outer oval blackness to encompass blackness in its entirety. This definition of blackness is that from imperial or European colonial times, Matias (2016) and Morgan Consoli (2016) offer a definition of colonisation as ‘an action or process of settling among and establishing control over the indigenous people’ of a geographic area. This type of colonialism (of chiefly non-white countries) had been going on before the invasion/colonisation/discovery of Australia. The middle oval titled Indigeneity captures this moment. Australia was regarded by the British as *Terra nullius*, which is a Roman law term meaning no-man’s land. This was used in law to define land which had not been claimed by any sovereign state (Australian Government, 2016c). In this regard, the imperial definition of colonisation arches over the local colonisation. The centre oval is Africanness; the positioning of this category here is strategic because Africa fell to imperial colonisation. Africa was viewed as a provision continent; it provided colonies, slaves, minerals and other exports. All these things linger in its history and in some of its present. As an African, navigating one’s way into Australia one is also met with local colonisation. Whereby the dark skin Indigenous people were/are dominated, thus, there are two layers of blackness encircling the African being, imperial and local colonisation. This analysis is the outward manifestation of African discourse

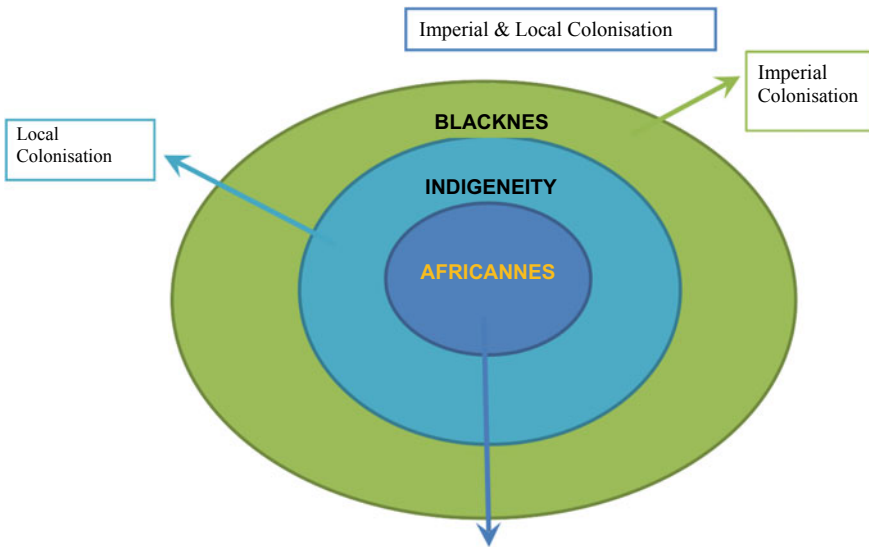


Fig. 5.2 Model of Africanness, Indigeneity and blackness

in Australian media, at first glance of the headline/title of the media pieces. In order to have a more informed viewpoint, it is necessary to delve into the content of the articles and uncover what embedded messages there are.

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## Chapter 6

# The Language of Moral Panics and Invisibility



**Abstract** With Africans being a relatively new immigrant group in Australia, much of the information about how they adapt to their new lives in Australia, as well as how they appropriate their everyday identities in social and private settings is largely unknown. Academic research that has been carried out regarding African immigrants in Australia tends to focus on two particular groups—refugees and asylum seekers (Baak in *African Identities* 9(4):417–434, 2011; Due, 2008; Gatt, 2011; Hatoss & Huijser, 2010; Hatoss & Sheely, 2008; Nolan et al., 2011, 2016; Nunn, 2010; O’Doherty & Lecouteur, 2007; Warriner in *Language learning and the politics of belonging: Sudanese women*, 2007; Windle, 2008). The research engages strongly with how these groups of Africans are represented in Australian media, specifically Australian newspapers. The themes discussed centre around the depiction of predominantly the Sudanese Africans great migration from ‘war torn’ ‘guerrilla run’ lands and their difficulty with adapting to their ‘new’ Australian lives. The nature of content analysis in the examples provided is based on the frequency and the construction of representations in the media. It does not take into account the personal perspective of the individual African groups in discussion. I conducted the cross-sectional survey online; in this section, the participants were asked a series of questions to gauge what media sources they predominately consumed and for what purpose. This was the catalyst to start to explore some of the general ideas that they had about the media. By conducting a national study, it will enable me to cast a wide net on participants from a range of geographic areas, within which various individuals will have different immigration backgrounds as well as belonging to a range of socio-economic, national and cultural backgrounds. This approach will allow for a large and diverse sample size that will create a rich data sample of African immigrants living in Australia and how they perceive their mediated representations as well as their social perceptions. Using the cross-sectional methodology is not without its criticisms, surveys can be vague and subjective in their interpretation. In this section, I aim to provide an overview of the data collected in the cross-sectional survey, so as to satisfy two goals. The first, to show the breakdown of the demographic surveyed, as well as to highlight the media attitudes of this demographic. This level of transparency will allow me to demonstrate a contradiction to the common knowledge of Africans pushed by ideological institutions that seems to purport that all Africans

are Sudanese, male and dangerous (Brabazon & Chivaura in Tara Brabazon Podcast, 2016; Brabazon, T., Chivaura, R., Redhead, S., & Gatwiri in Tara Brabazon Podcast, 2016; Brabazon et al., 2015).

**Keywords** Cross-sectional survey · Homogenous groupings · Methods of data collection · Methods of data analysis · Media use · Media access

## 6.1 Semiotic Violence

As colour is the most obvious outward manifestation of race it has been made a criterion by which men are judged, irrespective of their social or educational attainment. Fanon (2011, p. 424)

The next stage in this study is to evaluate how race is ascribed meaning in Australian media. For this section, I will chiefly be using Stuart Hall's theorisations of how language is used as a representational system (Hall, 1997a, c; Jhally & Hall, 1997) as well as criteria of how moral panics are created in society. Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994) emphasise that there are five criteria or stages in the creation of moral panics; I shall briefly outline them below

- i. **Consensus**—This coming to a decision that a person or groups are a threat to a dominant group's interests and ideals.
- ii. **Hostility**—This is the dissemination of discourse (often mediated) of this undesirable group. They are clearly identified and easily recognisable.
- iii. **Disproportionality**—There starts to be an over-representation of this group in the media, thus rapidly building concern and anxiety around this undesirable group.
- iv. **Concern**—This public concern is often responded to by moral custodians (Cohen, 2011, p. 1) in the form of the press, government and key public figures.
- v. **Volatility**—In this last stage, Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994) maintain that panics usually die down on their own or social changes are made in response to them. However, Martin (2015) argues that they remain suspended and never completely go away.

From the data that I obtained from the content analysis, I would say that my findings align with Martin's (2015) theorisation. I will be demonstrating this further on in the chapter.

In any discursive study, it is essential to study the use of language in a text, a text in this instance is taken to mean written and spoken language as well as images. Hall (1990, 1997a, c, 2000) highlight that the study of language is important in Cultural Studies as it creates and frames meaning. Fairclough and Wodak (1997, p. 258) provide a richer explanation in saying, language:

Constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people.

This is not to say that language is the only tool that can be used to analyse discourse, however, for this study, a closer look at language is aimed to help provide insight into how moral panics are created about certain groups. Through the use of a combination of Hall (1997c) and Goode and Ben-Yehuda's (1994) theories that I am seeking to present how *symbolic violence* is committed against certain groups. I have coined the term symbolic violence to mean discourse or deeds that villainise or demonise particular groups in society, through the way that they are presented in discourse. It is particularly important to consider how language plays a role in fueling moral panics and stigma of particular persons and groups. I will be drawing from articles that I collected from the media content analysis study initially broadly then discussing specific articles in-depth.

Discourse analysis and Cultural Studies align as their chief focus is establishing how power is maintained and demonstrated through language analysis. The interrogation of texts and images is seen as a way of revealing how dominant institutions want to shape society's understanding of specific groups and themes. When certain images are repeatedly presented time and time again, they start to become familiar. For instance, using the Google search that I conducted earlier, Kangaroos are associated with Australia, baguettes and berets are associated with France. These items and symbols aid in building a common sense understanding of a group. Thus, in the reader's interrogation of the texts, *common sense* identifiers and comprehension of certain groups is easily achieved. Common sense is a term that has been heavily contested because it does not specify to whom the sense is common to. In the majority of the work conducted by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, the use of the work common sense was taken from the work of Antonio Gramsci in the *Prison Notebooks*. Gramsci took the term common sense as being 'the traditional popular conception of the world'. This means what dominant institutions define how different phenomena should be understood. In Media Studies, this term is often replaced or used interchangeably with the word stereotype. Saptefrati (2008) offers stereotypes as common, fixed and oversimplified images or conceptions of a particular type of person, group or thing, hence why stereotypes are sometimes regarded as common sense knowledge of subjects. With this common sense knowledge, came a new set of problems. In the creation of *usual* meanings and representations of images/people/cultures the association between the stereotype and lived reality could be seen as creating a distorted rendering of reality (Jhally & Hall, 1997; Nadler & Voyles 2020). This distortion—that is masked as real—makes stereotypes hard to break and disprove.

Using the 11 categories of the articles that I devised from the 12-month content analysis (ranging from most frequent to least):

1. European Migration Crisis;
2. Refugee Programmes and Community Events;
3. Migrant Stories (non-refugee);
4. African Crime;
5. Refugee Trouble/Crime;
6. Racism and Discriminatory Discourse;

7. African Terrorism;
8. Sport;
9. African Politics;
10. Media Criticism of Representations of Africans;
11. African Disease.

I needed a systematic way of dealing with the data to best highlight the discourse surrounding Africans in these articles. I could have analysed each category separately but due to the space confines of this book, it would have proved to be vast. Instead, a smaller further categorisation had to be devised in order to group news categories together and provide a more succinct way of presenting the data. I decided to deploy male and female categorisations, the 11 initial categories were so varied this provided a way of grouping most of the articles into appropriate subcategories. However, a pattern emerged that exposed the representation of both sexes in Australian media that was overly biased. Table 6.1 shows the 11 categories in their male/female subcategories.

There is an over-representation of males in the 12-month content analysis of media articles involving Africans during the period of 26 May 2015 and 26 May 2016. Another obvious observation is that in the male sub-categorisation, almost all apart from the Sport category are articles that would be considered to be negative. African politics has been included in the negative categorisation because of the five articles that were obtained one was about ending a coup in Burkina Faso, two were about Jacob Zuma the South African President facing challenges to his term, one was about The Ivory Coast electing a new President after a period of civil unrest and lastly, Guinea-Bissau forming a new government after a 2-month political stalemate. In reading the contents of this category, there can be argued to be a one-directional gaze of the African male.

**Table 6.1** Representation of different sexes in the media

Male	Female
<b>European Migration Crisis</b> (all male coverage with the exception of four pregnant women mentioned in one article)	<b>Refugee Programmes and Community Events</b> (some female inclusion 10/39)
<b>African Crime</b> (all male with the exception of one South African Woman)	<b>Migrant Stories (non-refugee)</b> (some female inclusion 5/25)
<b>Refugee Trouble</b> (all male)	–
<b>African Terrorism</b> (all male)	–
<b>African Politics</b> (all male)	–
<b>Sport</b> (all male)	–

## 6.2 Reading the African Male Gaze

From the articles collected in the content analysis, ethnicity and race can be seen as performing a discursive double function. In this discussion, ethnicity signifies the geographical origins of the person. The second function provided by race would be seen as a form of qualification criteria in particular societies. Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke, and Roberts (1978, p. 347) offers the perspective that race is

the principal modality in which black members of that class 'live,' experience, make sense of and thus come to a *consciousness* of their structured subordination.

This sentiment echoes that of Du Bois (2014) that black people experience the world *behind a veil*. The veil is used as a symbol for oppression and injustice; however, they could also see the world outside of the veil, whereby the blacks could also see how non-blacks viewed them. I will illustrate this point through a tagline and particular language used to describe young African males in an article from the 12-month content analysis written by Brook and Palin (2016) and published by [news.com.au](http://news.com.au). In this article, race can be seen as being positioned as a negative. This is achieved through the use of language and placing of the groups. The lead to the story reads

South Central Melbourne became more like South Central Los Angeles on Saturday as rioters swept through the CBD terrifying locals and tourists alike.

The comparison to of South Central Melbourne to South Central Los Angeles carries great of signification. South Central Los Angeles has had a long history of gang violence, civil unrest and strained police relations (Sides, 2006). Comparing an isolated incident in Melbourne with a generation-long struggle in Los Angeles creates a lot of necessary fear and sensationalism in the reporting of the article.

The use of language in this article could be seen as a way of evoking fear and stigma of a particular group. Another way in which fear and alarm are invoked is through the following sentence:

young people, some no more than 12 years of age, from a hitherto little-known gang living out their dreams of a "*Fast and the Furious*" lifestyle.

The statement of the age of the some of the violence provocateurs and the statement of living a *Fast and the Furious*, add another layer of meaning. *Fast and the Furious*, is a North American made film franchise that depicts young delinquents involved in carjacking, violence and other criminal activity. The merging of predominant black and Latina/o gang violence in South Central Los Angeles and Californian criminal activity creates a double effect on the alarm of the violence and possible future effects from gangs.

The gang's predominant make up is described as being Eastern African; this is a very broad categorisation that involves the grouping of 20 countries and territories into one. There is no explanation in the article to understand how the reporter came to the conclusion that the perpetrators were Eastern African. Potter (1996) argues that it is through this type of grouping that descriptions of events or actions are presented in a way to maximise their impact by attaching particular qualities to their descriptions



to make it seem shockingly bad or damnable. This is seen by the grouping of these ‘East African Youth’ with a penchant of the gangster and mob lifestyle. Using Du Bois (2014) concept of *the veil*; it is from outside the veil that this construction of the black male is created as a dangerous, terrorising figure. Within *the veil*, an East African male reading this article could dispute this representation of the whole geographic region as being violent and thuggish. In this light, oppression is achieved without the consent or opinion of the *black soul*. In this representation, the *black soul* comes to the realisation of their oppression and othering in society using discourse.

Another example is obtained from comments further down the article that came from Commanding Officer of the Salvation Army in Victoria, Brendan Nottle. It is not clear what Mr. Nottle’s role in giving an opinion of African matters is besides giving the ‘*white moral voice of reason*’. Mr. Nottle was voted Melbournian of the year in 2013 for his work to the underprivileged community (Green, 2013). His religious affiliation is the qualification of him being the *white moral voice of reason*, as well as being the voice of *Godly reason*. The following are excerpts of his comments in the article, which I will use to analyse the uses of language to create further fear and othering of African groups:

Stating with the first excerpt:

1. I think it’s *driven by this deep seated anger*. They don’t care what impact they have, they’re saying ‘*we don’t care what you think*’.  
*‘It’s no surprise to me this happened’*, he said. “*The only surprise was it happened at 10 pm when people were still around.*”

The italicised sections of text show that Mr. Nottle’s opinion is that this event was caused by inevitable and typical behaviours associated with this group of Africans. There is no explanation as to why he thinks that these behaviours are associated with being African, but he states that it is *no surprise to him*. This gives an insight into the frameworks that inform his thinking, that certain behaviours and conducts are readily associated with specific groups in society. This is what I termed earlier in the chapter as being *common sense* identifiers and comprehension of certain groups. In this example, discourse serves as a signifying practice. In the statement that ‘It’s no surprise to me this happened’ a certain common sense identification has taken place. Lawrence (1982, 2004, 2007) maintains that common sense ideologies can quickly become racist ideologies. I will use the second excerpt from Mr. Nottle to expand on this point.

2. Mr. Nottle said *African youth, mainly immigrants, had suffered through a deeply tortuous journey to Australia, often spending years in camps in ‘appalling’ conditions.*

Mr. Nottle categorises Africans that were involved in the crime wave in Melbourne as being immigrants who have ‘suffered through a deeply tortuous journey to Australia, often spending years in camps in “appalling” conditions’. Most immigrant groups living in Australia would argue that their passage to Australia mostly on an airliner was hardly tortuous. In this instance, Mr. Nottle can be seen as confusing the term immigrant, refugee and asylum seeker. McGuire, Casanova, and Davis (2016) offer

immigrant as more recently, a term *commonly* used as a blanket term for those who ‘occupy marginalised social categories’ but traditionally this was a term used for a person who came to live permanently in a foreign country. With the term refugee understood as an individual or group that has been forced to leave their country in a bid to escape war, persecution, or some other type disaster (Baker et al., 2008; Colic-Peisker, 2006). The meanings evoked by these two terms are quite different and the confusion of these two terms was found to cause great offence to some African people (as discussed in Chaps. 7 and 8). This homogenous way of thinking that refugee = African, or that black immigrant = refugee, could be seen as supporting the results that were generated by the Google search on African stereotypes earlier on in the chapter. This threat to the Australian way of life is best captured by Lawrence (1982, p. 47; 2004), where he is arguing for the stigmatisation of West Indian people in Great Britain in the 1970s and 80s. ‘The “alien” cultures of blacks are seen as either the cause or else the most visible symptom of the destruction of the British (Australian by colonial relation) way of life’. Mr. Nottle’s theorisation that every African immigrant in Australia has had a traumatic history, hence why the group is extremely prone to violence could be seen as reinforcing a stereotype of how Africans are perceived in Australian media and furthering ideological racism. In the next excerpt, Mr. Nottle acknowledges that his views might be seen as being racist:

3. *I went public about this and I got labelled as being racist* but my comments were the complete opposite. *Having met African youth I know they have a deep sense of anger.* We need to have some very serious conversations, and not point the finger, about why people are so angry.

He argues that he is not a racist, then proceeds to group all Africans as one and all suffering from the same afflicted past. His only support for this comment is that he has *met* African youth. However, how many of the estimated 250,000 African people living in Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008) has he met and would vouch for his claims? In this, Jhally and Hall (1997) point to the use of language as a representational system. In this case, the excerpts presented from Brook and Palin (2016) show how language externalises the meanings that people make of the world and events around them (Jhally & Hall, 1997). From *outside the veil*, this is presented as *the truth* that non-Africans have of Africans. This viewpoint is presented without contestation because in the article no Africans were approached to provide insight or a rebuttal to this discourse. Instead, the authors of the article offered the following statement ‘News.com.au has contacted a number of groups representing the African community in Victoria for comment’. Again, out of the estimated 250,000 Africans residing in Australia, *none* were available for comment. This is another example of how in this signifying practice there is a *circulation of meaning*. Hall et al. define the circulation of meaning as who holds power in discourse. It is clearly seen that the three white people involved in the writing of the article have all the power. Hall (1997a, c) argues that the absence of particular groups is just as important as what is presented in the production of meanings of inclusion and exclusion.

Hall maintains that the study of language in discourse aids in the creation of conceptual maps.

He defines conceptual maps as being ‘the ways in which we classify and organize the world’ (Hall, 1997c). The article by Brook and Palin (2016) is not the only one that does not take into consideration of first-hand African views on African matters. In the male sub-category of articles collected from the content analysis. There are only three instances of Africans being asked to provide a comment on African matters, Halle (2015), Cook, Dow, and Jacks (2016) and Rigney (2015). Three out of the 116 articles shows a great lack of African voices in articles dealing with issues and affairs directly concerning the group. Looking at the articles collected in the content analysis as a whole, 22 out of 198 had African providing a comment media reports surrounding them, this is just slightly over 11% representation in Australian media. In this, it is observable that there is a silencing of Africans in Australian media. The exclusion of African voices from discourse presents them as objects of discourse or passive participants.

In the introductory chapter to this book, I argued that African immigrants occupy the object position within media representations. They are observed and are positioned in social and political discourse that is bound in a specific social construction. This exclusion of African voices from discourse makes it easier to develop and devise tropes that will go uncontested. Thus, the media institutions have a large degree of control on this group and certain notions and perceptions. Over time these become common sense ideologies or stereotypes. By over-representing certain tropes of particular groups, it becomes easier to control the public’s opinion and knowledge of these groups. This is not to say that everyone will have the same way of thinking but there is likely to be a larger group of people who do not question or counter the discourse. Hall (1997b) maintains that there is power in signification; it is through the power of certain ideologies that singular and uncontested meanings are fixed and provide a constructed reality. This makes it easier to establish moral panics and helping them stick. I will illustrate this through further articles collected from the content analysis. Melbourne, the capital of Victoria, Australia hosted the annual Moomba Carnival from the 11 till the 14 March 2016. On March 12, a riot erupted in the Melbourne Central Banking District (CBD) between two groups, one that was identified as being the Apex gang that is primarily comprised of Sudanese youth and a Pacific Islander gang identified as the Islander 23. However, when media coverage on the story initially broke the ‘riot’ was reported as being exclusive rioting by an African gang (Calligeros & Gough, 2016; Willingham, 2016). Using Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994) five stages in the creation of moral panics to illustrate how the incident was reported and was made into a moral panic. In my example I am not condoning violence or gang activity but merely showing how language is used to alienate and target particular groups as being a ‘danger to society’.

### **Stage 1: Consensus: Threats to Values and Interests**

To highlight how consensus works in the reporting of the Moomba riots I will be looking at the language that was used in the reporting of the incident. I shall be using two articles that were written for *The Age* newspaper and were produced on the same day (14 March 2016) two days after the gang activity in Melbourne CBD. In the article by Willingham (2016) the Apex gang is described as *rioters*, *evil* and as *radicalised youth*. The incident was reported as being solely an African gang incident and there was no mention of the Islander 23 gang.

The article by Calligeros and Gough (2016) provides more vivid use of language in reference to the Apex gang. The gang is described as a *violent street gang*, hurling *missiles*, *taunting police* and leaving *innocent bystanders cowering* in restaurants and *others running in fear for their lives*. The description of this scene is reminiscent of scenes reported in Hall et al. (1978), and Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke and Roberts (2013) and Brabazon (1998) of the new immigrant West Indian youth in Great Britain. This is particularly captured the description of the Apex gang taunting police. Police are generally regarded as protectors of civilians and law enforcers but in this instance, the polarisation of the police and the black youth show the ‘riot’ as slipping away from the control of the law. These descriptors sound as though they are coming from a report describing a war zone. This is further revealed in the excerpts taken from eyewitnesses.

*the rioters had behaved “like animals” and left some fearing the city had come under a terror attack, there were children and old women at tables.” Ms. Papale said she feared for her life as the rioters—from the so-called Apex gang and predominantly of South Sudanese descent.*

Looking at the underlined words, it is clear there seems to be a depersonalisation of the African youth. They are described as being *like animals* when it is clear that they are not. This adds a layer of savagery and primitiveness that is associated with colonial Africa (Behrendt, 2016; Czajka, 2005; Said, 1978; Tan, 2016). The type of reporting gives the perception that there is a clear inclusive/exclusive divide through the presentation of comments from white Australia who are presented as the civilised victims coming under attack by brute African savages. The article does not mention that there were other ethnic minorities including black Africans that were also caught up in the melee or the fact that Pacific Islanders were also proponents of this ‘riot’. In this, the language of media discourse is seen as the chief carrier of negative language or discourse that provides a threat to the Australian way of life.

### **Stage Two: Hostility: The Depiction of the Threat**

In the coverage of the Moomba Riots, the depiction of the threat was clearly and specifically identified. This was achieved through the use of language as a descriptor of the perpetrators as highlighted in the following, predominantly of South Sudanese descent (Calligeros & Gough, 2016), African gangs (Willingham, 2016), mainly South Sudanese (Johnston, 2016), left war-torn South Sudan for Australia (Dobbin, 2016). This leaves no question of who the aggressor is. In this age of digital media, language is not the only tool that media producers have to rely on. The use of images

and video was evident on many news sites, these images and videos clearly showed the ‘riot’ making visible the undesired persons. In this sense, panic and disorder are visualised and attached to the African group of males. In light of this representation, Lawrence (2007, p. 605) argues that it is not that race, per se, is the ‘problem’ but rather that ‘race comes to signify the crisis’. Just as ‘mugging’ was a crime associated with black youth in 1970s Britain (Hall et al., 1978, 2013), in this instance we see the ‘riot’ being associated with Sudanese youth with no mention of other races that were also involved in the incident. This is a form of ‘fixing meaning’ the reader’s mind, this fixing of meaning does not occur independently (Osgerby, 2002). Smith (2001, p. 188) maintains ‘meaning is relational and depends on the interplay of the text and the reader’. In the examples from the articles provided, the text presents, portrays and describes the African youth as *evil, animalistic, terrorising innocent old women and children* who were fearful to the point that this could have been a *terrorist attack* and could possibly *never see their families again*. The text is presenting a dire situation to the reader the majority of who are white Australian (based on the demographic makeup of Australia), thus this completes the identification of the hostile proponent, who is visibly different and ‘unAustralian’. An important note to make is, in this depiction, the Pacific Islander gang go unquestioned, reasons for this could be that although they are visibly different they do belong in Australia. Even though they could be a threat they are part of Australia and cannot be reported as a threat.

### **Stage Three: Disproportionality: Rapid Build-up of Public Concern**

Public concern could be seen as a measure to see if the receivers have decoded the encoded messages sent out by ideological institutions such as the media in the intended form. Public concern can be measured through differed methods such as straw polls, letters to the editor, online blogs, comment sections under online media reports, etc. In my reviewing of public concern, I will be drawing upon letters sent to the editors and opinion sections of different newspapers in the days following the ‘riot’. These articles will be sourced from the content analysis data. The first article for review was published a day after the ‘riots’ the headline read ‘Our safety betrayed by ugly cover-up over refugee program’ (Bolt, 2016). In this passionate and inflammatory commentary of the ‘riots’, race is clearly defined as the cause of the crisis (Lawrence, 2007), direct blame is placed on ethnic background

This evasion—or deception—is standard. Google “Apex gang” and see for yourself how rarely reporters identify its key characteristic—that most members are African.

Bolt argues that the Apex gang is hardly identified as being African and challenges the reader to search for this fact. I took the challenge and on the first two pages a Google search result all articles mentioned that the Apex gang were Sudanese or African and the first three rows of Google Image Search feature black males. African in this article is seen as a visible representation of undesirable, unAustralian behaviour and is seen as the invasion of the *white space*.

Yesterday’s *Sunday Age*, for instance, refused to mention—again—that one of the gangs was African.

This repetition of the fact that one of the gangs was African is repeated for it to resonate in the readers mind. Bolt, does no mention the ethnicity of the other gang members who were Pacific Islander. Once again in media reporting, Africa is being presented and viewed from a colonial lens (Czajka, 2005; Hochschild, 1999; Matias, 2016). Africanness is viewed as being the signifier of everything undesirable and offensive to Australian culture.

This level of *mass violence*—like the terrorism threats and the shootings in Melbourne’s north and Sydney’s west—is relatively new to Australia and demands an explanation.

How will people know *we are importing danger* when we take in *people from war zones who have a martial culture, few employable skills, and very different cultural or religious values?*

This type of discourse can be categorised as racist ideology, Lawrence (1982) argues that in times of uncertainty, racist ideologies become an organic component of the crisis. He argues that ‘the “alien” cultures of blacks are seen as either the cause or else the most visible symptom of the destruction of the British (Australian) way of life’ (Lawrence, 1982, p. 47). In Bolt’s article, he categorises *all* Africans as being from war zones, militant, unemployable and no having Anglo values. In this categorisation, Bolt, does not acknowledge that there are significant differences between the 54 countries that comprise the African continent, instead race is the qualifier that fixes meaning on this ethnic group. This type of one-sidedness in reporting mirrors what Hall et al. (1978, 2013) were writing about in *Policing the Crisis* of race being used as a signifier of the crisis:

Race has come to provide the objective correlative crisis—the arena in which complex fears, tensions and anxieties, generated by the impact of the totality of the crisis as a whole on the whole society. (Hall et al., 1978, p. 333)

Again, through the use of language, violence and antisocial behaviour are presented has a naturalised characteristic of African behaviour. This is the second article in a matter of weeks to use the phrase ‘it is no surprise’ to attach a particular signification to Africans.

*It’s no surprise, then, that Melbourne had two more mass brawls of Sudanese immigrants—one involving 100 people—last December, and a rash of home invasions and car thefts by the Apex gang* (Bolt, 2016).

‘It’s no surprise to me this happened’, he said. ‘The only surprise was it happened at 10 pm when people were still around’ (Brook & Palin, 2016).

Public concern was also observed through ‘Letters to the Editor’ section similar anti-African sentiments can be observed. What is curious to note is that there seems to be a confusion in the use of the words African and Sudanese as well as immigrant and refugee. It is a fair argument to say all Sudanese are Africans; however, it is not correct to say all Africans are Sudanese. In the excerpts used in this chapter, the words African and Sudanese are used interchangeably and to the same effect. In the comment section of the Bendigo Advertiser (May, 2016), a reader left the following comment under the title *Blame Labor for Warring Gangs*:

*...at every occasion urges all and sundry to flood our state with a never ending flow of immigrants, with very dubious backgrounds...The police must adopt a boots and all approach to terrorists and hardened criminals,.... otherwise no one in this state is safe even in our own beds.*

There seems to be ignorance in highlighting that Africa is not a single country nor does it have a singular language and culture (Brabazon & Chivaura, 2016; Brabazon, Chivaura, Redhead, & Gatwiri, 2016). It would be laughable if one were to say that Asia is a single country and made up of a singular culture and language, however, this colonial view that African is the Dark Continent without cultured civilisation persists. Previously discussed in this chapter were the differences between the words immigrant and refugee. These are completely differed migration routes into Australia with different visa and government requirements. With the two terms being used interchangeably in the texts it implies that all Africans who have come to Australia lived in militant countries, have little education and are prone to violence. This type of generalisation in representation further reduces the available space discursively subjugated Africans occupy.

#### **Stage Four: Concern: Official Responses to the Panic**

In the digital age, the four stages of moral panics (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994)—consensus, hostility, disproportionality and concern—are often raised and observed in the same article.

Ideological institutions are regarded as ‘the official voice of reason’. Institutions such as the police, religious leaders and politicians can be seen as proving the public with a solution or a course of action to aim to resolve the issues. The official response to the panic often captures and at times mirrors particular discourse that surrounds certain groups, for instance, the official commentary on the Moomba ‘riots’. The negative way in which Africans were discussed and represented in the media seems to inform the official body’s perceptions of these groups. In the commentary given in official remarks, the positioning of the perpetrators is given in terms of inclusive and exclusive subject positioning. For example, the comments provided by Peter Dutton Australia’s immigration minister:

If non-citizens are involved in violent criminal activity such as that seen in Melbourne last weekend, the Australian Border Force will work with Victoria Police to cancel their visas. (Hosking & Hamblin, 2016)

In this framing of discourse, the targets of deportation are Sudanese youth, Pacific Islander gang members that were also involved in the ‘riots’ are left out of this discourse. This type of action could be seen as a form of ethnic cleansing akin to the White Australia policy or Apartheid. Legal Anthony Kelly quoted in Mills (2016) argues, that the fact that these young people (African youth) have grown up in Australia and are exposed to similar activities as any other Australian they should be treated the same. Instead, in this case, race and ethnicity are presented as being a contributory factor in violent and criminal behaviour. This type of comparison helps to reinforce stereotypes that are attached to particular groups. In the stage of concern, complicated social and cultural problems are simplified as being rooted in a

particular group's characteristics or behaviour. This, however, is presented in vacuum conditions whereby other factors such as socio-economic and political influences are ignored. This reinforces Martin's (2015) claim that was stated earlier in the chapter arguing 'Anything connected with immigration, migrants, multicultural absorption, refugee, border controls and asylum seekers, will be the most important site of moral panics' (Morgan, 2018, Kwan, 2018, SBS News, 2018).

### **Stage Five: Volatility: Panic Ceases or Social Changes are Made?**

Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994, 2010) argue that moral panics do recede just as quickly as they arise. Viewing the Australian context of how Africans are represented in the media, I would have to agree to disagree with Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994, 2010) and align more with Martin (2015) Martin argues that moral panics instead, lay dormant till an opportune time in which they are resurrected to achieve particular gains. A notable time is during election time where there are a lot of anxieties playing on people's minds, throwing in hyperinflated information about particular groups can help sway votes. This happened during the rule of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher whereby West Indians and Indians were villainised in the media and official discourse (Hall et al., 1978; 2013; Rule, 1991). The same can be observed in Australian politics through the campaigns of Former Australian Prime Ministers John Howard (Jakubowicz & Seneviratne, 1996; Kuhn, 2009), Tony Abbott (The Age & Abbott, 2015; Whyte, 2014) and current Prime Minister Scott Morrison (Ali, 2018).

However, it is the media that still generates the most discriminatory messages about Africans living in Australia. I have given the example of the Moomba 'riots', but in the period of 2 months following the riots (March 12–26 when the content analysis cut-off date was), there were 16 additional articles of disturbances being carried out by African males in Australia. All 16 articles apart from one were about crimes thought to be committed by African men or comments and articles discussing the *dangers* of having this ethnic group in Australia. 16 articles out of 198 (8.1%), in a 2-month period can be seen to be a great over-representation of a one-dimensional portrayal of African men living in Australia. In some of these media portrayals, even after it was established that African males were not involved in a crime, the media produced still made it a point to state that the initial suspect was a black male.

Ms. Nikat said she never saw the face of the man, who she described as being of African appearance, between 20 and 30 years old and about 1.8 m tall.

The man unbuckled the pram, grabbed the baby and ran off towards the creek and the shopping centre. (Palin, 2016)



The man has been described as between 20 and 30 years of age, about six feet tall with short dark hair and not wearing shoes.

They said he had dark skin and smelt heavily of alcohol. (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2016)

Earlier, police say the only suspect in the toddler's death is described to be a man of African appearance, between the ages of 20 and 30, six feet tall, wearing black pants, a black hooded zipper top, no shoes and smelling heavily of liquor. (Galloway, Hurley, & O'Rourke, 2016)

A Melbourne woman who police say confessed to killing her 14-month-old daughter hasn't appeared in court because of her mental state. At the time, Nikat told police a barefoot man of African appearance and smelling of alcohol had pushed her to the ground and snatched the toddler. (Special Broadcasting Service, 2016)

The mother of 14-month-old Sanaya Sahib has been charged with her murder The after making a 'full confession' to police.

She had described the stranger as a man of African appearance who was wearing no shoes and smelled of alcohol. (Mills & Booker, 2016)

Her mother told police that on Saturday morning, as she walked in Olympic Park, an African man had snatched her baby and run off.

But police told an out of sessions court hearing last night that Ms. Nikat had now made a full confession to murder. (Deery & Hosking, 2016)

These excerpts demonstrate that even when Ms. Nikat was found guilty of murdering her daughter, the media still included that the initial suspect had been an African male. This is highly significant because if a message is continually reported it is likely to resonate in people's minds. There is no observable benefit of continually reporting that initial the suspect was of African appearance when the murderer had been apprehended. This serves to keep the image of the African deviant in the minds of the reader. What is interesting to note is Ms. Nikat's choice of kidnapper:

A man of African appearance, between the ages of 20 and 30, six-feet-tall, wearing black pants, a black hooded zipper top, no shoes and smelling heavily of liquor. (Galloway, Hurley, & O'Rourke, 2016)

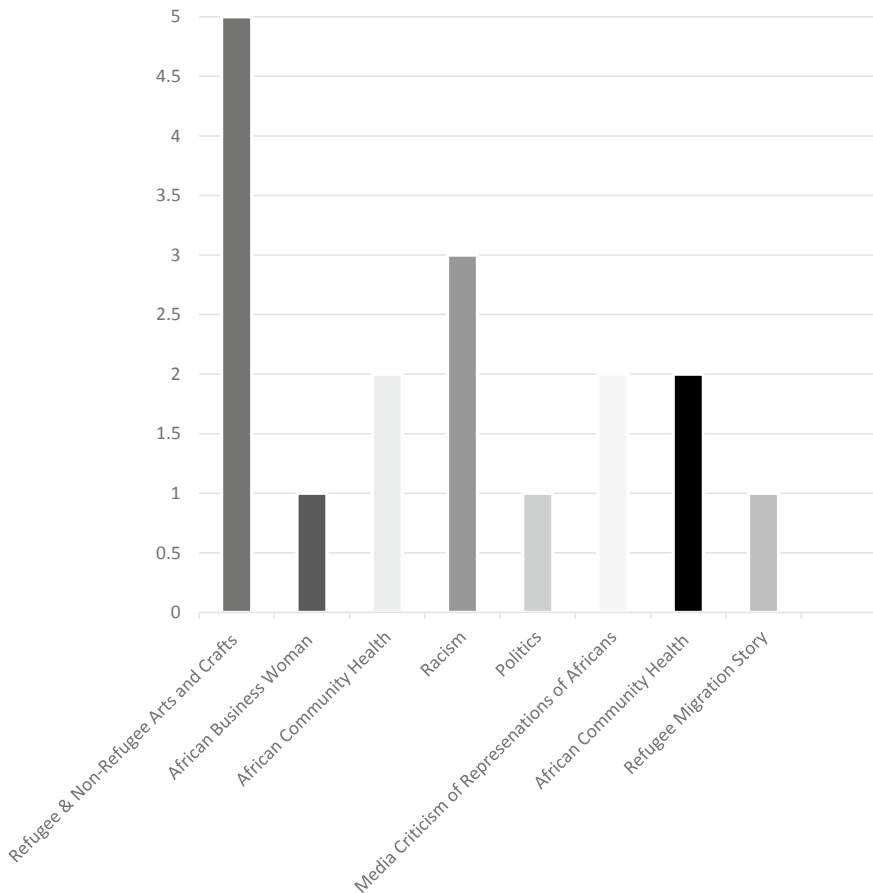
What purpose does this image serve? The use of this description serves as a *symbolically loaded* signifier of African males. The savage, uncivilised and delinquent male, this is a similar type of descriptors as that was used to refer to the African males involved in the Moomba Riots. This could be seen as a continuation of a stereotype that black African males carry in Australia. In this regard, the fact that the police were only considering this account by Ms. Nikat as the only lead, shows that the stereotype of the black African male has become so *naturalised* that it goes without questioning even by officials. This stereotyping then carries a *to be expected from this ethnic group* signification Nadler & Voyles (2020). Austin (2001) maintains that the media's high levels of attention to black male deviancy is a way of hinting at their *natural criminality*. 'This constant projection of their deviance causes many to accept their place in society as a that of a social pariah' (Austin, 2001, p. 215). The 'kidnapping' and murder of Sanaya Sahib came a month after the Moomba riots when sentiments of African males were not particularly popular. Thus, an African male murderer would not be a farfetched concept. In this section, I have sought to illustrate how the language of media discourse aids in the creation of subject positions and othering, especially inclusive and exclusive discourse. My second argument was how particular behaviours and characteristics become naturalised and thus are taken as factual descriptors of certain groups (Osgerby, 2004). The aim of this was to highlight that if there were existing tropes about particular groups that made it easier to create moral panics and sustain them. Hall (1997b) argued that race was created through discourse and therefore did not exist outside of it; moreover, he argued 'race cannot perform the function of fixing the truth'. In this section, I have disproved Hall's argument that race does exist within and outside of discourse. In the Australian media context race, particularly of African males, is presented as the signifier of a person's character. I have sought to show that race in Australian mediated discourse provides a fixed identity for the majority of African males and nothing is presented past that. But wait what about the females?

### 6.3 Where the Girls at?

The majority of this chapter has focused on the (re)presentations and perceived threats of the black male body. In this section, I seek to highlight the space black females occupy in Australian discourse. In the data collected in the content analysis, a total of 15 out of 198 articles dealt with African women in Australia, that is a 7.6% representation in a 12-month period. This number is even less than the articles published of the fictional, kidnapping, alcoholic African male who abducted a toddler in Melbourne. Some research has been conducted in Feminist and Women Studies in regard to representations and discourse of African women. Examples of these studies, include experiences of female refugees from Africa settling in the Western World (Haffejee & East, 2015; Hopkins, 2010; Warriner, 2007). Economic deprivation (Abdelkerim & Grace, 2012; Ghorayshi & Bélanger, 1996; Kehler, 2001), domestic violence and Cultural roles (Baak, 2011; Brand, Loh, & Guilfoyle, 2014;

Fisher, 2013; James, 2010). The work that has been done in the Australian context tends to focus on the refugee experience and issues concerning those communities. This leaves out a sizable population of African women who do not belong to that's immigration and cultural grouping. By sub-categorising the results of the content analysis I wanted to observe how African women feature in Australian media. I shall demonstrate the distribution of the 15 articles collected during the 12-month period. Unlike the male sub-categorisation, there are slightly more positive representations of African women in Australian media. Perhaps this is due to the limited media coverage that offers a space for African women to be (re)presented to the Australian public (Fig. 6.1).

**Refugee and Non-refugee Arts & Craft = 5**



**Fig. 6.1** How African women feature in Australian media

The largest representation is afforded to Refugee and Non-Refugee descriptive arts and crafts projects. These were largely presented as community initiatives to get recent arrivals integrating with each other and not specifically the Australian community. This could be seen as a way of containing this group by giving them tasks that are commonly associated with this racial and ethnic group (further theorisation is provided in the section: The Girls are busy crafting, singing and dancing.

### **African Community Health = 2**

This section focused on initiatives by African women to improve cultural understanding in issues of mental health in African communities. In these articles, emphasis is placed on the trauma suffered by refugees in their respective countries and how they are settling in Australia (Cowan, 2016) instead of spending time explaining more about the services provided. More time is spent providing descriptors of horrific journeys and how grateful the refugees are to the Australian government. In this regard, this article becomes another revival of the past. In most news articles concerning the health and well-being of African refugees, they tend to fixate on past events and little to no regard is paid to how the individuals have settled and progressed in Australia. This reinforces the subject positions of Australians being superior and the refugees being forever indebted.

### **Refugee Migration Story = 1**

This story was about the migration story of a Rwandan woman (Wynne, 2015), again the same trauma and horror of refugees are highlighted. It is made to appear as the dominant message of the article. This article was produced to coincide with Refugee Week (2015). Instead of writing stories of empowerment and progress since their destructive pasts, it seems easier to keep dwelling on the past and highlighting the greener pastures of Australia.

### **Politics = 1**

In this article, Dr. Watts is acknowledged as having been appointed as one of the six new members of the Victorian Multicultural Commission. Her appointment comes after her work in the field of the Social Sciences; however, in her commentary, she is quick to state that at her level she does not want to be just affiliated with African people. This is an interesting comment, perhaps because of the way that she phrased it. 'I'm an African woman, of course, but I just think at my level I cannot tie myself to an ethnic group', (Ilanbey, 2015). Working in social work she probably realises that Africans in Australia are a subjugated group and might be one of the probable reasons why she was elected to help represent this group but there is some distancing created by her comment.

### **African Business Woman = 1**

This is the only instance in which there is a white woman who is identified as being African. Unlike her other African female counterparts, she is referred to as ‘Our Elize’ (The Morning Bulletin, 2015a) a claiming by the people of Rockhampton. This is interesting because this is the first instance in 198 articles that an African has been positioned in inclusive discourse. There are factors that might influence this type of acceptance, her race is an obvious maker. Elize *fits* into the feminine ideal of the western world, slender, blonde with blue eyes. Nothing of her outward appearance signifies that she has African heritage or that she poses a threat to the Australian way of life. As discussed earlier in the chapter, race as an effect of locating people geographically and positioning them within particular signifying practices<sup>1</sup> (Hall, 1997b; Jhally & Hall, 1997). Thus, the fact that Elize is white offers her some type of protection and removes her from the negative representations that surround other non-white Africans.<sup>1</sup>

### Racism = 3

The section on racism was the second largest in the female category, the themes ranged from racism in the workplace, stereotyping and blackface. The common theme between the racism in the workplace (Donnelly, 2015) and the stereotype article (Brown, 2016) is that judgement is based on face value. In this chapter, I have maintained skin colour is a signifier of geographical origins as well as functioning as a *qualification* criterion in society. The report by Brown (2016), Osob, a young African Muslim woman states:

*I'm African and everything. And I was born here. The first perception I get, especially when I walk into a store or whatever, especially with my dress code and everything, is that: "Oh, OK, she's an African immigrant or refugee," without getting to know me.*

This is a clear example of how skin colour is encoded with particular meanings in Australia. Being black African and a Muslim is associated with being an immigrant or refugee, as non-Australian. As much as the government tries to push the fact that Australia is a multicultural society (Boese & Phillips, 2011), it seems there are still ideological certainties of what makes one Australian. Having dark skin and being Muslim do not fit that image (Ahmed & Matthes, 2016; Poynting & Mason, 2008). In Donnelly (2015), Keletso, a South African woman who works with *The Dreamseed Project* exposed the fact that not all racism is verbal some of it is done in a *subtle* way based on assumptions of what positions particular people occupy in society.

*Kel, says people don't often expect to find a black woman in a leadership position.*

*"My admin staff didn't tell him that the Kel he was coming to see was black," says the childcare centre director. "He was probably expecting to meet a person whose name was Kelly."*

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<sup>1</sup>The concept of signifying practices is derived from Stuart Hall (Du Gay, Hall, Janes, & Mackay, 1997; Hall, 1997c; Jhally & Hall, 1997). He maintained that the way particular groups are represented in the media or society, e.g. ethnic people as the villains in films, over time this becomes the shorthand of how certain groups are understood, thus forming stereotypes.

Keletso's comment that 'people don't often expect to find a black woman in a leadership position' confirms my argument at the beginning of this section that feminine positions exist for women from particular races and ethnicities. Keletso, being a black woman does not fit the stereotype image of someone in a leadership position (Young, 2000). In this, race, for women of colour can be viewed as an *impenetrable double-glazed glass ceiling*, whereby they have to occupy prescribed social positions. The article by Ward and Cherny (2016) reports of Alice Kunek wearing blackface for a dress up party. Blackface in The United States of America and The United Kingdom is considered to be offensive. However, in Australia, it is still a subject of debate (Fryer, 2018, Hayman-Reber, 2017, Farhart, 2018). When Kunek was confronted over her post, she assumed the defensive position, instead of acknowledging blame or accepting responsibility her initial response was to state in a series of tweets (Kunek 2016):

- 1/4. I'm sorry that people would think my support of Kanye as being racist in some way.  
 2/4 People who know me, know that I don't judge others based on the colour of their skin.  
 3/4 One of the things I love most about basketball is that I get to play with and against women from different countries.  
 And then lastly  
 4/4 religions & upbringings and be united as a team. I never meant to offend any team mates, fans, or people in the community.

In this example, we see that self-preservation is more important than apologising for offensive behaviour. A commentary was sought from teammate Liz Cabbage who is biracial, her father is of Nigerian descent. She excused her teammate as being ignorant of her offensive behaviour. In a way, this could be seen as a tokenistic comment from someone who is to a degree affected by racism but, on the other hand, has the privilege of embracing her Caucasian heritage. Cabbage has recently come out and spoken about being 'ashamed to have darker skin as a teenager growing up in Melbourne' until she emigrated to the United States of America (Johnson, 2019). No comments were sought from the Indigenous or African population at large. Two months after this incident, a Victorian football team hosted a dress up party where several teammates came dressed in blackface (Eddie & Tran, 2016). The lack of seriousness of offence created is observed even from the reporting of the incident. Take for instance the headline to the article:

Sports club apologises for 'racist' party where teammates dressed in blackface as rappers and singers—after 'receiving abuse and threats' on Facebook.

The word racist is put in quotation marks which are often used when one is making light of a situation or expressing point that is farfetched or unrealistic. This adds to the notion that the reporters are also making light of the possible offence it could have caused. Initially, the football club refused to apologise and more deflected and placed criticism to other cultural groups (Fig. 6.2).

The Frankston Football Club only apologised after receiving threats online, which shows that there were unremorseful for their actions but more succumbing to pressure from online shaming. In a way, this can be viewed as some type of colonisation based



Fig. 6.2 Frankston Bombers Twitter comment

on what is deemed to be offensive to people of colour by white people. In this, there is a claiming or ownership of race portrayals. The fact that it took hundreds of people to threaten and criticise the football club in order for them to apologise shows the sad state of racial affairs and cultural insensitivities in Australia.

### Media Criticisms of Representations of African People = 2

This section comprised of two articles, the first by Pearce (2015) and the second by Tan (2016). In both of these articles, the researcher provided media criticism based on the representations of African people. In a nutshell, both these articles draw on the points that I have made in this book on the biases that lay in how Africans are depicted in the media. My argument is, it is possible to have a myriad of representations of particular groups without over saturating the consumers of media with a particular discourse. As a black woman living in Australia, not only do I experience the invisibility of the African female, but I am also engaged in research that aims to address the issues of Africanness from a range of perspectives.

## 6.4 The Girls are Busy Crafting, Singing and Dancing

The 15 articles that included African females, compiled as part of the content analysis section, do not allow for an observable pattern or theme to be generated. This absence of African women in Australian media shows invisibility of this visibly different group of people. The factors that limited the visibility could be theorised as the triple marginalisation of Black women.

This content analysis has demonstrated that there are three key factors I have theorised as impacting to the lives of African women living in Australia, colonisation, sex and race. Colonisation plays the chief part in this oppression, colonialism is a process often associated with the subordination of women. This subordination has been further sub-categorised by hierarchies created through race and ethnicity (Fredericks, 2010; Lake, 1993). White women were/are regarded as the *paramount* representation of femininity as well as being the most delicate (Hall, 1997c; Jhally & Hall, 1997; Lake, 1993). Indigenous women came/come secondary to this, with varying levels of acceptance. In mediated portrayals of Indigenous women, lighter skin is presented as being more favourable and assessed by Western ideals as seen in the case of Australian Indigenous singer and actress Jessica Mauboy. The more popular she becomes it seems the lighter her hair and skin become and the more *petite* her figure in national publications (Sams, 2012; Scrimshire & La Cioppa, 2016). However, on the other hand, lighter skin Aborigines face discrimination and chastisement within the Aboriginal community (Liddle, 2014; Mendoza, 2015). In colonial times 'inter-marriages' between white men and Aboriginal women were permissible initially. This is because the union of a white man and black Aboriginal woman was seen a way of achieving *biological absorption*. This was a form of racial cleaning, ridding the black and slowly engulfing it into the desired shade of white or close to. 'White men where the active parties here, their semen conceptualized as a bleaching agent' (Lake, 1993, p. 383). This was a form of control of the Indigenous population by *turning* the blacks white they hoped to *civilise* and thus reduce the chance of rebellion from the Indigenous populations. Torgovnick (1991, p. 192) maintains that this type of action by colonial cultures around the world was a ploy to mask 'the controllers fear of losing control and power'. Similar practices can be observed with black female slaves in the United States of America.

The next second type of marginalisation is through sex. In the colonial context discussed above, it is observable that black females were not sexualised beings, instead they were breeding machines or available vaginas to their masters. They had to be ravaged by *white seed* to produce acceptable, disempowered mulatto or half-cast children. In the African context, apart from the countries that were affected by slave trade women were/are largely excluded from the picture. The colonisers in Africa were after material goods, minerals, land, oil, etc. Women were largely left alone; not even deemed suitable to reproduce and *engulf* the black race. They were/are outside of the consciousness of the white male, female and child apart from the provision of the carer or *mammy role*.

The third type of marginalisation is through race. In the 15 articles collected in the content analysis that feature women, it is clear to see that women still occupy the traditional role of what it means to be female through maternal tasks. The other space that is permitted to African women in Australian media is through arts, craft, song and dance. The 'lets observe how you can culturally entertain and fascinate us' category. Mihesuah and Wilson (2004) in their discussion of Aboriginal female representation reason that this type of exposure of the ethnic female cultural traditions is a form of tokenism. It is a way of being seen to be interested in a culture by cherry-picking what interests and reassures the dominant population that the black woman is not a threat.



Such practices that focus on cultural expression and perceived exotic elements of Aboriginal culture... can operate as a form of tokenism and entertainment for non-Aboriginal(s) (Mihesuah & Wilson, 2004, p. 44).

In this 'narrow focus of cultural expression' (Fredericks, 2010, p. 547), it controls how the African woman is to be perceived discursively. It significantly minimises the small space that they occupy by funnelling these women through a one-directional gaze. Western women in Australia have the luxury of being represented as professionals, sexual objects as well as caregivers. By presenting the singing, dancing, crafting African woman it reinforces and affirms the white woman's structural power (Fredericks, 2010). A large number of non-Western countries are often represented as having artistic and craft skills, some more than others. Thus, by presenting this already accepted image, the media are further cementing particular behaviours with this particular group. Durkin (1986) emphasises that the media specifically do this derogate or limit the forms in which certain individuals can be presented. It is important to highlight that in the Australian context, particularly in regional media, it is common to see women presented in the 'traditional roles' as caregivers, non-professional and confined to the patriarchal feminine ideals (Hogan, 1999; Warner-Smith & Brown, 2002). Therefore, it is significant to note that all the articles that were dealing with African women engaging in arts and crafts came from regional media sources. This could be seen as incorporating African women into the gendered roles that exist in regional Australia and therefore reinforcing the role of the feminine.

## 6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have conducted a discursive study to review how African immigrants are represented and regarded by the Australian media. In this study, discourse was the appropriate tool to use to analyse how power structures are created through the use of language. Language is demonstrated to have a 'fixing' power in placing particular groups in inclusive and exclusive positions. This is particularly highlighted in the content analysis of media articles that featured Africans conducted over a 12-month period (26 May 2015–26 May 2016). In the categorisation of subject positioning, there seems to be a great leaning towards negative presentations of Africans in Australian media. This is overwhelmingly noticeable in regard to the one-directional gaze of the African male. It is demonstrated that there is a tendency to attach negative, violent and undesirable behaviours to this group. In the abundant reporting of these issues, *Africanness* is presented in a way that seems to push the threat agenda further. Giving African males these particular characteristics and qualities fixes particular behaviours and makes them seem natural. They come to be viewed as to be expected behaviours of the group or stereotypes. In terms of African women, they are afforded very little space in media reporting. Using colonial history of the roles and exclusion of Indigenous and African women in national affairs, similar under-representations are observed. Racialized and ethnic women are assigned to domestic and passive positions. In these positions, they are not presented as being more than what they offer

beyond their maternal roles—breeding, nurturing and crafting. This categorisation only gives a microscopic view of how women operate in their everyday lives and again presents a way of managing this group into a particular discourse (Fielding-Lloyd & Mean, 2015). It is evidenced through the content analysis that in mediated discourse there is stereotyping of gender, racial and ethnic roles. Through the association of particular behaviours and characteristics of African men and women through the media, it is easier to control how these groups are perceived in society. In the writing of this chapter, I have aimed to show that Africans in Australia live within *controlled discourse*. This group is not given the space to voice their concerns or opinions on matters that directly affect them. Instead, African men and women assume the object position within discourse. They are spoken about but hardly ever spoken to. Thus, fixed meanings of what it means to be African and living in Australia go uncontested.

In the Australian context, another issue that could have an impact on limiting the discourses surrounding African people is the problem posed by media ownership. News Corp and Fairfax Media own the majority of newspapers in Australia. This means the discourse produced is predominantly filtered to fulfil these two news publishers' agendas, this significantly limits diversity in the discourse produced. The lack of diverse news outlets makes it easier to create moral panics through the dissemination of messages that are fuelled with anger and fear as exemplified from the articles gathered from the content analysis.

This chapter has established that language has a great impact on how certain ideologies are created and maintained. By ostracising particular groups in media, political and social discourse, it becomes easier to control the way they are perceived socially as well as limit the space that they occupy. I have maintained that Africans living in Australia are not given the space to comment, contribute or rebuke comments and theorisations made of them. Instead, they are regarded as passive objects within discourse. In my conduction an original study of news media in Australia, this chapter has provided evidence of this fact, as well as laying a foundation to build the next two chapters, *Surveying the Demographic* and *Oral Testimonies of Africans Living in Australia*. In these chapters, I present the attitudes of Africans living in Australia in relation to how they are represented in the media as well as the discrepancies between their lived reality and their (re)presentations constructed in the media.

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# Chapter 7

## Surveying the Demographic



**Abstract** This chapter captures how the moments of identity and regulation in the *Circuit of Culture* (Du Gay et al., 1997) function in the life of the African individual. I examine how an immigrant individual articulates through speech, how they consume discourses in Australian media about themselves and what do they draw from it. Specifically, I explore how the discourse of mediated representations operates in the negotiation of identity in their everyday lives. These are fundamental issues to address, it is through the use of carefully considered methods of approach that this study is intended to yield results that provide new insights, voices and views of how African immigrants go through these moments of the circuit. Probyn (2007, p. 431) argues, the processes of production and consumption are best articulated in Hall (1999) through his research on encoding and decoding. The theory of encoding and decoding pays particular attention in noting the role of the *receiver of information* in analysing the message and ultimately deriving *meaningful content* from it. It is how the individual appropriates this meaningful content from their consumption into their everyday life that I intend on capturing in this section. This study seeks to employ oral history to provide new and original knowledge into how the African interviewees perceive and articulate how they are represented in the media and socially. The objective of oral history is to collect the real experiences of groups that are usually not included in dominant texts. Reality is subjective, theoretical, political and variable. Oral history, seeks to capture *the real* experiences of the intended groups. In recording the undocumented experiences, the researcher has to take note of how the experience is constructed by taking particular note of what is said when and how.

**Keywords** Oral history · Interview · Lived experience · Interviewee · Interviewer · Data analysis · Transcription · Autobiographical

### 7.1 Justification and Appropriateness of a Cross-sectional Survey: Context of Research Problem

With Africans being a relatively new immigrant group in Australia, much of the information about how they adapt to their new lives in Australia, as well as how they appropriate their everyday identities in social and private settings is largely unknown.

The 2006 census data<sup>1</sup> revealed that there were close to 250,000 people who were born in Africa living in Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008). This data is now 10 years old, and since then, some non-government polls have put the number of Africans close to 500,000 (Mercer, 2010). In 1996, Africans were officially listed as a statistically significant population by the Australian government. Since then, the way dominant institutions such as the media and government interact and represent this group has received some attention (Hugo, 2009; Special Broadcast Service, 2010), however, how Africans respond to these interactions and representations is an area that is still largely unknown.

Academic research that has been carried out regarding African immigrants in Australia tends to focus primarily on two particular groups—refugees and asylum seekers (Baak, 2011; Due, 2008; Gatt, 2011; Hatoss & Huijser, 2010; Hatoss & Sheely, 2008; Nolan, Farquharson, Politoff, & Marjoribanks, 2011; Nolan, Burgin, Farquharson, & Marjoribanks, 2016; Nunn, 2010; O’Doherty & Lecouteur, 2007; Warriner, 2007; Windle, 2008). The research engages strongly with how these groups of Africans are represented in Australian media, specifically Australian newspapers. The themes discussed centre around the depiction of predominantly the Sudanese Africans great migration from ‘war torn’ ‘guerrilla run’ lands and their difficulty with adapting to their ‘new’ Australian lives. With the exception of Baak (2011) the rest of the studies use content analysis of newspapers as a strategy of their inquiry. The content analysis of these newspapers predominantly centres around key events in Australia and within the communities that these Africans reside. Some examples include, Nolan et al. (2011, 2016) focus on the newspaper coverage and representation of Sudanese Africans around the time of the 2007 Federal election. Windle (2008) studies the discourse in newspaper articles focusing on a series of violent incidents in which African refugees were identified as either victims or perpetrators. Gale (2004) explores the relationship between ‘populist politics and media discourse through the analysis of media representations of refugees and asylum seekers’. O’Doherty and Lecouteur (2007) examine constructions that constitute marginalising practices towards people who request asylum in Australia. Due (2008) analyses newspaper articles that were published following the murder of Sudanese teenager Liep Gony. Baak (2011) explores the responses of a South Sudanese community following the murder of a young Sudanese man. These studies do not provide understanding of the everyday events that impact and shape the general sentiment of Africans in Australia. Despite these research articles offering varied and deep insight into the mediated representations of the Sudanese in Australia, Sudan is only one of 54 countries that make up the continent of Africa. This presents a disproportionate representation of one country and over-representation of one type of African immigrant group in Australia. KhosraviNik (2009, pp. 13–14) argues that; this type of systematic representation in the authorship of a particular group might lead the *general public* to perceive

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<sup>1</sup>2006 Census Data—In this thesis, I have used data from the 2006 Census to provide data for the African population. At the time of writing this thesis (2016), the Australian Government conducted the 10-year census, however, the data will not be made publicly available for at least a year.

immigrants as a homogenous group, 'sharing similar characteristics, backgrounds, motivations and economic status through process of aggregation, collectivization and functionalization'.

In the reporting of Africans in the media, this might influence homogenous groupings in which 'representations become one directional and creates errors in its representation and discourses that it forms about particular groups'. In their work, Nolan et al. (2011, p. 659) maintain that the 'Media serve as key mechanisms through which discourses around multiculturalism are produced and circulated'. However, they do not explicitly state that the type of representation that they are focusing on; specifically centres on the representation of African immigrants that came to Australia as refugees. The dominant population come to know 'other' groups mainly through the media, thus the media functions as key site through which the general public are presented with what they ought to think of their social relationships, the culture of others as well their positioning in society (Altschull, 1994; Cohen, 2011; Osgerby, 2003). Cottle (2000, p. 2) upholds that the media 'provide crucial spaces in and through which, imposed identities or the interests of others can be resisted, challenged and changed'. The media configures and promotes these ideologies. These are perpetuated and manifest through racism, sexism and xenophobia.

The themes discussed in the listed articles above focus on topics that impact and show Africans in negative circumstances. Baak (2011), Windle (2008), and Due (2008) focus on the news reporting of violent murders of young Sudanese men. O'Doherty and Lecouteur (2007), Nolan et al. (2011, 2016), and Gale (2004) discuss the representation of asylum seekers and illegal immigrants in Australian press. This facilitates in creating a type of image of what it means to be African in academia. These types of presentations of a particular group of Africans in the media circulate a particular type of social discourse, which situate Sudanese Australians as outsiders to the Australian mainstream (Nolan et al., 2011). Sudanese Africans dominate most academic work conducted in Australia about Africans. This African group is presented as being problematic as compared to the *normal* Australian. Hopkins, Reicher, and Levine (1997, p. 324) argue that this is the sole purpose of these representations. Hage (2008) reiterates:

Work centring on media treatment of ethnic and racial minorities reveals that mainstream media tends to engage with ethnic and racial minorities through stereotypes, the invocation of fear and danger, and through stereotyped as well as generalised processes of othering.

As a result, the way the dominant (white) population come to learn of Africans is mostly through the process of othering and problematising based on the visible ethnic and cultural difference (Cottle, 2000; Gale, 2004; Hage, 2008). Without alternative sources of representation on show, this cognition of what it means to the African filtrates down to the stereotyped version of what it means to be African.

## 7.2 Deficiencies in the Literature

In the section above, the studies were conducted during periods of intense media and political scrutiny. Content analysis is typically used to interpret meaning from the content of text data, hence, it adheres to the naturalistic paradigm (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The nature of content analysis in the examples provided is based on the frequency and the construction of representations in the media. It does not take into account the personal perspective of the individual African groups in discussion. In the work of Due (2008), Gale (2004), Nolan et al. (2011, 2016), and O’Doherty & Lecouteur (2007), the authors come into *second-hand contact* with African immigrants. They are basing their research on secondary ideas of journalists and their perception of African immigrants that are exclusively represented by the Sudanese. Basing whole research on content analysis and one African ethnic group presents deficiencies in the study of African immigrants in Australia. First, research based on content analysis does not seek to delve into what influences the media to report on this ethnic group in such a manner (negative, fearful). What are the conditions of production of these representations? Without providing context into the originating *moments of production* in which the representations come from, some representations become detached realities to which any context can be attached to fulfil the desired frame of representation. Different institutions play a role in what the general public come to know of certain groups (in this case I will be discussing media institutions). The ‘labels’ they use, tend to categorise certain groups indefinitely. Windle (2008) maintains that the danger of labelling/stereotyping is that in subsequent media reporting, these labels remain affixed to the particular group. In this, he states that representations are

transformed from the ‘localised’ public opinion grounded in discussion of experience and media consumption into the mediated public opinion – often (this is)...relayed far beyond their originating contexts by virtue of this symbiotic relationship. (Windle, 2008, p. 555)

Second, by predominantly featuring one group of African immigrants (refugees), this does not discuss or expose that there are other non-refugee African groups that came to Australia through other entry routes, e.g. skilled migration, students, etc. Current published work by researchers on African Australians does not explore the personal narratives of how these representations affect the groups involved. This reaffirms the representational power that media institutions have over individuals that does not seek alternative interpretations and perspectives (Deaux & Wiley, 2007; Hall, 1997; Rasinger, 2010; Saptefrati, 2008; Shaw, 2013; Trebbe & Schoenhagen, 2011).

## 7.3 Appropriateness of a Cross-sectional Survey

Foddy (1993, p. 1) argues that asking questions is widely accepted as a cost-efficient way of gathering information of past behaviour, private actions, motives and experiences, the responses to which can be subjective and variable. The subjective nature

of everyday life makes it nearly impossible to directly measure reasons for individuals conducting themselves in a certain way. Data about media consumption and the frequency of this consumption for larger and more established minority groups in Australia can be found in statistical reports. This is not the case for African immigrants in Australia, they are considered to be a recent minority group in Australia and extensive research into certain behaviours is yet to be carried out. Conducting the research using data collected from other minority groups in Australia might not yield the same results that are true to the African population. This could omit the immigrant's expressions of attitudes, feelings and opinions (Foddy, 1993). Conducting first-hand research allows the researcher to observe and record the attitudes of the individuals as well as behavioural patterns that are specific to the participants at that moment.

To obtain this information, I filled the gap in knowledge by conducting a cross-sectional study. I believe this would aid in providing a 'snapshot' of a representative sample of African immigrants living in Australia, particularly how they consume and appropriate their mediated representations at a specific point in time (Fink, 2003, p. 101). The nature of cross-sectional surveys is that data is collected once and in a short period and it is the information that is obtained from this that sequences of individual action, as well as responses to social and mediated change, can be analysed (Payne & Payne, 2004). Since currently no data is available about media consumption by African immigrants in Australia, a cross-sectional methodology using a survey questionnaire is useful in providing essential first-hand data. Davies (1987, p. 2) argues that many surveys, include questions which provide direct measures of change over time. However, to achieve an enhanced understanding of the causes and possible effects of this change over time, one has to employ other techniques to attain these answers from the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013; Groves et al., 2011; Jansen, 2010). Thus, surveys serve a primary basis of attaining information, which can later be examined using other qualitative research techniques to delve into the *richness* of the substantive issues.

### **Methods of Data Collection**

For this study, purposive sampling will be implemented; the participants for this part of the study will be recruited from Africans living across Australia. By conducting a national study, it will enable me to cast a wide net on participants from a range of geographic areas, within which various individuals will have different immigration backgrounds as well as belonging to a range of socio-economic, national and cultural backgrounds. This approach will allow for a large and diverse sample size that will create a rich data sample of African immigrants living in Australia and how they perceive their mediated representations as well as their social perceptions. Using the cross-sectional methodology is not without its criticisms, surveys can be vague and subjective in their interpretation. The diversity of the participants might cause them to understand and decode *common words* in a range of interpretations. Being that these survey questions are being directed to participants from varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds, the cultural context in which a question is presented might impact the way participants interpret and respond to the questions

(Foddy, 1993, p. 6). Another drawback of conducting surveys is that some of the respondents might be unwilling to admit to certain behaviours and or attitudes that they form as part of their everyday lives. This could create discrepancies in establishing the relationship between what the respondents divulge and what they actually do. Davies (1987) argues that basing research on cross-sectional surveys does not offer the scope of exploring the relationship between attitudes and behaviour. In this, he explains that attitudes influence behaviour and thus data obtained from cross-sectional surveys will only expose 'the net' effect of these two processes. In this, one can observe that cross-sectional research does not have the capabilities to explore variables such as attitudes and behaviours. These could have an impact should one want to examine the dependence of one outcome upon another. In this light, it is clear to see that the nature of cross-sectional surveys will not allow for a thorough understanding of the relationship between media consumption and the internal effects of media representations on the African immigrant.

Surveys present a way of questioning persons on preferences through carefully administered standardised inquiries (Rossi, Wright, & Anderson, 2013, p. 3). However, to capture the *subjective* aspects of individual experience and how events impact attitudes and behaviour, methodologies that help interpret these phenomenological experiences must be employed.

The final data collection chapter will be based on the oral history tradition, this will put to use semi-structured in-depth interviews with the participants. This research technique will allow for an intimate immersion in the social interaction of how the role media consumption plays on the symbolic formation of identity (Foddy, 1993, p. 14).

### **Methods of Data Analysis**

I conducted the cross-sectional survey online; in this section, the participants were asked a series of questions to gauge what media sources they predominately consumed and for what purpose. This was the catalyst to start to explore some of the general ideas that they had about the media. With no information about how African immigrants utilised the media, obtaining this information would fill the gap in knowledge by providing a clear picture of how my intended participants engaged with the media and what they derived from it. Following the participants completing the survey questionnaire, I needed to analyse the data to observe how the participants consumed and perceived their representations in the media. In order to successfully complete this I needed to

- i. Edit and code the data.
- ii. Find computer software that would aid me in analysing the data.
- iii. Use the computer software to generate insights of the research participant's responses.

The data collected for this study was not intended to be used as a statistical sample. Instead, it was intended for the researcher to gain insight into how a select population of African immigrants living in Australia consumed and perceived their representations in the media.

How I edited, analysed and reported the data was informed by the following steps:

### **Data Editing and Coding**

Sarantakos (2013, p. 468) defines coding as ‘the process of transforming raw data for the purpose of analysis’. For this, the researcher has to ‘assign numeral or character codes to all responses for each and every question in the survey’. Following the receipt of the responses of the survey, I had to edit the questionnaires that were deemed as being invalid. In this case, this included incomplete questionnaires, where responses are missing and responses with the same answer throughout such as ‘I don’t know’. For this study, I used *Google Forms* for data collection and analysis, and this programme is designed to create rules of how to code varied responses. *Google Forms* allows for the inclusion of question summaries, individual responses as well as open-ended questions. These rules could further be manipulated to filter unwanted response surveys and focus on specific subsets of data.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis is an essential part of the research process as this is the stage at which participant responses are interpreted and compiled as meaningful findings. In this study, I used an ordinal scale for questions with a predetermined response, Sarantakos (2013, p. 474) defines the ordinal scale as a scale in which ‘elements are arranged according to their relationship with each other’. The open-ended questions were compiled separately. In the *Google Forms* programme, it is possible to create rules to export individual open-ended questions into a Microsoft Excel file. These responses could then be analysed by the researcher to compile general insights. Preprogrammed rules sometimes cause errors in data compilation, as a result, I will be exporting the data collected to cross-check that it has been compiled correctly.

### **Data Reporting**

My intentions were for the data acquired from this study to be presented in two ways, first as a visual illustration (graph, pie chart, etc.) This would aid in clearly displaying how the data is distributed across the group in question. Second, snapshots of the data would be presented in its raw and unedited form through the chapter.

## **7.4 Digging into the Data**

### *Demographics*

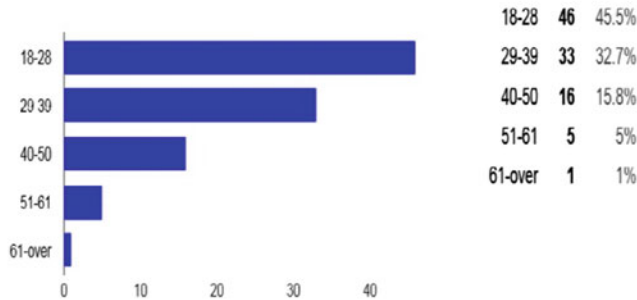
In this section, I aim to provide an overview of the data collected in the cross-sectional survey, so as to satisfy two goals. The first, to show the breakdown of the demographic surveyed, as well as to highlight the media attitudes of this demographic. This level of transparency will allow me to demonstrate a contradiction to the *common knowledge* of Africans pushed by ideological institutions that seems to purport that *all* Africans are Sudanese, male and dangerous (Brabazon & Chivaura, 2016; Brabazon, Redhead, & Chivaura, 2016; Brabazon et al., 2015). The study of demographics is a useful and important in clearly identifying whose responses are provided as well as their contribution to those responses (Fig. 7.1).

# 101 responses

[View all responses](#) [Publish analytics](#)

## Summary

### Please provide your age



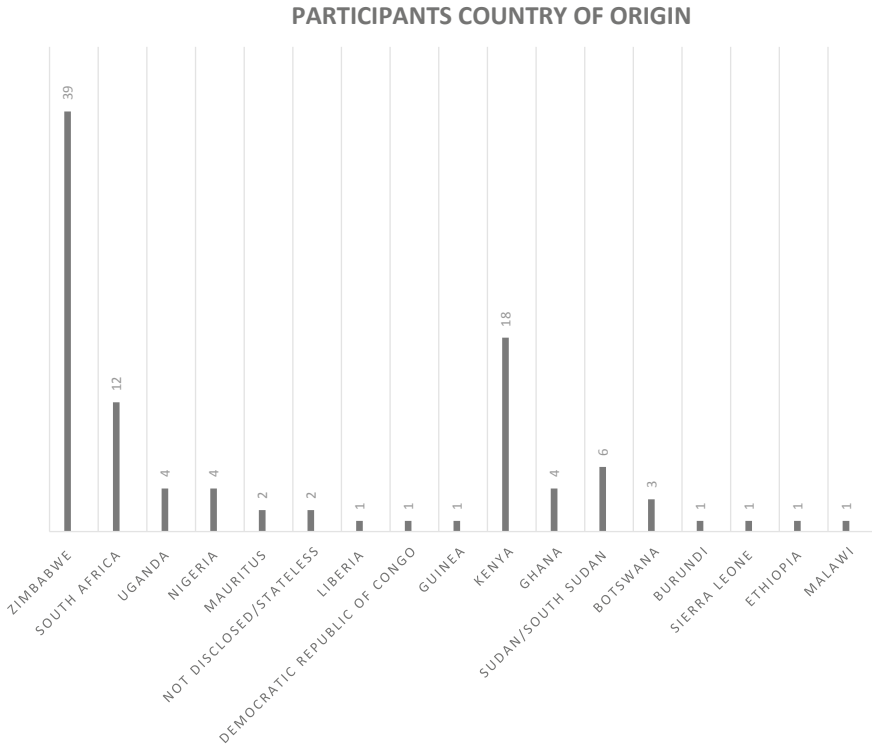
### Please provide your sex



**Fig. 7.1** Breakdown of survey responses

In this data set, the largest group of respondents identified as belonging to the under 40 categories which made up 72% of the surveyed population. The significant number of participants under the age of 40 respondents could have been a result of the study being conducted online. The survey was heavily promoted on social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook as well as through African Association groups and snowballing. This breakdown of respondents by age group is almost similar to the data collected by Australian Bureau of Statistics (2014, 2016–2017) in a nationwide survey of patterns of home internet use. What is interesting to note is that there were more female respondents as compared to male. This is interesting because in Chap. 6, I demonstrated that there was hardly any representation of African females in Australian media. In this case, African females seem to be engaged and willing to share their media uses and attitudes. This survey can be included in the relatively small space that African women are *permitted* to voice their opinions (Fig. 7.2).





**Fig. 7.2** Nationalities that participated in the research

The preceding section was Country of Origin, the following distribution was observed:

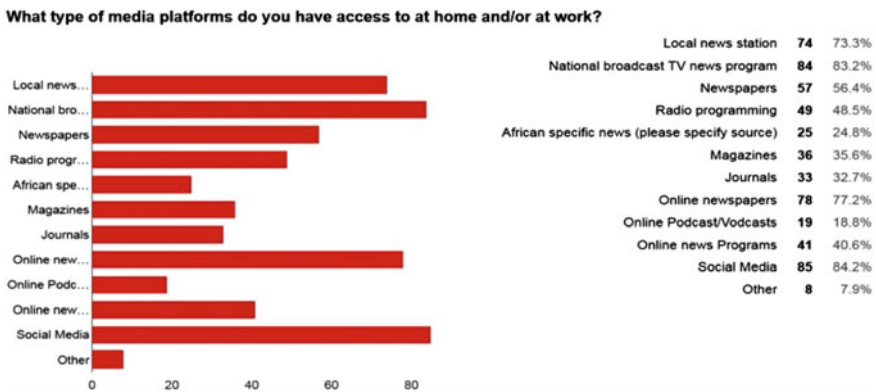
In this graph, readers observe that most of the responses collected came from individuals that identified the following countries as their place of birth, Zimbabwe, Kenya, South Africa and South Sudan/Sudan. In total, there were 101 responses from 17 different African countries. This is a 31.5% representation of the total number of African countries, which makes a significant contribution to attaining diverse opinions. Again, to date, this is the most diverse data set compiled of individuals that identify as being African residing in Australia. The length of stay in Australia varied between participants and ranged from four months to 51 years. This varied length of stay in Australia would allow the researcher to compile a range of experiences from individuals with differed experiences of Australian media and social landscape. All respondents apart from one identified as being either being students or having a profession that required a tertiary level qualification (from a Technical and Further Education Institution (TAFE) all the way to postgraduate research degrees.) This throws the argument that the mediated representations of Africans in Chapter Five tried to put forward by journalists such as (Australian Associated Press & Kwek, 2011; Bolt, 2016; Cook, Dow, & Jacks, 2016) that Africans, particularly African

males are violent thugs or that African females are largely involved in craft and other cultural activities. Again, this exposes the lack of thorough research by academics in Australia about Africans living in Australia. Instead of fixating on the single dialogue of Sudanese youth, refugee crises and traumas of pre-migration experiences when there is a plethora of other topics that could be researched.

**Media Access and Attitudes**

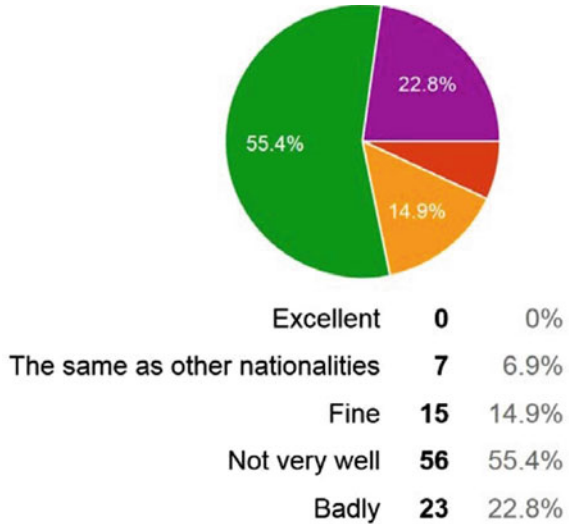
In terms of media access, the most used platform amongst the participants was social media (84%), followed by national broadcast (83.2%) and online newspapers (77%). This is another indicator that the consumption patterns of African immigrants do not differ from Australia’s dominant population. In fact, the varied media sources used by the respondents indicate that Africans living in Australia are avid and discerning media users. In chapter five, I argued that through the results of the content analysis, mediated portrayals of African immigrants were mostly unfavourable. The responses provided by the participants supported this claim. When asked: ‘In your opinion, how do you think Africans are represented in the media?’ (Figs. 7.3 and 7.4).

The responses above clearly indicate that 78% of the respondents believe that Africans are not represented well in the media. This point evidences the arguments that I was drawing upon about the negative discourse surrounding African people in Australia in chapter five. In the newspaper reports involving African immigrants collected in Chapter five, the target audience was not intended to be African. Instead, as I argued that, Africans were rather objects within the discourse, hence their positioning and the fairness of this representation went unquestioned by the reporters. If 78% of a surveyed population believe that they are on the short end of the stick of media representations, I think it is fair to say that this is a valid point that should be addressed. In the media’s negation in obtaining the opinion of African people in matters that concern them, this could be seen as a way of controlling the discourse, a way of naturalising particular *truths* about certain groups. It also shows that Africans are not required in completing the discourse that has already been



**Fig. 7.3** Africans in Australian media access

**Fig. 7.4** Responses to the question: how do you think Africans are represented in the media?



written for them. Through the lack of contesting views, representations of gang-affiliated youth, murderers and nurturing females go unchallenged and unquestioned (Staples, 2011; Wilson & Gutierrez, 1985). Thus, this becomes the *true* representation of what it means to belong to this group. Some of the reasons that the participants gave for why they thought Africans were badly represented in the media included:

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Most of media reportage about Africans is based on stereotypes and certain perceptions of being prone to criminal activities. The media continues to portray the message that Africa and its people are needy and need to be saved by the benevolent West

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The most frequent stories making headlines are those negative (poverty, HIV, Hunger, war, corruption, famine, disease, etc.). Positive stories of success are either very few or covered very scantily—not making headlines in Western newspapers

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**1.** Identities are easily revealed where none would for other races. **2.** Africans are almost always referred to by their country of origin and almost never as simply Australian, regardless of whether they are first-gen immigrants or not. **3.** Journalists’ own presumptions are evident in the tone of the story (e.g. if theft is suspected). **4.** Reporters show a complete lack of understanding about the diversity of the African continent when reporting on people from there—Africa is not one country and one big failed one at that. **5.** Africans doing ‘mainstream’ activities are either ignored or only highlighted in controversial circumstances

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These comments from the survey responses highlight the fact that African participants are aware of how they are represented and have an understanding of the basis of these representations. The common link between the articles collected in the content analysis section of chapter five and the responses provided by the participants in this chapter; is the perception of the individual is secondary to racial markers. Thus meaning, race defines what *qualities* an individual is perceived as having, as well as what characteristics are *likely* to be attached to this person. Regardless of

your profession, immigration status or qualifications, race almost always provides a defining moment for the African being to the Western world (Ahmed & Matthes, 2016; Herbert et al., 2008; Van Dijk, 2015).

When the survey participants were asked if the way Africans are represented in Australian media provided the population with an informed idea of what it means to be African, 81% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. This again is another strong argument that most Africans living in Australia are unsatisfied with how they are represented in the media. This overwhelming response proves that the media are in denial about how they predominantly represent minorities, in this case Africans (Fig. 7.5).

Ideological institutions function to create spaces in which particular groups can operate and be controlled from (Gramsci, 1971; Hall, 2013; Lumley, McLennan, & Hall, 1977). It is through the use of this symbolic power that dominance and maintenance of that dominance is achieved and made to seem normal or naturalised in society. 63% of the surveyed population reported that Africans almost never or never featured in the media that they consumed. However, 94% of the same population said they would be more likely to consume media featuring this ethnic group. There is an observable pattern, Africans hardly feature in Australian media but when they do they occupy unfavourable positions in the reporting. The second pattern is Africans living in Australia are keen to consume media featuring Africans, however, they are predominantly dissatisfied with current representations of Africans. Media providers and content creators should take heed of Africans are active consumers with opinions and concerns about the way that they are represented.

Do you think the way Africans are represented in the media, provides the Australian population with a good/informed idea of what it means to be African Australian?



In the media sources that you consume how often do stories that deal with Africans in Australia appear?



Are you more likely/less likely to read/watch/listen to a story if it features Africans?



Fig. 7.5 Representations of Africans in the media

When it came to the African respondent's interaction with the general Australian population there was a scattering of results. Just under 6% identified as having had negative experiences with the rest being neutral to positive comments (please see pie chart overleaf). In the section of frequent questions that Africans were asked by Australians, it seemed that there was a need for the African participants to fill the gaps in what the Australian population had learnt from the media. Questions of the wildlife, living conditions and disease were the top questions asked to the respondents. Certain *truths* that some Australians have based on what they have seen in mediated reports and did not have first-hand knowledge upon was evident. Take for instance these two comments:

Do you have this in Africa?

Drawing from my personal experience, I have been asked if Africans had access to technology, cars or leisure activities. As I argued before, to be African comes with loaded presumptions, commonalities between Africa and developed countries are rarely explored and thus questions based on ignorance arise. In my experience, most people that I had to explain to that in Africa it was possible to have similar or better luxuries as in Australia, these comments were treated with scepticism and suspicion. Instead, it is easier (more comfortable?) for people to accept what they perceive to be the *truth* of a geographical location to be. The issue of race does not just affect Black/Asian/Indian Africans; White Africans to a degree are also implicated in the race discussion. Take, for instance, the following comment that a participant identified as commonly being asked:

Whether I am ra(s)cist. Being a white South African it is often assumed that I am ra(s)cist.

South Africa similar to Australia has a long history steeped in racial segregation and discrimination. The Apartheid Rule was only officially abolished in 1994 just 24 years ago. In this chapter, I have argued that skin colour is a marker of difference and that for the white population it is a marker of power. In the case of the South African respondent, he/she can blend into Australia without having the distinct racial or ethnic marker until he/she opens her mouth. His/her voice/accents then becomes how she is categorised and what characteristics he/she ought to have or behaviours he/she ought to demonstrate. In this case, one observes that for white South Africans living in Australia is that there is an assumption that they ought to be racist (Fig. 7.6).

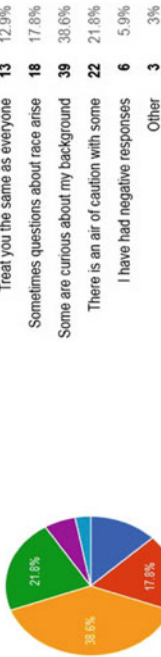
When the question 'Why do you feel that you're being asked these questions?' was posed, opinions on questions of culture race and immigration resulted in differed responses. Some of the participants took it as a general curiosity:

Some people are just curious about the whole process of me moving to Australia.

Others took the chance to present themselves in a way that the media fails to do

I take it with a grain of salt—it's a good opportunity to interact and present an image that is not always portrayed in the mainstream.

**In your association with the non-African population do you feel as though they**



**In your experience of socialising with non-Africans, what are some of the more common questions that you're asked about yourself?**

What is it like in Africa? Do you have lions just walking around? Do you live in huts? Why are African leaders corrupt?  
 Why are people starving in Africa? When will Africa need it's contagious diseases (Ebola, Malaria, Cholera etc). Why don't Africans buy and own property? When will Africans stop drinking themselves to death. Why isn't personal health and or hygiene a priority in some of the African cultures etc.  
 Where are you from? How long have you been living in Australia? Do you like it here? Are you here to stay ?  
 How come you can speak good English? Do you speak English in your country? Is it safe to live in Zimbabwe?  
 Why is my English so good. Do I miss home Am I glad I left. How do you get your hair like that  
 Whether I am racist. Being a white south African it is often assumed that I am racist.

**Why do you feel that you're being asked these questions?**

Some people are just curious about the whole process of me moving to Australia  
 I take it with a grain of salt - it's a good opportunity to interact and present an image that is not always portrayed in the mainstream  
 I believe they have interest in knowing more about my culture...  
 I dont fit into any visually/genetically (?) stereotypical coloured group, from my mixed parents backgrounds I look different and my hair (afro) is very different, in my anglo communities. (Live in sutherland shire, in probably the whitest area of sydney or feels like it... )  
 To make sarcastic comments or to actually gain information  
 Some people have genuine curiosity and desire to learnt but there are those who asks question meant to be condescending

**Fig. 7.6** Experiences socialising with Non-Africans

However, for some, this question presented a challenge to their identity, location and cultural identification. For instance, the following response:

I don't (sic) fit into any visually/genetically (?) stereotypical coloured group, from my mixed parents backgrounds I look different and my hair (afro) is very different, in my Anglo communities. (Live in Sutherland shire, in probably the whitest area of Sydney or feels like it....).

There have been significant contributions to the field of mixed race studies and theories of belonging and identification (Orbe & Harris, 2008; Song, 2003; Williams, 2015). These works amongst many others have raised issues posed by individuals do occupy more than one ethnic/cultural background, how they negotiate their everyday lives and which side they pick as their dominant race? In the comment given by the survey participant above, several issues in regard to how biracial individuals perceive themselves and how they view the world around them provides an intriguing insight into how they see the world. For example, take the comment '*(I) Live in (S)utherland (S)hire*', without applying context to this it might seem as just a comment about the participant's geographical location. Viewed in the Australian context, Sutherland Shire is a very affluent part of South Sydney in New South Wales. In recent times Sutherland Shire has controversially been associated with the Cronulla Riots with took place on December 2005. This riot was incited by tensions between white and Middle Eastern gangs over beach area (Special Broadcasting Service, 2014), these riots were later classified was a race incited incident stemming from long-standing tensions and intolerance. More specifically the white proponents of the riots saw this as an invasion of white space by the growing Middle Eastern population. Thus, Sutherland Shire has a history of being marked as a white space.

The participant identifies that she looks different by stating that he parentage is of mixed descent and that her hair particularly stands out, as it is Afro. A sizable number of the survey participants identified that they were frequently asked questions about their hair and why it looked the way it did. Afro hair is a key marker during colonial times that was highlighted in mixed-race individuals, even though their skin colour could *pass*, the hair was a giveaway (Mendoza, 2015). The next comment that the survey participant makes is that in her opinion, Sutherland Shire is perhaps the whitest area of Sydney. This description completes how visibly different she feels in her skin, hair and surrounds, thus in a way voicing her isolation in this difference.

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that survey data is important in capturing and gathering previously unrecorded first-hand information from participants. The data on the views of African immigrants living in Australia was previously unavailable and no study at the writing of this book has surveyed the media uses and attitudes of African people living in Australia. The survey data yielded a substantial amount of information that can be used in the consideration of what positions this group occupies in Australian media as well as how they perceive how they are currently represented. As useful as the survey data is in providing this information to media producers or future researchers, it lacks the ability to provide a detailed account of the participants' lives. The responses offered in the survey only offer a snapshot of the views that the African respondents had on media representation and social perceptions of the group.

It does not expose the day-to-day negotiations and challenges that the research participants face. I wanted to take this research a step further by digging deeper into the impact media representations and social perceptions on the participants' personal experiences. This is why I decided to include an oral history component of this study. In the Chap. 8: Oral Testimonies of Africans Living in Australia, I seek to draw out these individual experiences in order to develop a holistic study that captures the African experience in the Australian media and social landscape.

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# Chapter 8

## Oral History, Interrogating the Method



**Abstract** The objective of this chapter was to obtain detailed first-hand information of how African immigrants living in Australia perceive their representations in the media. Second, how these representations influence how they believe they are socially recognised and what bearing this has on their everyday lives. Aforementioned in the previous chapters, there tends to be an objectification of African immigrations in Australian media. Hence, in this chapter, I want to position African immigrants as the subjects of discourse in documenting their experience. The oral interviews that form the key component of this chapter gives this immigrant group the space to *answer back* to what is written *about* and *for* them. In my role as a researcher in this book, I am not just writing about the African experience in Australia as an external phenomenon of which I have no connection to. Instead, my research and writing to a degree also capture my lived reality. In my inclusion of the transcripts collected from the interviews as well as the digital audio files, this adds reflexivity to the data in the ways in which it is accessed in conjunction with reading this book.

**Keywords** African voices · First-hand information · Subjects of discourse · Experience · Lived reality · Dominant cultural narratives · Racial characterisation · Identity performance · Xenophobia · Everyday life

### 8.1 Introduction

This chapter captures how the moments of identity and regulation in the *Circuit of Culture* (Du Gay, Hall, Janes, & Mackay, 1997) function in the life of the African individual. I examine how an immigrant individual articulates through speech, how they consume discourses in Australian media about themselves and what do they draw from it. Specifically, I explore how the discourse of mediated representations operates in the negotiation of identity in their everyday lives. These are fundamental issues to address, it is through the use of carefully considered methods of approach that this study is intended to yield results that provide new insights, voices and views of how African immigrants go through these moments of the circuit. Probyn (2007, p.431) argues, the processes of production and consumption are best articulated in Hall (1999) through his research on encoding and decoding. As discussed in chapter

three, the theory of encoding and decoding pays particular attention in noting the role of the *receiver of information* in analysing the message and ultimately deriving *meaningful content* from it. It is how the individual appropriates this meaningful content from their consumption into their everyday life that I intend on capturing in this section. I shall now expand on the key factors that I considered essential in the conduction of such a study.

### I. Documenting the Experience

The main methodological problem is to find an analytical mechanism which can catch the subtlety of lived experience and how that is expressed through language or action or performance. (Gray, 2003, p. 32)

Experience has long been argued as being subjective (Probyn, 2007). This challenge adds complexity to the research, particularly when understanding the alignments of culture, ethnicity and oppression. If meaning is constantly shifting and variable between individuals how can experience be documented? Gray (2003) states that this can be achieved through the analysis of language, action or performance, however, what qualifies these three to be the most authentic experiences? How does the researcher know that they are not capturing the mundane passing of life on the part of the participant? In Chaps. 5 and 6, I introduced discourse analysis as a strategy of inquiry. Honing on the importance given to the power that is created through the language of institutions (Wodak & Meyer, 2008), how subjects are positioned in the structuring of information (Mautner, 2008), as well as, the context surrounding the way in which information is gathered (Van Dijk, 2000). These are essential subjects to cover but what is lost is the focus on the individual. ‘How do they behave? How might they feel’ about their experiences? (Brabazon, 2011). Documenting the experience becomes equally as important as researching or writing about it. If the inappropriate methods of capturing the experience are employed, then the researcher may omit factors that might provide comprehensive understanding of the experience.

### II. From Hot to Cold: Capturing the Real<sup>1</sup>

Having discussed the importance of documenting the experience of the participants in this research project, the next essential step is how to capture the phenomenon. I have maintained throughout this book that discourse analysis is essential in analysing the macro context in which events or situations arise. However, in attempting to capture the experiences of the participants on a micro level, more intimate research methods need to be employed. The interview has been heralded as a source of powerful data

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<sup>1</sup>I have derived this concept from Marshall McLuhan’s (1964) conceptualisation of hot and cool media. He defined hot media as media that is data rich and requires minimal contribution from the audience because all the information is already there. For cool media, he defines this as media lacking enough data, the audience has to fill in the gaps to complete the message. In my use of hot data, similar to McLuhan, I identify the interview participant as a hot or rich source of data in their ability to tell their stories of their experiences in their own words. I identify cold data as data that has been provided through the transformation of the hot data into a more stable form such as a transcript. The richness of the participant’s voice is lost, tone, pitch and emphasis are lost through this process.

(Creswell, 2003, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2013; Elliott, 2005). It permits the participant/interviewee to put into their own words, their comments and experiences. The oral tradition is valued for preserving and recording information. Interviewing is particularly important for other qualitative research methods such as ethnography, especially in traditional societies whereby writing or photography is deemed disrespectful or inappropriate. Stone (1984) maintains that interviews can be broken down into two categories. The first being, interviews that are published as audio files ‘spoken memories, reminiscences and tales that circulate among groups of people’ (1984, p. 3). The second type of interview also involves the recording of audio but ‘eventually some of these articulations are set down in writing, producing—documentary evidence’ (Stone, 1984, p. 3). The second type of interview of transforming the recordings into text forms the bulk of research interview data that in qualitative studies. The categories of the interview are further broken down into subject/context-specific criteria, e.g. sociological interview, qualitative interview, in-depth interview and oral history interview. Having established that the interview is essential in capturing the micro experiences of the research group, the next step is deciding which interview is best suited for this research? Brabazon (2011) argues that interviews should only be done when other sources have been consulted and are found lacking important information. This project seeks to capture the experiences of African immigrants living in Australia and how they perceive their representations in the media and how they utilise these representations in their everyday lives. I have established in previous chapters that much of the Australian literature dealing with African immigrants is conducted through the content analysis of secondary sources and this presents gaps in knowledge. These gaps include omissions in biographic information of the African group and specific discussion of specialised topics in reference to this group. In this analysis, the oral history interview would seem appropriate for the collection of these intimate data. In their work Brabazon, Redhead, and Chivaura (2015) uphold that the source of information (the interviewee/participant) is *hot*. In this context *hot* is taken to mean a raw, active, personal and a loaded source of information (McLuhan, 1964). The richness or the *hotness* of the information that is obtained from the participant is best captured through oral history’s ability to provide a means to rewrite ‘history, to include the views of average people... by means of attending to their accounts, new perspectives can be given concerning past events’. (Stone, 1984, p. 8).

Oral history interviews are designed to present the authentic experiences of the people in an immediate form through the use of the voice. Portelli (1998a, b) referenced in Clary-Lemon (2010) maintains that oral history is based on a narrative genre that intermediates the relationship of the individual to public life. Thus, as well as filling knowledge gaps, oral history interviews also contribute to areas of less known subjects such as cultural implications and internal struggles. These are perspectives that are often provided by members of groups that have been repeatedly underrepresented in the dominant media (Clary-Lemon, 2010; Finnegan, 2007; Firouzkouhi & Zargham-Boroujeni, 2015).

In her work Brabazon (2011) argues ‘oral histories provide a vehicle to articulate the nature of oppression...from migrants not seen as (being) important based on dominant discourse’.

### III. Articulating the Experience: Potentials and Problems in Deploying Oral History Interview as a Method

Grele (1998, p. 41) maintains 30 years ago oral history was regarded with great suspicion and scepticism particularly by professional historians. He lays blame largely on the institutionalised doctrine of how professional historians believed historical events ought to be researched and documented. The written word dominated the spoken word. Cutler (1970) warns of the pitfalls of oral history, particularly the accuracy of memory of which he deems to be wishful and fanciful when recalling events. This, however, is not the only barrier, the oral history interviewee’s positioning in society and the ‘cultural milieu’ influence the validity of the oral testimony. Indeed, these are factors that impact the legitimacy of information; however, oral history interviewing is often deployed in instances whereby the information is not available from any other source. As mentioned by Grele (1998), the value placed on oral history is not held in high esteem as that researched by a historian. However, in the seeking of information from relics, official documents or publications this also produces a version of history. One that has been *cleaned up* or *polished*, ready for consumption, with a particular viewpoint and audience in mind (similar to content analysis). In this, one can observe that *official* history too can be corrupted by social and cultural milieu. Finnegan (2007) offers justification for oral history/testimony in stating that understanding oral history characteristics and meaning cannot be achieved through the application of literary standards of judgement. This means, what historians look for in an artefact or interview differs from what a sociologist or media practitioner might ascertain. In this book, the oral history interview is not being conducted to confirm already existing information and interpretations. Instead, this study seeks to employ oral history to provide new and original knowledge into how the African interviewees perceive and articulate how they are represented in the media and socially. The researcher fully understands that this is subjective and contingent on a range of factors. Benison (1971, p. 291) offers a conceptualisation of what oral history is by confirming that

An oral history is an autobiographical memoir, (it is) a first-hand interpretation, filtered through a particular individual experience at a particular moment in time (...it is) a beginning of an interpretation although not an end.

In this, we see that oral history does not represent the full experience of an event, instead, it seeks to capture how the interviewee recalls the experience in that particular moment. There will be problems in ascertaining the accuracy of individual memory as well as the levels of subjectivity of varied types of biases; however, emphasis should be placed in capturing individual experience at a particular moment in time.

### IV. Methods of Data Collection

An oral history project requires the organisation of interviews with the sources of information (participants). There are steps that need to be adhered to in order to

successfully execute the project. The first stage that Stone (1984) lists as being important is surveying and explaining the project to the participant. In Chap. 7, I explained how I recruited the participants for the survey and why these particular participants were targeted. This chapter carries on where Chap. 7 left off. Out of the 101 respondents of the survey, 10 of the participants offered to share insights into their media consumption and attitudes in the oral history interviews. Information about the project was provided in written form for the participants to have opportunity to read the content at their leisure. The researcher also provided an opportunity to meet with the participants' face to face or telephone them to provide clarity and more information. Establishing trust and rapport with research participants increases the chances of the participants opening up to the researcher (Elliott, 2005; Firouzkouhi & Zargham-Boroujeni, 2015; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Preparing the oral history interview questions is essential, what is equally as important is the interviewer's background. How much experience does he or she have interviewing a diverse range of people? Is the researcher confident and the best option to interview the participants? I have 11 years of experience working in community radio as a broadcaster and content producer. Through the years I have interviewed a range of people in different countries, backgrounds and occupations. This has given me experience that I can draw on in this study. The essential element in interviewing is making sure you allow the interviewee every opportunity to speak. It is their experience that you're trying to capture, and this should not be unnecessarily interrupted or rigidly guided by structured questions. Semi-structured questions are argued to be the best way of obtaining oral histories (Clary-Lemon, 2010; Finnegan, 2007). Semi-structured interviews permit the researcher to have some structure to the interview whilst catering for unexpected questions or discussions that might arise in the course of the interview. Another key aspect to consider is how the interview will be recorded. Digital hardware and software have made it easier to have access to a range of recording mechanisms. In this research, I used a professional quality handheld recorder with a microphone built-in.

## V. The Oral History Interview: Asking Questions of Here and Now and There and Then

The objective of oral history is to collect the real experiences of groups that are usually not included in dominant texts. Reality is subjective, theoretical, political and variable. Oral history, seeks to capture *the real* experiences of the intended groups. In recording the undocumented experiences, the researcher has to take note of how the experience is constructed by taking particular note of what is said when and how. Fisher and Rosenthal (1991, p. 253) contend that researching people's histories 'implies both, the question of the social function of biographies as well as the question of the social processes that constitute biographies'. Put simply, this means collecting oral histories are twofold, first, the researcher has to have a firm idea of how the histories will be put to use after they have been collected. What is the purpose of collecting these? Second, what experiences help shape the participants' accounts? Traditional historians argue that oral histories are subjective and thus can be considered to be a type of social construct. Like all social constructs, they are

influenced by various factors such as the society in which one resides, the ability to recall experiences and what they feel is important to share with the interviewer. Oral histories are also regarded as social realities, this meaning the oral history given by the participant is defined by what they are currently experiencing, how they perceive themselves at that moment and how they choose to construct the information that they provide to the interviewer. How then can the interviewer decipher the 'real' life history and how the present social life situation of the interviewee impacts how they recall and present their past?

When conducting oral history interviews, there are many questioning methods one can take to achieve their desired result. In my case, I will be implementing the questioning method devised by Rosenthal (1993). This method of asking questions in oral history interviews is valid as it seeks to first and most importantly bring out the personal experiences of the interview participant in their own words, in a way that captures how they interpret their history at that moment without any prompts or encouragement from the interviewer. The objective of conducting oral history interviews is to capture the thoughts and opinions of the participant. I believe using this questioning method will yield the best possible results from my interviewees. In questioning, Rosenthal (1993) maintains that oral historians need to follow the three steps she outlines in order to achieve the best possible results from their research. I shall list and detail the three steps of questioning below.

1. The first step is for the interviewer to ask the participant to relay their life story and experiences or a 'full extempore narration'. At this point Rosenthal (1993, p. 3), stresses that the interviewer should not ask any further questions or try to influence recall from the participant. Instead, non-verbal encouragement and 'paralinguistic expressions of interest and attention' are encouraged. This is done so as for the participant to rely on what they feel is important and significant in their lives. This is their stream of conscious and a selection of narratives that they feel has shaped them.
2. The second stage of the interview involves the participation of both the interviewer and the interviewee. At this stage, the interviewer can ask specific questions relating back to points that the interviewee mentioned before. This is done for several reasons. The first is to gain more clarity on points that in the participant's history that the interviewer may need further insight on. Second, to make sure that the interviewer fully understands what the participant means in their narrative and lastly, to see if any further detail can be given about the experience.
3. The final stage seeks to delve deeper into the participants' memory and recall details that may not have been mentioned in the interview or address any further questions that the interviewer might have.

Rosenthal (1993) argues that this type of interrogation enables the researcher to tap into the research participants' present definition or reconstruction of experiences that happened in the past. The analysis of oral interviews relies exclusively on the language the participants use to describe their experiences in the present as well as what they choose to reveal to the interviewer. By the same token, what the participant chooses to reveal and what they do not to the interviewer could limit how much



of their oral history is captured. In conducting oral history interviews, the ideal situation is having a participant who is ready and willing to talk about their lives, but this is not always the case. Some participants need a bit more encouragement to open up about their experiences, some might gloss over significant events and some might completely not want to discuss particular aspects of their lives particularly in a recorded conversation. This is where developing a rapport before the interview becomes essential so as to gauge how to conduct the interview as well as how to get the participant talking.

## VI. Data Analysis for Many Voices

Rosenthal (1993) uses thematic analysis of oral history to derive themes from the interviews. She states that there are three stages, the first being deriving themes from the interview. This is essential in data analysis of oral history as this makes it a bit easier to sift through a large amount of data. This also helps give a bit of method in a way helps develop an advanced form of analysis. In this study, I identify some themes in the oral history testimonies from my participants to categorise the shared themes that African immigrants raise in their consumption of the Australian media as well as in the production and regulation of their social identities. This will aid me in categorising the themes that are important to the African immigrants. These themes will be given further attention in the discussion section of the chapter. The second stage of data analysis after the thematic categorisation is to determine the main categories that I wish to analyse in greater detail. The aim of this book is to investigate how what African immigrants consume of themselves in the media and how this aide in constructing their social identities, as well as how they feel they are perceived in society. Issues of the production and regulation of social identities will form the basis of this analysis. This strategy of inquiry is adapted from Firouzkouhi and Zargham-Boroujeni (2015). In their paper, they present an innovative method of studying oral history in Nursing. The authors emphasise that this method could be used in the study of all disciplines that are concerned with oral history as the framework is not based on a specific research tradition. Firouzkouhi and Zargham-Boroujeni (2015) outline four main stages in the analysis of oral history.

1. Data gathering through interviews with the oral witness and first level coding.
2. Second-level coding and determining subcategories.
3. Third-level coding and determining the main categories.
4. Connecting the main categories to each other and writing the narrative.

In using these stages in the analysis of my oral history testimony, I maintain clear sequential stages in my data analysis as well as create a flow in the writing up of the narrative. I decided to follow the method outlined by Firouzkouhi and Zargham-Boroujeni (2015) instead of Rosenthal (1993) for several reasons that I will outline. First, Rosenthal's aim in her data analysis is to analyse the sequences of the oral history in proving and disproving premeditated hypotheses. In my analysis of my participants' oral histories I will not be seeking to have right or wrong answers, but instead, to capture the moment of realness, to capture what the participant feels is the account of their history and feelings about life events in that particular moment.

It is essential to note that in the participants telling of their histories, it is not just how they remember the past but what understanding of the past that they have and what meanings they attach to that particular moment. Another crucial point to note is what they choose to reveal to the interviewer at that moment based on the rapport that they form before and during the interview.

#### VI. Methods of Data Editing and Analysis: The Three Forms of Oral History

The imperative of oral history is that the participants' lives have value and therefore are held in high regard, consequently, how does the researcher present the data that is collected from the oral interview? Brabazon et al. (2015) argue that oral history exists in three forms. The first being the spoken testament. This is the analogue face-to-face interaction that the interviewer has with the interviewee. This form of oral history exists in the moment and ends when the interview is terminated. The second form of oral history is the digital spoken word, this is the sonic recording of the interview. Oral history interviews are now more commonly captured on digital recorders this way of capturing the voice is favoured more because of the ease in recording, duplicating and storing. The third and final version of oral history is the transcribed copy of the oral interview. This can be seen as the last link in the compilation of oral history data, after the interview is conducted via a recorder, it is downloaded and stored as a digital file. The next stage is for the researcher to transcribe the words of the interview for further detailed analysis. The next pressing stage and question is how the researcher deals with the three forms of oral history. Which one is prioritised? What is included what is left out? And which one provides the researcher with the best version of the real?

## 8.2 The Analogue Face-to-Face Interaction

In the structuring of the hierarchy of the importance of interview data, analogue or face-to-face data holds chief importance. In the moments when the interviewer and interviewee are together, this is where the understandings of experiences, feelings about them and the meaning they have to the participant are shared. Atkinson (1998, p. 122) contends that in the sharing of these stories, the interview participant has a chance to 'affirm, validate and support (their) experiences socially and clarify the relationships with those around (them)'. This provides the interview participants with the opportunity to view themselves both as an object as well as a subject in their recalling of their lives. It is important at this moment for the interviewer not to interject and allow the interviewee to rely on the singularity of their lives without the interviewer offering some interpretation of what they might mean. The primary focus of oral history is to capture how the interview participant remembers aspects of their lives, an issue or feelings they have or had. It is essential to regard the information they provide with respect and treat them as 'the expert and the authority' (Atkinson, 1998, p. 122) of their lives. He reinforces this point in saying

The way an individual recounts a personal narrative at any point of his or her life represents the most internally consistent interpretation of the way that person currently understands the past, experiences the present, and anticipates the future.

This content, however, only exists during the interview, this is why it is important to have a recording device to capture the moments. This leads us up to the next section, which is the digital spoken word.

### 8.3 The Digital Spoken Word

Digital recorders have become the preferred way of recording interviews. Some of these reasons include audio quality, ease of editing as well as the ease of data storage. By capturing the voice digitally, making copies as well as deriving key themes or comments is quick and simple to do. However, with this come some ethical considerations and responsibilities. In the editing of digital media, the data could be manipulated to better serve the interests of the researcher or to completely change the context and content of the interview. This, of course, is highly unethical; thus, the researcher has a great responsibility in representing the data as authentically as it was delivered. Selections of key/common themes will be drawn out from the interviews for deeper analysis in the discussion section of the chapter.

The second advantage of having a digital version of the spoken word included with the book is to enable those interested in the oral histories of the participants to have the ability to relive the interview moment with the participants. As well trained in transcribing, as one might be, the word form of the interview does not fully capture the silences, inflections and emotions of the interview. These aspects add a layer to the interview that in their own right could be examined and provide more information about the participant's feelings about a particular subject.

The third advantage of capturing the interview digitally is that the content can be published (with the participant's consent) on a range of media platforms such as radio, television, online newspapers/magazines, online radio, social media, just to name a few. Including the full digital version of the oral interviews in the book, this allows for moments that cannot be described on paper to be heard by interested individuals. Bakhtin (2010, p. 269) argues that trying to force every last utterance onto paper will inevitably come across 'flat and abstract' and 'loses the fluidity of social interaction' (Bucholtz, 2007). For the purposes of this book, the main aim is to identify the main concerns and comments that African immigrants living in Australia have based on how they are represented in the media and socially. It becomes essential to discuss why the transcribed version of the interview is also important.

## 8.4 The Transcribed Copy of the Oral Interview

Transcriptions are important in interview-based research as their aim is to present the written version of the spoken word. Thus, the accuracy of transcription is essential in deriving the precision in meaning. In the transfer from the spoken word to the written word, editing is an inevitable part of the task in order to present the information in some sort of order. This is where the greatest flaw in transcription lies. There are varied modes of how one can transcribe interview data based on what they want to derive from the data. For instance, in linguistic transcription, pauses, data interpretation (spelling) and data representation (representing the verbalisation) are highly important (Bailey, 2008). In presenting life story transcriptions, the interviewer's comments are left out and what the participant says is organised in a series of paragraphs to read as a story. Generally, in oral history transcriptions both what the interviewer and the interviewee say are included in the transcription process. In this, one can observe that dependent on the method of transcription the data transforms in how it is presented and what is included.

In this book, I transcribe the sections that I analysed thematically, this is done to preserve as much of the participants raw/original words, silences, emotion and inflections. The parts of the interview were transcribed were done from the poststructuralist perspective of discourse analysis. This is to continue the flow of post-structural theory within the book but perhaps most importantly to analyse the content of the interview in relation to the macrostructures surrounding the participants. Some researchers consider transcription to be a representational form (Davidson, 2009). In my use of discourse analysis in my transcriptions I will be specifically looking at the content of the discourse. This take on transcription has been criticised by some as not being adequate and being insufficient in its representation of interaction (Bucholtz, 2000, 2007). My intention in this research is not to fixate on *how* words are said but rather *what* is said. I will include some linguistic transcription methods such as signifying pauses, hesitations, and idiosyncrasies, but this is not the focal point of the research.

## 8.5 Real Stories in Real Time

As discussed earlier, the objective of this chapter is to provide a space for Africans immigrants living in Australia to voice their opinions on how they believe they are perceived and understood by the Australian media and society. Second, to allow them to voice their opinion on how this impacts how they view themselves in relation to the dominant discourse that surrounds them in Australian media, as well as how this has an effect on their personal and private identities. In this regard, in Chap. 6, the African immigrant is perceived as an object within discourse through the representation in media and society. I elaborated on how this type of presentation often excludes the African being part of the discourse instead focusing on the presentation of the body as a signifier of the outsider who is only known through racial characterisation.

In this chapter, I seek to position the African immigrant as the subject of discourse as a contributory participant and a conscious participant who acknowledges and has a positioning in that discourse.

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# Chapter 9

## Hard Data: Voices of Africans in Australia



**Abstract** The objective of this chapter was to obtain detailed first-hand information of how African immigrants living in Australia perceive their representations in the media. Second, how these representations influence how they believe they are socially recognised and what bearing this has on their everyday lives. Aforementioned in the previous chapters there tends to be an objectification of African immigrations in Australian media. Hence, in this chapter, I want to position African immigrants as the subjects of discourse in documenting their experience. The oral interviews that form the key component of this chapter gives this immigrant group the space to *answer back* to what is written *about* and *for* them. In my role as a researcher in this book, I am not just writing about the African experience in Australia as an external phenomenon of which I have no connection to. Instead, my research and writing to a degree also capture my lived reality. In my inclusion of the transcripts collected from the interviews as well as the digital audio files, this adds reflexivity to the data in the ways in which it is accessed in conjunction with reading this book.

**Keywords** African voices · First-hand information · Subjects of discourse · Experience · Lived reality · Dominant cultural narratives · Racial characterisation · Identity performance · Xenophobia · Everyday life

### 9.1 Who Came Out to Play? Profile of Interview Participants

In this study, I had 10 participants who were willing to share their oral testimonies. In my participant recruitment, one of my main concerns was getting a gender balance. This was a key concern because in research particularly that of ethnic or minority studies, most of the participants involved are usually male (Jakubowicz & Seneviratne, 1996; Mainsah, 2009; Special Broadcast Service, 2010). I wanted to capture a diversity of opinions in my study, however, this did not materialise, and I ended up having six males and four females. I do not feel that this balance skews the results, as the study was not particularly based on gendered roles or gender-specific issues. The interviews took place in two formats; the first was face-to-face interviews with the participants. These interviews took place in Melbourne, Victoria, Sydney and

other parts of regional New South Wales and Adelaide, South Australia. The second format was via Skype; the participants of these were located in Regional New South Wales and South Australia. The following is a brief summary of the participants that took part in the study (Table 9.1).

As discussed in the data collection section of this chapter, all the participants of the oral history interviews were provided with a letter of information about the study and a consent form. All apart from one participant (Nancy\*, not her real name) agreed to be identified in the study. The age groups of the participants ranged between 20 and 52 years of age. The length of stay in Australia ranged from 2 years to 17 years. I feel this breakdown of age and length of stay provides the study with a varied range of participants with differed lived experiences of life in Australia. All the participants involved in this study held a tertiary qualification or were in the process of attaining one. This last point is interesting to note because in chapter five: Discourses Surrounding Africans in Australian Media and Society, out of 198 articles only 7 articles identified African immigrants as having any qualifications. The birth countries of the participants were varied and fell as follows (Fig. 9.1):

The participants provided varied reasons for relocating to Australia, these ranged from

1. Parents wanting to pursue further study relocating with their children;
2. Students relocating for further study;
3. Marriage;
4. Reuniting with family;
5. Employment opportunities.

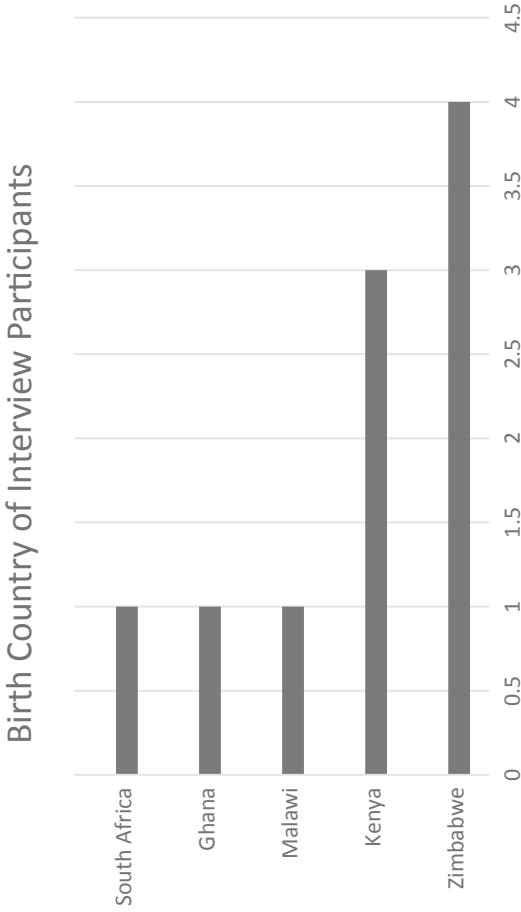
Referring to chapters four and five, the top news articles were of the migration crisis in Europe and Refugee community events. In this study, based on the disclosure, I got from the participants none identified as having migrated to Australia fleeing war

**Table 9.1** Oral history interview participants

Name	Sex	Age	Occupation	Length of stay in Australia (years)
Kunashe	Male	23	Physiotherapist	17
Reginald	Male	28	Intern Pharmacist	10
Beulla	Female	24	Hotel Client Manager	11
Leslie	Male	20	Undergraduate Student	15
Rambayi	Male	52	Workplace Counsellor	16
Stanley	Male	28	Postgraduate Student/Aged Care Worker	2½
Hilda	Female	39	Professional Photographer	14
Sheila	Female	27	Registered Nurse/Aged Care Worker	2
Ignatius	Male	40	University Lecturer	10
Nancy*	Female	26	Postgraduate Student	6

\*not her real name





**Fig. 9.1** Birth country of interview participants

or coming through an asylum seeker pathway. This again disproves the dominant discourse surrounding Africans in Australia. The fact that all the participants had a tertiary education or were in the process of attaining one, were employed in some capacity and had come to Australia through the usual migration patterns shows that there is some type of bias in mediated reports in which Africans feature. This is not to say that Africans who came to Australia through other pathways such as Asylum or Seekers or Refugees are any less relevant to the study. However, I wanted to show that other pathways and career channels are also available and utilised by African immigrants, this is something that is not commonly reported on.

The objective of this chapter was to obtain detailed first-hand information of how African immigrants living in Australia perceive their representations in the media. Second, how these representations influence how they believe they are socially recognised and what bearing this has on their everyday lives. This is not a simple task to investigate and requires a methodology and theoretical framework that guides the research and locates the key influences and variables in the everyday lives of the participants. Aforementioned in the previous chapters, there tends to be an objectification of African immigrations in Australian media. Hence, in this chapter I want to position African immigrants as the subjects of discourse in documenting their experience. The oral interviews that form the key component of this chapter gives this immigrant group the space to *answer back* to what is written *about* and *for* them. In my role as a researcher in this book, I am not just writing about the African experience in Australia as an external phenomenon of which I have no connection to. Instead, my research and writing to a degree also capture my lived reality. In my role as the interviewer, my intention was not to share my experiences with the participants but in some cases the participants would ask me questions about my own experiences

**Hilda, Question 18, 16:33**

Yes, yeah I um...I h...where are you from Sunny?

17:12 *I was born in Zimbabwe ummm... so we moved to England when I pretty young, ...having left Zimbabwe to England where its more multicultural definitely than Australia (yeah) then moving to Australia, particularly regional Australia (yeah) that's, that's what sparked me to sort of do this research.*

In these instances, I felt as though I had/could share a little bit about my life with the participants to create rapport as well as to be transparent. This is also an example of how through my belonging to the same ethnic and or cultural group as most of the participants they felt they could ask me about my experiences and insights on certain matters (Baak, 2011; Mainsah, 2009; Moore, 2008). In my inclusion of the transcripts collected from the interviews as well as the digital audio files, this adds reflexivity to the data in the ways in which it is accessed in conjunction with reading this book. Most importantly, the use of the digital files, as well as the transcripts, puts the missing voice of African immigrants through the ten personal oral histories. The aim is to show that African immigrants living in Australia,

Are not simply passive reactors to cultural cues, rather they exert agency in their identity presentation in response to their categorisation and treatment by others. (Wiley & Deaux, 2011, p. 51)

I have established that this chapter is methodologically complex. How does one go about examining voice recordings, transcripts and digitising the data in a way that is comprehensible? Even though I only conducted ten interviews, they ranged between 18 and 50 min. This presents a large data set of transcripts and audio. How then do I control the data and present it in a traditional academic fashion? I stated earlier that I would be using the model proposed by Firouzkouhi and Zargham-Boroujeni (2015) of categorising the data in a thematic way. In doing so, it captures significant moments within the oral histories; however, one has to be selective of the themes or moments they want to capture. If too much data is included it could fragment or disperse the intended meaning. This is why I am choosing to present select responses from the participants in the topics that I choose. The word limit set for the requirements of this book do not allow me to explore each individual participant's response. This is why availing the full digital files of the interviews is important so that for those who might want to hear a particular participant's responses in detail they have the option to. In this chapter, I have decided to go with four key themes, these are

1. Dominant Cultural Narratives: How Australians understand what it means to be African?
2. Racial Characterisation: How Africans understand how the Australian media to perceive them.
3. Situating oneself within the discourse: Everyday questions about race and ethnicity.
4. Questions of Identity performance and Xenophobia.

These four themes are derived from the six core questions from the oral interviews:

1. In your own opinion, what do you think the Australian population know about Africa and being African?
2. What are some of the things that you have been asked about your ethnicity or background?
3. How did you take this? What was your response?
4. How do you think the media in Australia understands or depicts Africans? Can you give me some examples?
5. How do you think this benefits/impacts how the general Australian population understand what it is to be African?
6. Based on how you have seen Africans represented in Australian media, has this impacted how you present yourself in public? What have been some of the consequences of this?

The essence of these questions was to establish how African immigrants as subjects, position themselves within Australian mediated discourse. Second, and equally important was how the African immigrants identified and categorised themselves within Australian society based on what the *general public* perceived them to be. If we are going through the moments with in *The Circuit of Culture* (Du Gay, Hall, Janes, & Mackay, 1997), this is where we would examine the moments of identity and regulation. In the literature review section (chapter three), I touched upon how identity is conceptualised and theorised. In the following section, I want to delve

a bit deeper into this conceptualisation and theorisation of identity and its regulation principally through the ideas of Stuart Hall. Following this is I will explore the themes present in the oral history interviews.

## 9.2 The Importance of Identity and Identification

Identity is formed in the ‘interaction’ between self and society. The subject still has an inner core or essence that is ‘the real me’, but this is formed and modified in a continuous dialogue with the cultural worlds ‘outside’ and the identities which they offer. (Hall, 1992, p. 276)

The focus on identity in the quote above demonstrates the change in Stuart Hall’s theorisations from when he was at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) as head of the Centre and when accepted the position of Professor of Sociology at the Open University. In this quote, there is a distinct sociological turn in how Hall conceptualises identity. In his work at the CCCS, there was a strong emphasis on interrogating how ideological systems impacted the *everyday person*. In the quote above from a book section he was featured in shortly after commencing as Professor of Sociology, he offers the interrogation of the subject and not the system as a focal point. In a way, this is a minute glimpse into Hall’s theorisation of identity. He argued that identity was always in flux (Hall, 1987, 1990, 1992, 1996, 1997, 2000) its conceptualisation cannot be fixed, in a way this also applied to his theorisation of identity. Solomos (2014, p. 1673) maintains that:

Hall’s style was never to argue that his work was a repository of a ‘truth’ as such. He saw his work as in some sense always in development, always unfinished.

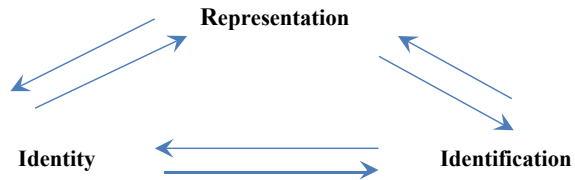
In Stuart Hall’s work on identity, race and belonging—much like myself—he was not only a researcher/theorist but in some ways he (we) was (are) researching and theorising about his (our) own identity and social standing. Hall maintained that the traditional way of viewing identity was through the conception that it was a stable and unified which he termed the *Enlightened Subject* (Hall, 1992; Shaw, 2013). This presentation of the enlightened subject can be seen in the way Australian media portrays the identities of Africans, particularly African males. Black males are identified as having particular *fixed identities* as gang members, violent, dangerous and this type of representation seems to be on a continuous loop. These types of representations are the dominant ideological view of African men in Australia as evidenced in the content analysis; African men are presented as objects within the ideological discourse. Hall offers two more types of identity the *Postmodern Subject* and the *Sociological Subject*. In these two categorisations of identity, Hall offers the subjects’ position as being active in terms of their *self* as well as their surroundings to varying degrees. In the postmodern theorisation of identity, Hall contends that the subject has no fixed identity, it is continuously morphing (Shaw, 2013). He maintains that this type of identity becomes a,

‘Movable feast’: formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in cultural systems which surround us. (Hall, 1992, p. 277)

In this regard, the subject is presented as not having ownership of his or her identity, he or she is at the mercy of the ever-revolving door of life. In Hall’s terminology, he describes the subject as *not being coherent*; this creates further emphasis on the fact that in the postmodern conceptualisation of identity Hall does not believe the subject plays a role in the forming, controlling or regulation of identity. Brabazon, Redhead, and Chivaura, (2016) maintain that in Hall’s undertaking in offering a definition of a postmodern identity his understanding was based on the critique of grand narratives. *Fixed* conceptions of race, gender or, class were starting to shift and were longer *solid*. Brabazon et al. (2016) uphold that during the 1980s and 1990s, there seemed to be panic in academia in trying to find a way of trying to contain the volatility in the structure of the traditional grand narratives. Suddenly *everything* that could not be clearly defined in structural terms was defined as being postmodern, which was an error. Theorists such as Foucault and Derrida, who have a strong poststructuralist inflection in their work, were being promoted as being postmodern. ‘Postmodern became this all-encompassing phrase for the current or contemporary’ (Brabazon et al., 2016) at that time. In the case of Hall, this can be observed in the way that he theorised the postmodern identity, it was uncertain, untameable and had no way to be understood. Unlike his other work in post-structuralism, economics, history, politics, Hall’s postmodern interest never really took off nor did it have a large presence in his theorisation. It is for these reasons that I believe that using the postmodern conceptualisation of identity is inappropriate for this study. The last offering of Hall’s three types of identity is that of the sociological subject. In defining the sociological subject, the argument is that the individual knows who they are, but they are also exposed to the social world which might influence how they choose to act in certain situations. Hall (1992) emphasises that it is the relationship between the individual and their social world in which identity is continually formed and modified. However, unlike the postmodern conception, in the sociological subject, the individual has an understanding and control of their true self. In this theorisation of identity, Hall shares the sentiments of sociological interpretations of the self by theorists such as Denzin (1992), Mead (1967, 2003), and Goffman (1959, 1967, 2012), who maintained that the individual has great agency in defining their identity. It is through this agency that individuals have the ability/power to know who they are but also select certain aspects from their social lives that they chose to adopt and incorporate into their everyday or select identities. I feel it is this active conscious decision making on behalf of the individual that makes the social subject the appropriate type of identity to utilise in this chapter. It is the individual African immigrant experience in relation to their social (and mediated) worlds that I am aiming to uncover. Having established what types of identity theorisations there are according to Stuart Hall, the next stage is to define what and how identification works.

Hall (1992) defines identification as a process in which the individual locates themselves within particular discourses or ideologies. For instance, there is a type of identification in nationhood. What does it mean to be Australian? Who is granted

**Fig. 9.2** Stuart hall representation, identity and identification model



Australian citizenship, what is the traditional view of what it is to be Australian? Who is left out of this discourse? These are all points for consideration in an individual's identification process. In this chapter, I am analysing the identification by positioning of African immigrants within the Australian context, most notably in the media and society. Shaw (2013, p. 145) states, 'Identification, like identity, is a process. Both connect through representation and none exists outside a relationship to the other two'. I have produced the diagram below to illustrate how identity, identification and representation work together based on the quote from Shaw (2013) (Fig. 9.2).

In this diagram, the representational process is positioned as the social world; in modern society, people are learning more about each other through mediated forms. As discussed in chapter four: Discourses Surrounding Africans in Australian Media and Society, the media occupy a powerful position in which messages are disseminated on a wider scale to a larger audience and certain ideas become naturalised as they would have in traditional society. In this case representations (to a degree) inform the African immigrant's identity and identification processes, put simply:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Identity} &= \text{representation} + \text{identification: to} \\ \text{Identification} &= \text{representation} + \text{identity formed} \end{aligned}$$

Shaw (2013, p. 145) maintains that all three are part of an ongoing never finished process, but at that moment when all three connect we can talk about their existence, their limitations and their nuances.

### 9.3 Themes of Analysis

In Sect. 9.1, I introduced the four themes that I would be exploring based on the information that I received from the ten interview participants. This section will be drawing on post-structural theory to explore how African immigrants living in Australia perceive their mediated representation as well as how they construct their social identities. I will be utilising excerpts from the interview transcripts to demonstrate what was said by the participants and the theorisation that goes with it. It is important to show these two together as this is a way of demonstrating theory in action as well as presenting the data from the research. As I mentioned before, I will not be analysing each individual's responses but picking significant moments in their testimonies to highlight. My intention is to highlight the thoughts and views that African immigrants have based on their experiences in Australia both socially and mediated.

## 9.4 Dominant Cultural Narratives: How Australians Understand What It Means to Be African?

In the data collected from the oral interviews, there was a strong consensus amongst the respondents that; the *general public* in Australia had limited knowledge of what it was to be African and to come from Africa. The responses from the participants were drawn from personal encounters that they had and, in some cases, they offered possible reasons as to why they thought the Australian public had these views. Other examples were drawn from mediated representations and the dominant themes of Africa and Africans shown in these. In this study, both personal accounts and experience of the participants as depicted in the media play critical roles. The media as a dominant ideological institution informs and to a significant degree controls what information about particular groups is disseminated (Cover, 2012; Kuhn, 2009; Nolan, Farquharson, Politoff, & Marjoribanks, 2011; Nolan, Burgin, Farquharson, & Marjoribanks, 2016; Sohoni & Mendez, 2014).

Rappaport (2000) maintains that lived experiences, as well as mediated representations, are what form dominant cultural narratives:

Overlearned stories communicated through mass media or other large social and cultural institutions and social networks. The dominant cultural narratives are known by most people in a culture. They are often communicated in shorthand, as stereotypes (welfare mother, college student, housing project resident) that conjure up well-practiced images and stories. (Rappaport, 2000, p. 5)

In this instance, the limited knowledge the Australian media provides about Africans forms the basis of what Africans are and what they *cannot* be. The common themes the participants identified as being dominant narratives in what it means to be African were

### 1. Africans as hungry, savages and full of disease

#### **Reginald, Question 4, 8:56**

They have their own specific way like a place where people are starving, going about without any food where there is poverty where they will get sick the moment they land, where umm... you're going to get chased by a wild animal.

#### **Sheila, Question 10, 6:46**

I think they think Africans, we don't, we're not educated (*um*) and I also feel like they, they don't know much about Africa like you know like in Africa when we were studying you know history and geography we, we knew about continents and we knew about how many countries were in continents but I'm usually surprised that they always think it's just about South Africa and the rest, the deserts were you know we just die of hunger. I have been asked very strange questions, I have been told I speak good English did I learn it here?

In these descriptions from the participants, the themes that they point out as being what the perceptions of Africa are could be based on the colonial view of Africa (Czajka, 2005; Fowler, 2007; Gilroy, 1992; Tan, 2016). It is interesting to note in Sheila's response she notes that Africans are perhaps more knowledgeable of the history and geography of the world than Australian nationals. The fact that she highlights that

there is a lot of knowledge about South Africa and not much about anywhere else is significant. The fact that South Africa has the largest white population in Africa in a way makes it the most relatable African country for *general* Australians. Australia and South Africa have a shared history of colonisation and segregation/apartheid of the Indigenous people. Thus, there was comradeship through politics as well as through sports. However, in forming such associations is this simply drawing on the racist colonial ideologies? Hasford (2016, p. 159) draws on Fanon (1967) in his argument of how dominant cultural narratives arise. In his use of Fanon, he noted that

European history books, comic books and literature served to propagate myths about the inherent savagery of blacks and the superiority of whites.

Referring back to Sheila's response, she demonstrates that South Africa is given a privileged position in its representations and cultural narratives. On the other hand, there also tends to be ignorance in the fact that some people do not associate being white and being African.

Hilda, a South African participant who also happened to be white explained that:

**Hilda, Question 9, 6:13**

based on my appearance and the fact that I have a lighter colour skin so they would say to me that 'they didn't realise that there were white people in South Africa and when my family moved there in the 1600s so I really consider myself to be African (*laughter*) just like anyone else umm... but yeah...it's just based on my appearance...and I suppose that's ignorance.

In this scenario, Hilda is provided a privileged position. Surely, a white woman cannot be associated with a continent full of savages, hunger and disease, there is no way she can call that place home. Hilda's response captures the point that I trying to make, that Africanness comes with a particular loading especially if one is black African. In this, arbitrary selections of particular features are used to fetishise and from group narratives of what one ought to be, with race being the chief signifier of this. In the black African participants there seemed to be a constant battle of them trying to justify where they came from and what types of lives they lead, this is demonstrated by the response given by Kunashe:

**Kunashe, Question 9, 6:31**

People always ask um what, what my home was like in Africa, um I think people often have the view that you know... (stammer) certainly having that image of a third world country that ... that they don't always expect that you'd be able to describe the infrastructure that we have. I mean growing up I lived on an acreage with um... quite a substantial sized house, um you know many fam... some family that I had and friends that lived in the area had swimming pools and con... gaming consoles and what not, what not so I suppose that link between umm... you know... what I know Africa or my experience of Africa to be like and what people perceive it to be like is always often wrong. Err other people often ask the education, particularly, as I grew up and started university and stuff like that people ask me often you know, 'what is the education like in Africa?' I mean coming from Zimbabwe, I think it's got, it's one of the highest rates of education in the continent so most of the people that you come across in the street are well educated are quite vocal, quite eloquent in the way in which they speak and are quite knowledgeable about a vast array of things so er that had sort of shocked me that people would think that you know, across the continent you



wouldn't find you know people which high levels of tertiary education erm (tut) and then other things you know people often ask about the day to day life, I think people in Africa have more of a link to umm.. you know the rural side of things, most people come from some type of village or farm and you are able to relate umm... to those types of questions because you can say my family has a farm in this particular rural province but at the same time um people think that's where day to day life is spent where most people at least where I come from actually live in the city in suburban houses and go about work or life in a not too different way than they would in a country like Australia.

In his description of Zimbabwe, there are many similarities to suburban life in Australia. Growing up on an acreage, swimming pools, gaming consoles, tertiary education, these are all things at do not usually get associated with Africa. Had the fact that Kunashe was describing life in Zimbabwe been omitted, his description would suit most of middle-class Australia. So why isn't this version of Africa shown? In cultures that are dominated based on racial or cultural difference omitting the positive aspects make it easier to suit a more sinister narrative that meets the ideological discursive needs. Sinclair, Sidanius, and Levin (1998) note when societies are marked by group-based hierarchies, members of devalued ethnic groups are more likely to see ethnic and national identification as incompatible. This makes it easier to *construct* spaces in which they are permitted, thus making the discourse surrounding them easier to control (Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke, & Roberts, 1978, 2013; Lawrence, 2007; Van Dijk, 2000, 2015).

In the responses provided, they seem to align with the initial responses collected from the previous chapters. In the participants' retelling of some perceptions people hold of them, it reveals the objectification of the discourse surrounding Africans in Australia. This is demonstrated in the way that questions are asked to them. Instead of asking questions to understand the individual for instance, how did you develop an interest in physiotherapy? Or I don't know much about Ghana, could you tell a little bit about what it's like? Instead, according to the responses the participants provided, questions are posed to them to understand the individual in the context of their Africanness/Blackness. This means the individual constantly has to offer their identity in the context of their geographical origins, meaning one cannot exist just a *regular Aussie* but rather must constantly reflect on their life pre-immigration (Selasi & TedGlobal, 2014).

**Rambayi, Question 11, 12:17**

You could live here for 20 years, 50 years those comments are still the same (*um*) there is another guy a Zimbabwean he has been here, he has been here for ... I think for about 30 years or so (*ok*)... he was still being asked those same questions after having stayed here for over 30 years. Its (*sic*) unfortunate he passed away some time last year but in the experiences we're the same. Even after having stayed here for that long. (*um... so do you think...*) there's that stereotyping that stays amongst most Australians here its ehh... just ... but yeah.

It is this constant looking back at one's past life to provide context for their present life that Fanon (2011) argues constantly traps the *black soul* within a particular time and place.

I am not given a second chance. I am overdetermined from the outside. I am a slave not to the 'idea' others have of me, but to my experience. (Fanon, 2011, p. 424)

This experience that Fanon (2011) speaks of an experience that draws upon the colonial and marginalised experience. The African constantly has to carry past atrocities to determine their social positioning. In reference to the responses provided by the participants, the responses they provided were never expected to have a similarity to the Australian way of life (See Kunashe's response above), instead it has the fit the colonial/explorer paradigm. In this regard, the *black soul* must occupy a subordinate position in their response.

In South Africa there are two million whites against almost thirteen million native people, and it has never occurred to a single black to consider himself superior to a member of the white minority. (Fanon, 1967, p. 93)

It is through the colonial placing of ethnic minorities in subordinate positions through literature, representation and discourse that Lawrence (1982, 2004, 2007) claims develop into common sense racist ideologies. These are based on the traditional understandings of colonial empire definitions of nation and belonging 'which explicitly exclude black people' (Lawrence, 1982, p. 48). This is not to say that racist or essentialist ideologies have to be explicitly articulated in order for them to be present. It is within the implicit questioning and presumptions that these ideologies continue to exist.

**Leslie, Question 13, 11:18**

Again its ...it's hard to say because you know you don't really talk about it too much with other people it's kinda one of those things that you try to brush off but um...you do...you do... feel as though there are instances were u... a lot more attention is directed towards you and you ...you do have to be aware that you are ummm... that you do stand out in certain situations and that does affect how you portray yourself, how you talk, how you dress, how you interact with other people.

**Stanley, Question 8, 9:22**

I was like oh no, we have racism here as well but it's not... anyone will come and racist you (*racially attack*) openly, but you can feel it, not everyone but reasonably a population will not ...might overlook you, or look you down or not feel safe with you when you're walking in a car park to your car and then if people see you they just scatter and get into their cars and if someone was just sitting in their car and making a phone call and they see you come or... they quickly pull up the windows and ...I was like it's in the middle of the day and the carpark is full of people so you shouldn't feel threatened but its life.

Leslie and Stanley's testimonies demonstrate the power the black body holds in Australian society, particularly that of the black male. The black male is seen to signify danger, barbarism and untrustworthiness. Again, the examples found in the content analysis conducted in Chap. 3: Discourses Surrounding Africans in Australian Media and Society, provides validation for this. Black males in the media are positioned as dangerous and unstable (Bolt, 2016; Brook & Palin, 2016; Due, 2008; Nunn, 2010; Windle, 2008).

In terms of the female respondents, there was no reporting of perceived threats, instead questions were based more on what the participants deemed to be ignorant questions. Questions of language ability, education attainment and beauty regimes seemed to be more prominent.

**Nancy, Question 10, 9:05**

on my first graduation, when I was graduating with my Masters, a professor in the school was studying my Masters in (um) came up to me and she saw me ... it was actually a he, he saw me with these very nice high shoes, high heels...and he said "Oh those look good on you" "Did you get them here?" and I went "no, I got them from home" and he went "Oh geez, so you have shopping malls? That's you can get something like this, this is just unbelievable." And honestly his mind was looking like it was being blown ... because he was like in so much shock. We are talking about a professor, in the university, so er... this was not a uneducated person at all,...and I remember just feeling 'ew where do you think we get our clothes and our shoes and all these things?' so...it's an ignorant comment that stuck with me because of who it came from, not because it was said to me because you hear that a lot.

**Beullah, Question 13, 5:10**

For example, whether I...where I learnt how to speak English, if it was, do they speak English in Africa ummm... places that I have lived like if I have lived in a hut or.... Just questions like that which what I would say what they have seen on the media and they see people living in stone hut and not a lot of... they don't really show the towns in Africa so ermm... and they ... they would assume that I don't speak English because I am from Africa but ... it's a language that I grew up speaking as well, or that my English is quite good for someone who is from Africa.

As detailed in previous chapters, black African women in Australian media don't occupy dominant positions. Brabazon et al. (2016) argue that promoting the discourse of the non-threatening female would dilute and throw off the persistent discourse of the savage black man.

## 2. Homogenous grouping of all countries into one

Stereotypes provide a comforting sense of group continuity; the ground one in a tradition, which is especially valuable in the fragmented modern world; and they spare one the effort of really dealing with another person, of confronting him in his individual richness and complexity. (Kovel, 1984, p. 212)

The second key theme in dominant cultural narratives was that of homogenous groupings of Africa as one country. The participants believed that most Australians did not seem to know that there were varied cultures, economies and languages within the continent. Rather, skin colour was deemed to be the commonality and tying factor to homogeneity.

Media representations refugees from Africa are often presented as being members of a single community, with no ethnic or linguistic boundaries recognised and nation often standing for 'race'. (Windle, 2008, p. 554)

This picking of an arbitrary feature that ties a ethnic group is what Kovel (1984) deems to be *metaracism*. Kovel (1984) maintains that the traditional form of *dominative racism* has been succeeded by an *aversive racism*. In this, racism can be seen as

no longer being an outward manifestation but instead, it is maintained through a *symbolic* type of racism that is embedded in the *unquestioning unconscious*. In this instance, the ‘common/general’ belief that all Africans are the same is a manifestation of meta-racism.

**Reginald, Question 5, 10:46**

Since I rarely get people asking me about my particular background umm... unless I actually push it on them, um I think they usually just see you as African, they don't really see you Ghanaian or any of that so ...unless, unless you actually become more familiar with them...

They just assume you to be part of the bigger population of Africans in Australia they wouldn't really try to tell you apart from them you asking where you come from or anything like that. So if they see a bunch of umm...like say um...say umm... a bunch of Africans doing something over there they expect you to automatically identify with that or ... in their mind they will just assume you to be part of it so yeah um ...

**Kun Ashe, Question 8, 5:07**

Erm.... I think if you're asking me what they know about Africa, I think many people, if you were to give people a map to pin point where Africa was they'd be able to, I think people necessarily wouldn't know where certain countries are situated umm... (tut) I think people fairly have, for the most part, have a pretty reserved view and what I mean by that is that they.... They feel like they have some idea but because they don't fully know the continent itself they won't really come out with such a hush judgment. At times I think the harsh judgment or the way in which they view things is fairly narrow minded in the sense that, you know...the... the belief of it being a third world continent for the most part um people don't understand the diverse nature of the continent so yeah um...

In the media, there seems to be a prevalent representation of particular types of countries, as previously discussed, it is that of *World Vision* types of Africans (hungry, homeless, uncivilised), crafting, singing women or South African sport. There is not much that exists in-between. As argued in Chap. 3: *Discourses Surrounding Africans in Australian Media and Society*, by limiting the space in which Africans occupy it helps makes their existence more abstract. In their alienation and dehumanisation, it is easier to control their discourse.

Hall (1992) maintains that in the representation of the:

‘Black’ identity, (it) is not that they are culturally, ethnically, linguistically or even physically the same, but they are seen and treated as the same (i.e. non-white other) by the dominant culture. (Hall, 1992, p. 308)

My argument, with the support of participant responses collected in Chaps. 5 and 6 is that the media try to push the one-sided homogenous side of Africans. In so doing, the media control how Africans are perceived in society. By showing Africans as being violent or not being law-abiding citizens this changes and affects how people with no first-hand knowledge of the group come to think and voice their opinions of the group. Take for instance the *Special Broadcasting Cooperation* produced a feature on an African festival held in Sydney (Feng, 2016). This was the eighth annual hosting of the African festival, which aims to bring African culture to Australia. The *Special Broadcasting Cooperation* posted a link to this story on social networking site Facebook and what is interesting to note are the comments left by visitors to the page (Figs. 9.3 and 9.4).



Fig. 9.3 Facebook comments about African festival



Fig. 9.4 Facebook comments about African festival 2

The first comment on the page is from a user who likens the African Festival to the riots that occurred in Melbourne and Sydney between Sudanese and Islander youths (Johnston, 2016). In this instance, in the mind of the author, Sudanese youth form the whole representation of what African culture has to offer. Instead of seeing the cultural festival as a way of celebrating multiculturalism in Australia, it is seen as almost a vigilante recruitment drive.

What is interesting in this user's (User X) comment is the use of language. Language plays a large role in determining how discourse is received. The use of the phrase 'hundreds upon hundreds, more than likely a thousand' makes it seem as though the town is overrun by some type of plague (Fig. 9.5).

Jeffries (2014) in his article notes how political figures use language as a form of social categorisation. Jeffries (2014) presents a direct quote from the U.K. when the former Minister of Defence, Michael Fallon, stated: British towns are being 'swamped' by immigrants and their residents are 'under siege (with) large numbers of migrant workers and people claiming benefits'. The same anti-immigrant sentiments can be observed in Australian politician's discourse of immigrants (Due, 2008; Gale, 2004; Hosking & Hamblin, 2016; O'Doherty & Lecouteur, 2007). If political figures are making unsavoury comments about immigrants, it is not unexpected that they would resonate within media sources. User X also mentions 'we can't get around without seeing at least some of them'. This is an exclusionist comment inherently based in racist ideologies. The fact that User X is categorising visibly different people as being other, this shows that to him as long as you have dark skin you don't belong in Australia. To User X, race is the maker of difference that marks the confliction on what he terms 'everything that Australia was founded for'. In this comment not only is he singling out Africans for not belonging, he is also excluding the Indigenous population. In User X's narrative, Australia is still *Terra nullius*, is solely the property of the Anglo Celtic population. In his comment on often seeing 'large groups' of them, it invokes a sense of danger or dominance of this visibly different group. In their research into the Sudanese population in Australia, Windle (2008) and Nolan, Farquharson, Politoff, and Marjoribanks (2011) maintain that in the description of Sudanese males in the media, their features are often highlighted as being a threat 'African sources are constantly objectified and racialized through such references to build ('skinny' and 'tall') and demeanour ('defiant', 'swaggering')' (Windle, 2008, p. 557). Again this is another way of presenting Africans in an *alien* form in the way that they appear, both visibly and discursively. The comments made by User X, are quite damning but looking at the academic work conducted into African populations there is a definite exclusion of the majority of African groups that did not immigrate to Australia via refugee or asylum seeker visas. Other new and established Africans are excluded from this discourse and instead one type of African group who came via a particular migration route is put as the representor for all Africans. In this, there is a clear imbalance of what is really shown about the vast majority of Africans residing in Australia in mediated forms, social discourse as well as academic writing. In the manifestation of a certain type of African in these three outlets, it does not provide the space for a large number of diverse Africans in Australia to voice their opinions instead, it is limited to just a few. The argument is that with the advent of



Fig. 9.5 Facebook comments about African festival



digital media it has allowed an overturning of dominant ideological institutions to have the upper hand in the dissemination of discourse (Diehl, Weeks, & de Zúñiga, 2015). Instead, more power is placed on individuals, however, in this case, we see that digital social media platforms have also allowed the rise of bigoted thinking and discrimination (Miranda, Young, & Yetgin, 2016). In the online world terms such as *internet trolls* have been coined to define groups of people who go online to cause offence and harass people. In the case of African immigrants particularly those new to Australia, the comment section on media sites have been a new platform for racist commentary. Sheila explains:

**Sheila, Question 14, 11:20**

all of us are human beings you know I would expect that we would... we should be treated the same (*um*) but when there is these superiority complex that yeah these ones are savages and these ones are not and they are people that we work with, we live with it... it's really demoralizing I would say (*um*) so yeah and it got to a point now where I don't usually visit comments especially on those (*chuckle*) network news because especially if it touches on Africans because it always hurts my feelings (*um*) so yeah, I'd say it does impact.

The types of comments that Sheila is discussing are like the one below posted by *User Y*. In this example, User Y does not seem to think that the carjacking that took place is an isolated event that was caused by the six teenagers. Instead to him, the event is a characterisation of all Africans residing in Australia. The racial characterisation does not just end with the homogenisation of Africans as 'thugs', 'criminals' 'robbers' but extends to racist language in his presenting Africans as 'Negroes' (Fig. 9.6).

These savage Negroes have an active campaign of stabbing, bashing and raping the *white* inhabitants of Melbourne. This type of exclusionist and damning discourse can be seen as stemming from discourse that is also found in media reports for example, 'How will people know we are importing danger when we take in people from war zones who have a martial culture, few employable skills, and very different cultural or religious values?' (Bolt, 2016), 'I think it's driven by this deep seated anger. They don't care what impact they have, they're saying "we don't care what you think"'. (Brook & Palin, 2016). If this is the type of discourse that the general Australian public are exposed to through mediated discourse and when they read other people's comments also pushing the damning discourse this can create a one-sided *vacuum* type of understanding of what it is to be African in Australia. In User Y's case, this evidenced from him firm stance on the measure that should not only be taken for Africans but indeed for Muslims as well. 'All African and Muslim immigration needs to stop to restore peace and harmony to this divided nation' this view might be argued is an extremist view that is not shared by every white Australian but the fact that the comment remained on a public page for 13 h until I reported it, goes to show that there was little to no regard paid to the offence that it caused. This is just one example of what kinds of discrimination Africans face in Australia. As one participant put it, Africans really rank lower in the larger scale of race relations in Australia:

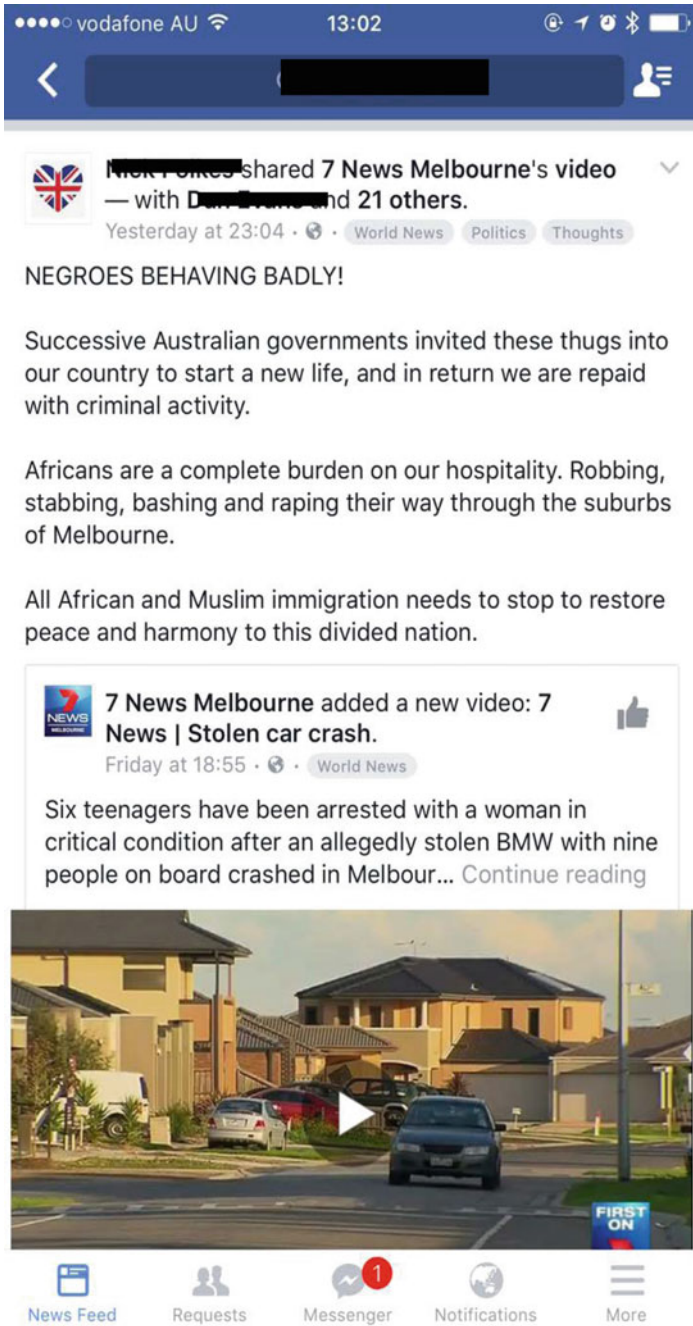


Fig. 9.6 Facebook user comment to 7 News Melbourne Post

**Nancy, Question 16, 21:33**

the history of Australia being a, based on white Australia policy, who deserves to be an Australian, who can be an Australian even the Indigenous Australians themselves, they are people of colour but they were still not considered a Australian for very, very, very, very long time you know? Why because they were not white, because they did not met the criteria of what it does meant to be an Australian... so if they are not able to accept their very own...how am I as am immigrant how should I expect actually to be accepted in this country? So I think there is still a lot of race politics to be had and um... and all those conversations to be had ...er... in fact for a long time, to be considered Australian for Indigenous Australians to be considered Australian, they had to give up their Aboriginality they had to say "Great, now I'm not Aboriginal now I can be Australian" so you see that dichotomy and that binary that you know you're either white or black and you're either Australian white or you're not and I think we still believe in that history a lot even though we have shifted in our attitudes are changing and Australia is become multicultural in very many ways I still think you know, err...we've got a long way to go in terms of race politics and race inclusiveness and ...but first of all it doesn't need to start with me as a black African immigrant because ...I am a visitor in this land, truthfully speaking, it needs to start with their own black people which is the Indigenous community and the day I see that happens is the day that I know I ...as another black person from another continent, I too can be accepted in this space but until then why should I fight for my own space when their own people are still down trodden like that. It doesn't feel like the right war to fight.

This is an extremely powerful and emotive response that really gets to the heart of the matter. As long as there are is unequal treatment of the Indigenous population race relations in Australia will remain strained. Australia unlike other former British colonies such as Canada, New Zealand and the United States, has still not recognised the Indigenous population within their constitution.

When the Australian Constitution was being drafted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were excluded from the discussions concerning the creation of a new nation to be situated on their ancestral lands and territories. The Australian Constitution also expressly discriminated against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Australian Constitution did not – and still does not – make adequate provision for Australia's first peoples.

The Australian Constitution has failed to protect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights as the first peoples of this country. (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2016)

In the detailed and informative comment made by Nancy, it highlights a plausible reason as to why discrimination against ethnic minorities in Australia occurs, but no real action is taken to stamp it out. In this context, it would not be extraordinary for minorities to be presented in subordinate positions or for the creators of the discourse to be made accountable for the messages that they push. With a history spanning 200 years of the unjust treatment of the Indigenous population, it is not hard to see why this is the course charted for Africans living in Australia. Keeping them in identified stereotypical roles is all part and parcel of the Australian history.

## 2. Eternal gratefulness of immigrating to Australia

The final category in which the participants identified as being a dominant cultural narrative for Africans was presenting gratefulness for being in Australia. The participants defined this as them almost having to show gratitude for being *fortunate* enough to reside in Australia. In the study of colonial histories, the conqueror is often seen

as the saviour (Cohen, 1994; Czajka, 2005; Gilroy, 2011). In this regard the ‘native’ or in modern times the immigrant should show his appreciation for the *colonisers* accepting them. In his work, Stuart Hall often maintained that the former colonies had a stake in what the colonial empires had benefited from the natives (Akomfrah, 2013), these views were also echoed through the work of his students (Gilroy, 1990, 1992, 2007; Hall & National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants, 1967; Hall et al., 1978, 2013; Lawrence, 2004, 2007). In these theorisations, particularly in *The Young Englishers* (1967), Hall wanted to articulate the experiences of Caribbean youth growing up in England and the challenges that they felt in being accepted into the social fabric. These types of challenges as exemplified in this chapter still exist for immigrant,s however, there is one striking difference from when Hall was writing in the late 60s. For *The Young Englishers*, Hall was writing about they had immigrated to England with their families in search of better lives and better prospects. With modern-day immigration, it is becoming increasingly common for individuals to immigrate for educational, professional and marital reasons. In some cases, forfeiting more luxurious lives in their home countries.

**Hilda, Question 7, 3:06**

I’ve got a friend from Kenya who came over here and she grew up very umm... very privileged and her dad umm... he’s like a ...a big coffee farmer and he owns quite a lot of businesses but people would come up to her and specifically and say ‘you’re so lucky to be in Australia’ (um) because she’d left Africa and um she’s actually ....

Much luckier in Kenya.

As one participant put it, the constant portrayal of Africa being a third world continent ensures that Australia maintains its dominance and no other contestation can be had.

**Leslie, Question 9, 3:09**

the only exposure that they have is through the news or T.V. programs ... which are not really educating people on modern day Africa it’s basically just the at the ancient culture and the ancient traditions specific to bush people and tribes, things like that and ... umm... and there’s this perception that ummm... we’re like a delicate culture that hasn’t been explored especially from people who have umm... African umm...err... African paintings and sculptures in their house ... So they tend to be interested in what Africa is but... there is still that ignorance behind their questions.

This understanding of Africa based on how colonial narratives perpetuates the dis-course of Africans having to be eternally grateful for being in Australia. In some of the participants’ responses, they articulate that they are fully aware that this narrative exists and take great offence to some of the lines of inquiry that they face.

**Stanley, Question 10, 18:10**

Some still perceive Africa with very high levels of poverty. And they mainly associate ... an African person in Australia as a refugee... and they when they get all... so that they just come here. Irrespective of how offensive the question can be some just comes and asks you ‘so are you here as a refugee?’ And maybe this is in a chat and you’re like what difference would it make you if I was a refugee or if I was a skilled migrant or student? How does that change how you relate to me? ...because whereas I would not go and ask someone ‘oh ...are you on Centrelink?’(A welfare scheme by the Australian Government) because it would be

the same question where I'd meet someone and ask them 'Oh are you on Centrelink?' then they would feel 'why are you concerned with how I make my income?' 'Whether I am on Centrelink, whether I'm independent, whether I'm running a business'

In the response that Stanley provided, one can see that the type of questioning that he received was done in order to categorise him. By asking his immigration status allows the inquirer not only to position him but also to create a way of understanding Stanley. In this regard, immigration status plays a role in the social categorisation process and regardless if you've spent your whole life in Australia, the only way you can be understood in the Australian context is through your *tragic* history. There is very little space to manoeuvre from this fixed ideology (Selasi & TedGlobal, 2014).

**Nancy, Question 12, 12:12:02**

Poor and lazy and diseased and...backward you know? There's ...I'm yet to find anything that is ever portrayed on western media, let alone Australia that is actually not patronising or condescending towards Africa...erm...most of the pictures that will sell, the documentaries that will sell and captivate are the ones with bear chested women, with dead babies suckling a dry breast you know...or you know, poor women walking around without clothes with children, ten children ...all of them with Marasmus or kwashiorkor with their swollen bellies or you know... I see these all the time or just children sitting there with flies everywhere! All over their face. And I always go ... I didn't grow up like this, I grew up poor...but I didn't grow like this, this is not ...this is not... it might be part of the story but it's not the whole story and I think there is so much danger in a single story there ...and I think what is depicted a lot about Africa in western media is the single story about Africa... so it's never told in any other dimension other than the dimension of backward, poor, lazy diseased and its hard as an African to watch that.

The essence of Nancy's comment then is if an African is rejecting this type of representation as being not truthful, to whom then is this representation catered for? It is definitely not targeted for the African population rather it is represented to show power and superiority of the Australian media without fear or questioning or reproach from the subordinate population. In their *gratefulness* for being in Australia, the least they could do is go along with the act. In the case of being in Australia one of that participants maintained that you're damned if you reside in Australia and damned should you say you would like to return to your home country.

**Rambayi, Question 13, 15:05**

"Would you want to go back home?", ... and if you say yes, errr...in fact you know they...they get that feeling that maybe there is something wrong with Australia or something, then you need to explain again, you know? (*yeah no that's, that's*) and er... no its quite frustrating ... in fact they are just a frustrating lot (*chuckle yes*) that's all I can say.

In this, Rambayi notes the impossible presence of being African in Australia. If one is not grateful for the *privilege* of residing here and would rather leave the country in which they are not fully accepted it causes contention. What space then should the *black soul* occupy without causing offence by their visible difference, their differed culture and unAustralianess? These are questions that the participants offer deeper insights into in the next following sections.

## 9.5 How Africans Understand the Media and Society to Perceive Them: Racial Characterisation

Under the terms of racism, the white self was either swollen, as in dominative racism, or pure as in its aversive form, while the black person was less than a person, less than a self: either a concrete body-thing or, as time went on, a nothing. (Kovel, 1984, p. 215)

In the discussion sections in the previous chapters, I have maintained that in the representation of Africanness in Australian media it is often presented as being unanimously black. Indeed, the dominant population of the African is black, however, other races such as Caucasians, Asians, Arab and mixed-race populations that call Africa home. What spaces are they afforded in the representation of Africa? In the Australian context, it seems these other non-black populations seem to be absorbed into their respective *original* ethnic groups. Take for instance the response proved by Hilda a white South African participant.

### Hilda, Question 7, 3:06

Because I'm white South African they sometimes don't believe me that I'm from Africa ...

In the discussion of Africanness in Australian media, the term *African* is exclusive to black Africans. In the previous chapters, I have outlined how the black body, particularly the black male is positioned against the dominant white population. I demonstrated how moral panics were created around the image of the black male body. This was conducted through discourse analysis of Australian media. However, what are the lived experiences of black males in Australia? What racial characteristics are afforded to them and at what cost? In the analysis of the data collected in chapter four, I maintained that examples from extreme case scenarios were being used to justify particular behaviours as being inherently ingrained in what it means to be African. All violence that happened at the hands of Africans was attributed to their warring cultures (Gale, 2004; Gatt, 2011; Nolan et al., 2011, 2016; Nunn, 2010). Potter (1996, p. 187) maintains that the use of 'worse case formulations' is a 'common descriptive practice that involves using extreme points on relevant descriptive practice'. Dobbin (2016) provides the following example:

... left war-torn South Sudan for Australia with his family when he was eight and joined Apex when he was 14, leaving school early and moving out of home a few years later. (Dobbin, 2016)

In the *decoding* of such representations by the public, how do they use them when they are in contact with the African population?

### Kunashe, Question 14, 16:11

One particular example comes to mind where you know, as many young teenagers, sorry young adults you know, we'd gone out had a couple of drinks you know (tut) in erm Kings Cross (*Sydney, NSW*), we visited one nightclub and there were these particular group of Africans ...um...you know, pretty much causing trouble you know, what not, so the ... the, the venue which we were at then decides that every other African in the club err...needs to

get kicked out. Now, my question is if that was any other race would that happen? You know what I mean? Certainly if a Caucasian person is causing trouble in a club then not every other Caucasian person gets kicked out.

In this experience shared by Kunashe, he was guilty not by personal association but rather guilty by racial association. Indeed, if the same incident were to take place involving white Australians the outcome would have been different? Hasford (2016, p. 162) argues that this is a direct consequence of the representation of black people in the media. In the use of heavily 'stereotyped and prescribed' roles that influence:

Societal perceptions and expectations, racial characterisations serve as a primary, though often unintentional or unconscious, motive and subtext for interpersonal interactions.

In the case of Kunashe's experience, it can be argued that the nightclub's response was neither unintentional nor unconscious, it was a clearly calculated measure. In expelling all black people from the nightclub in that instance, it is a clear signification that black = dangerous, black = unwanted and black = threat. For black bodies residing in Australia, this is commonplace, I have faced similar situations of being refused entry, refused service and police suspicion as the result of how another black person acted. In Australia, unlike Great Britain or the United States, this type of activity would not be reported as racial discrimination.

Instead, the benefit of the doubt lies within the offending institution. The burden of proof is placed on the victim instead. An example of this is provided by the Flemington and Kensington Community Legal Centre, in 2015 issued they a report into the alleged victimisation of African youth in Melbourne at the hands of the police (Haile-Michael & Issa, 2015) (Fig. 9.7).

In response to this report the Melbourne Acting Deputy Commissioner Jack Blayney said:

Victoria Police did not believe there was a problem with racialized policing, Victoria Police has completed significant work to ensure we do not racially profile in any form. We have made significant improvements to our culture, policies, training and education since 2013. (David, 2015)

This comment by Acting Deputy Commissioner Blayney is quite disturbing because in his comment he is not even willing to investigate the issue nor is he willing to believe that there is an issue with racial profiling by police targeted at African youth. How then can conservation be had if the people in power refuse to believe that there is targeted prejudice towards particular groups within the community? In acknowledging that racial profiling was occurring it would displace the discursive theory of black communities as sites of social problems (Hall et al., 1978, p. 333; Solomos, 2014, p. 1668). If the police are not willing to accept that black does not equal danger or a threat, what more is a nightclub bouncer going to think. The relations that black males face at the hands of authority figures has been long documented, yet in the Australian context, the issue of race and perceived criminality is still ongoing.

**Leslie, Question 13, 11:18**

Because I simply stick out and even with umm... things like running into the law ... they have that automatic perception ... that you are going to be doing something bad...ummm

## 2 Key findings

### Key findings from our conversations with young people include:

1. Young men of colour have had negative experiences at the hands of the police. These range from serious assaults to constant harassment and ridicule in public;
2. These experiences have resulted in negative mental health outcomes as well as criminalisation for those young people, who expressed feelings of not being welcome in society, anxiety, isolation, paranoia and fear;
3. Other impacts of racialised policing include mistrust by young people of not only police but the system as a whole;
4. Young people felt that institutionalised racism was part of a broader issue of racism within society as a whole and that a holistic review of the criminal justice system was required. They also identified education as being central to reform and cultural change within Victoria police;
5. Young people felt that lack of accountability is a serious issue within the police force, as the complaints mechanisms are all in a closed loop within the criminal justice systems machinery.

**Fig. 9.7** Key Findings by Flemington and Kensington Community Legal Centre

and the way that they interact with you erm... is mostly negative most of the time erm... and also things like when you're walking through the err...

Ticket machines at train stations you'll be asked to present your ticket despite numerous amounts of people err... walking through the ticketing machines at the same time ... which ... shows you that um ... how you are a targeted demographic for being... for ... for doing something negative.

Comments from Acting Deputy Commissioner Jack Blayney come 2 years after a settlement was made between six African men and Victoria police. The police had been found guilty of an 'arbitrary' stop and search campaign of African males.

Racial profiling by police meant individuals were targeted on the basis of the supposed criminal propensity of an entire racial or ethnic group, rather than for any legitimate policing reason. (Seidel & Hopkins, 2013)

To date, the case of the six Melbournian men is the only case that has been won by African Australians reporting discrimination. As racism is often hard to prove it goes on undetected by the larger majority of the population who do not experience it. It is not just with officials that *black souls* face challenges of being perceived as a threat. The research participants identified racial characterisation as a problem in



professional settings. It has become commonplace in countries such as Australia, Great Britain, The United States and Canada for qualifications obtained outside of those countries to be disregarded. In speaking to some of the older participants who had a professional career before relocating to Australia expressed they were faced with accepting jobs below their qualification levels or having to redo their graduate qualification to satisfy the Australian employer. This type of discrimination might not present itself as a racist action, however Gilroy (1990, 1992, p. 87) argues that black people:

Increasingly face a racism which avoids being recognised as such because it is able to line up ‘race’ with nationhood, patriotism and nationalism...it constructs and defends an image of national culture – homogenous in its whiteness yet precarious and perpetually vulnerable to attack from enemies form within and without.

In comments and ideologies about maintaining national standards, protecting Australian jobs and preserving Australian culture, certain assumptions are made that exclude people who do not fit a certain description. This exclusion predominantly based on people who do not fit into the Anglo Celtic image of Australian culture, this action also excludes the Indigenous population of Australia. This type of racism marks a notable shift from what Hall et al. (1978, 2013) argued about racism in *Policing The Crisis*. In the responses that Hall et al. recorded from their interview participants, racism was overt, one participant shared how he had been treated at a new job ‘You don’t mind if we call you a black bastard or a wog or a nigger or anything because it’s entirely a joke’ (Hall et al., 1978). Racism has morphed into a more *palatable* form which one of the reasons that it is becoming hard to prove a racial provocation. With the raise of political discourse from people such as Donald Trump, Peter Dutton, Pauline Hanson, inflammatory discourse is being labelled as patriotism or national pride. Hence, the provokers can be shielded from attack by the guise. This is not to say *traditional* forms of racism completely go away, the participants noted that issues of race also manifest in the workplace.

#### **Rambayi, Question 17 & 18, 19:49–22:21**

There is one job I applied for, they... they wanted a workshop manager, I was the most experienced guy in the, in that workshop (*um*) and they actually told me in my face to say “no we can’t give you this position now because you’re black (*gasp*) and most of our customers right now if they see you being a manager here they ... we might lose business” (*um*). So we managed to get someone from ... who has been... who has the workshop experience ... I mean who has been a manager already to come and take over (*um*) so I still had to go back on the bench and start working (*um*) you see.

18. 20:59 *and this was said irregardless of the policy of non...*

Yes... yes non-discrimination and all that no. because remember you’re the only one in the, in the workshop and remember you’ve got a family and you’ve got to put food on the table (*um*) so there are times when you’re just have to put up with all that crap for you to survive then all you need to do is “say no I’m just here to do my job” and nothing else, I don’t need to worry myself about all the politics of the day and it actually helped me quite a lot because that’s, that’s when I actually started to... to do my studies because I know.. I’m not gonna be ... for as long as I’m in this industry I’m not... there’s no way in going to earn myself a position ... a supervisory position.

In this powerful testimony by Rambayi, he provides an example of how his race stopped him for attaining a promotion in his workplace.

no we can't give you this position now because you're black (*gasp*) and most of our customers right now if they see you being a manager here they ... we might lose business.

In this instance, race is seen as an offensive feature, one in which limits him from attaining a position for which he was qualified. Second, race is seen a deterrent. His skin colour alone is enough to dissuade patrons from coming to the business. For these words to be articulated by someone, what would their knowledge of the black race be? In this instance, we can see that the person who said this to Rambayi cannot be a person who thinks all races are equal or places any value on the *black soul*. Rambayi notes that the reporting of racism in the workplace is difficult due to the fact that there are low numbers of ethnic personnel. In this, he is saying it becomes your word against them. In an environment where there is a lot of comradery this can be difficult. In Rambayi's case, he resigns to the fact that if he complains he is most likely to be out of a job:

Remember you're the only one in the, in the workshop and remember you've got a family and you've got to put food on the table (*um*) so there are times when you're just have to put up with all that crap for you to survive then all you need to do is "say no I'm just here to do my job".

The issue of putting up with discrimination; in order to retain employment, is a subject that has gaining some traction in ethnic studies, particularly with the influx of migrant labour (Hasford, 2016; Herbert et al., 2008; Moore, 2008). Despite this effort, it seems some immigrants are willing to *accept* discrimination based on race in order to retain their positions. This places more power in the dominant group, in their knowing that often new immigrants will not report or challenge workplace harassment and discrimination (Abdelkerim & Grace, 2012).

#### **Stanley, Question 9, 12:12**

Where I work some residents are really quite racist and they...as soon as you walk in some look up and say 'oh no! Get out of my room' and then someone else goes in and they don't say the same thing. They argue from work that if a resident is racist they can take action, but I have really not seen any action taken to anyone, ...despite some residents being quite racist, it's probably pushed more on the dementia side. If the dementia is to a darker black person then you might think that's a cognitive dementia because if (*giggle*) ...if its dementia in general then this person should be quite confused chasing everyone and affecting everyone but when he is ... they call him racist names and then some staff can use that as an advantage to make sure that its passed on ...so they like make sure that that this resident gets more agitated, agitated and keeps saying 'oh look you have to help her' ... rather than taken the initiative if this person doesn't like this person because he is black then lets rotate the jobs, you go do that person and I do this ...but if they keep insisting then you can clearly tell like they are encouraging it rather than come and tell this person 'it's alright I'll fix it', it makes the work easier. But...and especially because I've being a new migrant I was still new to the job I didn't know.

In Stanley's case, it can become an in-joke with other staff members to send unknowing ethnic staff to racist patients. In this instance, technically the staff members are not

being racist, but they are encouraging the racist abuse of staff members by patients. In this example, it is clear that the value placed on *black souls* is extremely low. No consideration is taken into account as to how this type of behaviour impacts and affects the *black soul's* quality of life as well as levels of acceptance in Australia. The participants identified racial prejudice taking place in public areas. Reginald recounted an incident he had on a Sydney suburban train whereby a Sudanese family left a disposable spoon on the seat that was later picked up by a white child and the following is what Reginald recalls the father of the child saying:

**Reginald, Question 11 & 12, 20:57**

He said “hey! Put that down!” umm... “Put that down! Don’t touch it! Don’t put it in your mouth! Do you...do you know like that some of these people even come from places where they don’t even have toilet paper?” so that’s what he says (chuckle) I was sitting at the back there and I kind of felt a bit nervous because umm... in a sense he was doing the right thing by telling his child not to put a spoon someone has used into ... into... not to play with it, but the way he actually you know like formulated it was quite was you know, was interesting. You know what I mean?

12. 22:45 Yes

It was very interesting because he didn’t know where that man comes from or he didn’t even know how he grew up because even if someone is living in Sudan, there is people who live much better in Sudan than in Australia right? And there different sections of that society and just to assume that you know um...you know that that man comes from a place where they don’t have toilet paper is... is you know, it could tell you... it just goes a long way to tell you how the person views Africans in general, or that... those people in general.

The fact that to this man on the train, black = places with no toilet paper, clearly shows a disregard that any type of civilised life can occur in Africa or in an African person’s nature. Quite rightly as Reginald mentions this gives you a view of how in the individual’s mind reasons Africans live. The point I have been trying to make in the examples that I have provided in this section is, often the side of racial vilification and abuse is rarely reported or discussed. In some of these experiences, it was the first time that the participants had shared them with anyone. The reason being they happen on a regular basis that you start to lose tally. The other reason is that if you have no contact with people of your own race it is often difficult for someone without that experience to relate or know what it is like to be discriminated against. Other forms of discrimination such as sexism, disability, religious persecution, cut across different races and across different sections of society, however with targeted racism it often tends to be an individual experience predominantly shared within one’s racial group (Hopkins, 2010; Mainsah, 2009; McIntosh, 2015; Tormala & Deaux, 2006).

## **9.6 Values Placed on Culture, Race and Ethnicity: Situating Oneself Within the Discourse**

Africans in Australia was first recorded as a statistically significant population in Australia in 1996 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008; Hugo, 2009). 22 years on the participants did not feel as though there had been an effort to incorporate Africans and *Africanness* into *multicultural* Australia.

**Hilda, Question 17, 15:11**

I still get the feeling that when... people celebrate Africa they expect people to sing and to dance and to cook food (*um*) when that's not always that's all to Africa or whatever a specific country. I think there's more to Africa and that's also the way that we get represented in the media is 'come along there's going to be a drumming workshop' (*oh yeah*) or you're gonna dance and sing and they are gonna dress up for you (*yes...*) I do believe there's heaps more.

In this extract, Hilda argues that African culture seems to be a *packaged commodity* with cherry picked events that intrigue and fascinate non-Africans. In this instance, this view is similar to those presented about Indigenous culture in Australia where singing, dancing and crafts are the dominant representations which do not leave room for anything else (Fredericks, 2010; Huggins, 1998; Moreton-Robinson, 2000). By only selecting these types of activities that show African culture as tribal and ancient as the dominant representation, this is the image that sticks in people's minds and then come to associate with this image (Tan, 2016).

Participants noted that Africans were amongst the top contributors in the Australian economy:

**Ignatius, Question 13, 13:18**

... I really feel that the media can portray us in a better light ...um even celebrate what we... Our contributions towards the Australian economy for example because the other day... whilst there are also some positives because the other day I was reading the newspaper where they were actually saying Zimbabwe is the ... the income for migrants from Zimbabwe is the highest in Australia (*umm*) than migrants from U.K which to me was quite appealing and also obviously made me feel good knowing that we're at least recognised within the economy in a positive light um and also we I... I guess we are apart from contributing in the workforce but also contributing within the community as well.

This is the report that Ignatius was referring to

A new Australian Bureau of Statistics report says that humanitarian migrants are the most entrepreneurial of all arrivals, with UK and South African-born skilled arrivals having the highest median incomes at nearly \$56,000.

Others with high average employee incomes included the skilled Zimbabwe-born (\$53,295) and Philippines-born with nearly \$50,000. (Masanauskas, 2015)

For people from South Africa and Zimbabwe, this is an extremely positive article, this highlights that Africans are not just in Australia for handouts but they are significantly making a difference to the Australian economy. Some of the participants maintained that the reason positive representations of Africans were infrequent was because they did not generate revenue for the Australian media companies.

**Leslie, Question 12, 8:49**

there really isn't a need for the media to provide a ummm... positive portrayal of Africa in the media ummm... There aren't going to be generating much public interest and revenue from it ummm...and because of this when they do portray Africa in the media it is always headlined which most of the time isn't something good.

Some participants' identified that there was a hierarchy in the representation of tragic events. Certainly, the images of dying, malnourished, diseased children were

the dominant ones but when it came to acts of terrorism or kidnapping there wasn't great media coverage. Instead, the events were treated as being minor:

**Hilda, Question 11, 8:04**

When there is a big story in the news for example when the girls go kidnapped (*by Bako Haram in Nigeria*) (*um*) the kidnapper was ... it was news for a while but not really full on but if that had happened in Australia (*yes*) it... it would have been MASSIVE and if it had happened in America it's also would have been massive here in Australia, but the fact that it happened in Africa I just think that they just don't care about it (*um*) that much it's a ... it's a bit far removed (*it is*) from their reality (*yeah*).

**Stanley, Question 12, 25:59**

Whether it's a terrorism activity, they might comment about terrorism ...but not the specific location (*ok*) like what happened at France...became such a big thing, the terrorism in France. And while... not very long we had another terrorism in Kenya where lots of university students were killed and the coverage of the two instances was way too different (*um*) I felt that those are still lives at were lost and the same evil minded people who caused terrorism are the same ...people who attacked Paris...because Paris is of high profile (*yeah*) its gets a big coverage.

In these participants' responses, they felt that the media representation of certain tragic events in Africa were not put as being important. There was a feeling that Africans lives were a bit *less* or inadequate, as compared to French, Belgian or American lives. The value or importance placed on certain lives is evident; this is the same type of response that is happening in countries such as Yemen, Syria and the Gaza strip. The common tying factor in all of these cases is that the people involved are from an ethnic background. This type of response is not new to ethnic groups, it has been ongoing since colonial times (Du Bois, 2014; Fanon, 1967; Hochschild, 1999) and violence and trauma were attributed to the savage nature of the natives.

## 9.7 Questions of Identity Performance and Xenophobia

Hall (1992, 1996, 1997) maintains that identity was not fixed but rather in flux. It was in the negotiation of cultural meaning and how that meaning was put to use that would an individual's identity emerge. In this theorisation of how identity emerges, Hall does not offer an explanation of what processes take place within the being. Instead, the identity formation process seems to be an external process. In this presentation Hall's explanation seems to revert back to his Gramsci inspired CCCS work in which the individual was at the mercy of the external institutions. The media, government, and other ideological institutions control and define identities. On the other hand, as discussed earlier in the chapter, his shift to the Open University as Professor of Sociology, one would have expected his ideas on identity to have more of a sociological inference. In a way they did, Hall began to draw more on how the individual acquired materials to create an identity. Hall maintained that one needs 'material and symbolic resources to sustain it' (Hall, 1996, pp. 2–3). Apart from offering that these symbolic resources are derived from the culture one lives

in through the process of identification, he does not expand on how these symbolic materials are regulated and put to use by the individual. In this analysis of identity, the individual remains in the object position and does not have any control. In the field of social psychology or sociology, the study of the self in relation to greater society is of great importance. 'The self can be thought of as a control mechanism through which the individual and the social world intersect'. (Elliott, 2011, p. 24). It is through this intersection of interaction and interpersonal relationships that identity is formed. Sociologists such as Rousseau and Cooley (2002) and Mead (1967, 2003) who are celebrated as the founding fathers of identity theorisation, offered conceptualisations on what identity was and how it is formed and put to use by the individual. In Cooley's work, this theorisation of identity was conceptualised as the *Looking Glass Self* (2002) and Mead termed his theorisation the *Generalized Other* (1967, 2003). In their arguments, they maintained that an individual needed to understand the symbolic meanings from the culture around them in order to form an identity. The organised community or social group which gives to the individual his unity of self may be called the '*generalized other*'. The attitude of the generalised other is the attitude of the whole community (Mead, 2003, p. 36).

The looking-glass self represents a bridge that overcomes the dualism between each person's sense of interaction. "'society' and 'individuals' do not denote separable phenomena but are simply collective and distributive aspects of the same thing." (Rousseau & Cooley, 2002, p. 86)

In these definitions by Mead and Cooley of how one obtains an identity, much like Stuart Hall, the individual has no control over their own identity. Instead, external stimuli are the chief influencer of how one comes to know and act. Again, this reinforces the analysis of the individuals as passive objects in their own lives. Cooley and Mead are more commonly known as symbolic interactionists due to the fact like Stuart Hall they placed a great emphasis on the use of language as a symbol in the study of interaction. In the study of African immigrants, the undertakings of identity offered by Hall, Cooley and Mead do not offer the level of reflexivity within the self that put the individual in *conscious* control of their actions and emotions. However, in the work of another symbolic interactionist, Erving Goffman, he presents a theorisation on the individual as an active participant in the regulation of their identity. Goffman (1959, 2012) contended that the individual has more agency over their identity. He sought to analyse how the individual formulated ways to present their *self* or in post-structural speak their identity. His main aim was to reveal how in varied instances and situations individuals devised ways of presenting or *representing* different aspects of their identity. Goffman (1959, 2012) used the theatre setting as an example of presenting ways in which people regulate their identity/ies. According to Goffman identity was akin to a theatre performance whereby like actors on a stage, individuals reveal certain aspects of their identities for intended audiences. Thus, in the *performance* of identity the individual occupies the active role and is conscious of which *self* they which to present to their audience. This, therefore, presents itself as a type of identity control, in which certain elements are hidden and revealed in varied circumstances, to achieve specific goals. This type of identity regulation was observed in the interview participant's responses.

**Ignatius, Question 18, 21:42**

Sometimes I would really try hard err... to try and fit in and to try and obviously speak and try to engage but umm... I really found it very difficult and umm...and even the accent I tried too hard to change the accent to thinking ah maybe my accent is too raw.

In this excerpt from the interview with Ignatius, he was acting in a way that he thought his audience would have wanted him to act.

In seeking to present a self-image that is acceptable within any given interactive framework, individuals must necessarily come to make certain distinctions between what Goffman call 'front' and 'back' regions. (Elliott, 2011, p. 33)

In Ignatius' comments, this could be seen as him presenting his front region to the people that he was interacting with. This is the version of himself that he imagined the Australian public would want to see and demand of him. In this aspect, Ignatius is still the actor on the stage but chooses to only show a certain part of him that is influenced by society, he lives in even when he knows that this is an act. This example shows how the identity theories by Rousseau and Cooley (2002), Mead (1967, 2003), and Hall (1996, 1997) fall short. In their theorisation of identity, the story ends where Ignatius performs the part that is informed by discourse and the culture he lives in. In Mead, Cooley and Hall's conceptualisation of identity, there is no other space in which the identity of the individual can exist. This is clearly not the case with Ignatius, because even though he might not be aware of Goffman's theories he is consciously putting them into action. In his mind, he knew he was carefully planning a performance for an audience, but in his back region, he knew that was not really who he was.

**Ignatius, Question 18, 21:42**

I felt umm... a bit disappointed in I would say, is when I came here my inclination was trying to fit in.

In review of his performance of trying to fit into Australian society, Ignatius at some stage realised that the behaviour that he was trying to perform did not help him achieve his goals.

For identity performance to occur, one must be visible to a psychologically present audience. Like actors on a stage, people only perform their identities when they believe someone else will be watching. (Wiley & Deaux, 2011, p. 57)

Instead his suppression of certain behaviours only further alienated him. Thus, in this case, it is clear that identity is not singular it is continually morphing to suit specific needs. Hall (1996, p. 14) upholds that people 'are in a constant agonistic process of struggling with, resisting, negotiating and accommodating, the normative or regulative rules' in which they strategically regulate their identities.

Some of the participants noted that they consciously controlled their identities in certain instances; one of these places being the workplace. In his work on experiences of young black Canadians in the workplace, Hasford (2016, p. 164) noted that his participants had heightened awareness of race. In doing so there was increased sensitivity to racism but also great pressure to perform. Hasford (2016) termed this

phenomenon 'Playing Alone' whereby the participant might be the only black person in the company. My participants also noted these experiences of sensitivities to race in the workplace.

**Leslie, Question 13, 11:18**

it's ...it's hard to say because you know you don't really talk about it too much with other people it's kinda one of those things that you try to brush off but um...you do...you do... feel as though there are instances were u ... A lot more attention is directed towards you and you ...you do have to be aware that you are ummm.. that you do stand out in certain situations and that does affect how you portray yourself, how you talk, how you dress, how you interact with other people...errmmm... which can work in your favour and it can't in some instances ermm... like for example my most recent place of employment ... I. I...I had this role the same as a number of people but err... attention was constantly drawn towards me and what I was doing....for what I believe was because...because I simply stick out.

It is important to note that Leslie states that these feelings of heightened racial awareness are not something that you freely talk about. Instead for the large part, they are harboured within the individual's conscience. In his performance of his identity in the workplace, his 'front region' is carefully planned out.

How you talk, how you dress, how you interact with other people.

Yet still, despite all this effort, he does not feel as though he fits into the environment. After performing all the desired behaviours, race is still the final frontier. This is evidenced in Leslie's response to the question 'Do you believe this has caused you to conduct yourself in a particular way to different people or different social settings?'

**Leslie, Question 14-16, 13:50**

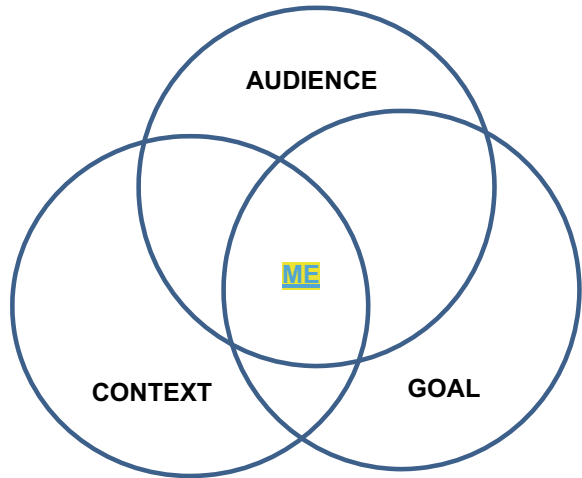
it's much different for .....errr...an African or someone of a different race to errmm... to walk into a room from full of Caucasians as opposed to a Caucasian walking into a room of Caucasians ... and for me it's quite interesting because I have grown up in Australia so immediately when I open my mouth and I begin to talk, people are always surprised because I ...I hold a strong Australian accent umm....also like I was saying before you kinda get used to it then you...you do get used to it and you...you umm you learn to just be yourself but you do have to be mindful of the fact that sometimes you might be you know talking to people who immediately act in their body language and even in the way they speak, or the questions that they ask that... that you know that they might be more umm... a bit more hesitant to talk to you or to interact with you in a social setting ...despite being in the same group of friends.

In this commentary, Leslie identifies race as being the definer of his identity. Everything else is secondary to that; the fact that he has grown up in Australia is somehow regarded to be out of context. Not only does the *black soul* have to learn the social behaviours to *fit in*, they also have to learn to be passive when other races glee over their 'perfect English' or 'good manners' as though they ought to be foreign to the *black soul*.

In some of the instances with the participants, it felt as though some of their experiences had been buried within their conscious. Sharing them was something reserved for an insider of the ethnic and cultural group. However, they felt being part of this research project could see changes being made in the way Africans are perceived in Australian society.



**Fig. 9.8** Audience, context and goal model (Brabazon, 2011)



**Sheila, Question 18, 16:12**

I think (sneeze) I think your research topic it's going to expose ...um I think the general public (*um*) to African maybe I feel like we are generally misunderstood so by doing this research it's going to educate them persons that we're not really as bad as you think we are and ultimately we are just mortals just like the rest of them just a different colour of skin really yeah... because when you look at a normal crowd of anything there is always the good, the average, the bad whether it's in Australia or Africa or Asia you know? (*yes*) so I find that it's going to ... I think it's going to play a role in educating people about perception of Africans.

**Rambayi, Question 30, 32:00**

I think it could lead to a lot of changes anyway, I mean if it gets to the right people and (*um*) if it gets to the right people in power.

As a researcher who belongs to the cultural and some of the participants' ethnic group, it provides the space in which I share part of the participants' experiences. Some of their concerns are also mine, some the prejudices that they have gone through, I have also gone through, and the changes they want made are of paramount importance to me. In this instance as a researcher, I occupy a shared space with the participants (Fig. 9.8).

Both the participants and I live in the highlighted section of the Venn diagram by Brabazon (2011). In its application in her work, she uses it to highlight the shared information between the audience, the context in which the information is delivered and the goals or aims of that information. In the Venn diagram, the intended audience is the *general* Australian public, the context of the information is the lived everyday lives of African immigrants in Australia—including myself by virtue of ethnic background. The goal is to get the participants/our shared experiences out to the *general* Australian public<sup>1</sup> about what it is like to be an African living in Australia.

<sup>1</sup>In my use of the term *general public* this is a term developed for the wording of the survey questionnaire. In my use of general public, I am taking it to mean the dominant Australian population.

Thus, occupying the same space as the researched group but also being a researcher of this group presents a unique and valuable commonality within the study. Never before has the first hand, in-depth lived experiences of African immigrants living in Australia as compared to their mediated representations been captured in academic writing (with the exception of (Baak, 2011) who briefly mentioned media In Chap. 3, I argued that most representations of Africans in Australian tend to be that of the Sudanese population. Particularly that of Sudanese men involved in antisocial or criminal activity, this was a point that was also picked up by the interview participants. In their responses, there was a tendency to want to disassociate themselves with the Sudanese community.

**Reginald, Question 7, 12:18**

... they see a bunch of Sudanese and they think you are...and you have never been there before ... they maybe you're friends but you don't have the same experience as they have ... you don't speak the same language as they have ... as...as they do.

**Kunashe, Question 14, 16:11**

There was a story in the media where a group of Sudanese youth got into a fight with Australian Navy seamen who were not ...erm...leave from a ship that had docked into um Sydney harbor and you know the media had shown footage of these Sudanese people fighting these youth, then the following Saturday we had then um... gone out for my friend's birthday and it was quite difficult entering some of the venues.

**Ignatius, Question 12, 10:07**

Sometimes I've been asked several times umm...how I mean ... 'you must ... you must be lucky to be here?' ... those kinds of questions or maybe asking about 'Are you from Sudan?' just by default I guess, trying to link me probably to the pathway of coming here as a refugee.

From the examples above, there seems to be a negative connotation associated with being Sudanese. In this, it is evident that the media is not the only place where these sentiments are found. From the participants wanting to prove that they were not Sudanese or that they did not come through humanitarian visas, this could be seen as a form of xenophobia. Xenophobia can be understood as hatred or prejudgment of people from other countries (Kuhn, 2009). This type of prejudice is different from racism because it is not bound by race rather it is driven by geography.

My aim for this research was to find participants from all walks of life in order to have a balanced opinion on their lived realities. In the responses compiled from chapter six: Surveying the Demographic, six of the respondents identified as being from Sudan/South Sudan, however, all six did not wish to be contacted for the oral history interview. The input from the Sudanese community would have been extremely beneficial in understanding how they perceive themselves as compared to

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In Australia, the dominant population is Caucasian, by stating that this would limit the analysis to the Anglo and Celtic groups of Caucasian and English speaking groups. Instead by using the term general public, I am aware that the dominant population is Caucasian, however, other variations of the Caucasian ethnicity as well as other minority groups are also included in this discourse. By using the term general public in the survey questionnaire it made the definition clear and understandable to the participants that were responding to the questions and limited subject-specific jargon. Another term that was used in the past was *masses*, however, this term tends to rarefy and create groupings within society that share uniform qualities.

how they are represented. Second, what lasting implications the representations had on their nationality as well as in responses when they disclosed their background. This aspect of the research will remain unknown at this stage however in saying that most of the research that has been conducted in Australia about Africans has focused on the Sudanese population (Baak, 2011; Due, 2008; Gatt, 2011; Hatoss & Huijser, 2010; Hatoss & Sheely, 2008; Nolan et al., 2011, 2016; Nunn, 2010; Warriner, 2007). From the responses collected in these studies, mediated representations have severely affected how the general Australian population has treated the Sudanese. The aim of this chapter has been to provide a space for African immigrants to have a voice and share their experiences of their lived realities in Australia. I feel I have been successful in collecting 10 detailed oral history interviews that offer a glimpse into that. This is new and never before done research that can be built upon to provide better awareness and knowledge of the cultural and ethnic group.

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## Chapter 10

# Conclusion: After the Dust Settles



**Abstract** This study laid a foundation in the study of the gap between mediated representations of Africans and their actual lived realities. It has been my aim to highlight that the African population in Australia are not merely a passive group, who do not notice the injustices done to them through ideological dominance. Just because they are not presented as empowered subjects in mediated representations does not mean that they do not note nor feel that they are not a valued ethnic and cultural group in Australian society. In saying so the argument remains, is the media the best locus to obtain a rendering of society? Granted the media has its flaws, however, it has been regarded as the mirror of society (Cottle in *Ethnic minorities & the media: changing cultural boundaries*. McGraw-Hill International, New York, 2000; Durham in *Crit Stud Media Commun* 21(2):140–161, 2004; Jakubowicz and Seneviratne in *Ethnic conflict and the Australian media*, 1996. Retrieved from [http://www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au/doc/jakubowicz\\_3.pdf](http://www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au/doc/jakubowicz_3.pdf); Jeffres in *Commun Res* 27(4):496–535, 2000; Mainsah in *Nord Rev* 30(1):83–94, 2009; Rasinger in *Media Cult Soc* 32(6):1021–1030, 2010; Trebbe and Schoenhagen in *J Int Migr Integr* 12(4):411–428, 2011). For this study, the media was a key starting point because this is one of the dominant platforms in which Africans feature. Other avenues I could have pursued were the representation of Africans in the economy of Australia, professional capacities or even consumerism. These are all viable areas of research that have not been explored. However, in my academic capabilities, I feel I might not have done them justice. The study of media and ethnic groups has a long research tradition. However, I have argued in the Australian context the data on how African immigrants are portrayed or how they use the media is largely unknown. Since 1996, (22 years ago) when Africans became a statistically recognised population (Australian Bureau of Statistics in *Census 2006—people born in Africa*, 2008. Retrieved from Canberra: <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/3416.0Main+Features32008#Top>; Hugo in *Migration between Africa and Australia: A demographic perspective*. Paper for Australian Human Rights Commission, 2009. Retrieved from <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/african-australians-project-migration-between-africa-and-australia-demographic>) research into the group has been sparse. This book has been an explorative



investigation into the relationship between African immigrants and the media. The key extraction from this book is the value given to certain lives over others, through the way that they are discussed, perceived and esteemed socially.

**Keywords** Cultural studies · Africans · Australia · Critical discourse analysis · Meaning-making · Snapshot survey · Oral history · Common knowledge · Representations

## 10.1 Concluding Summary

In this book, I have provided original research into how dominant mediated representations of Africans in Australia differ from the lived realities of this ethnic and cultural group. This study has demonstrated how the use of Cultural Studies theories and approaches, investigating race, social positioning and perception are as important now as when the field was first founded. There is a heavy inflection of Stuart Hall's theories in this book starting from his earliest work (Hall, 1979, 1987, 1990, 1992, 1997a, c, 1999; Hall & Jefferson, 1993), right up to some of his final interviews (Alexander, 2009; Connell, 2014; Grossberg, 2007; Hall, 2013; Jhally, 2015; Solomos, 2014). I have argued how Hall's research was groundbreaking in the study of the media and its relations with society. In his pioneering of the field of Cultural Studies, Hall sought to bring ideological institutions into account in ways in which they maintained and circulated power in society (Hall, 1979, 1980, 1992, 2002; Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke, & Roberts, 1978, 2013; Hall et al., 1967). With particular emphasis on how certain power relations and privileges made to seem normal for particular groups (Hall, 1990, 1992, 1996a, 1997a, b, 2000; Hall & National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants, 1967). His focus on how these themes affected ethnic minority groups and their understanding of belonging and empowerment is what made Hall's theorisations *forever immortal*. The use of Cultural Study theories from 20 or more years ago may seem problematic. However, it is through a contemporary application that makes them relevant and appropriate. The utilisation of Cultural Studies to capture *new social and ethnic phenomena* makes it a powerful tool of investigation. The cultural studies tradition is rooted in investigating how specific group's lived experience exist within particular discourses and social contexts. This allows a Cultural Study to be investigated through numerous research methods and methodologies that best capture this *experience*. As exemplified in this book, I have selected a range of methods that I believe better *capture* the experiences of Africans living in Australia in the moments that they allowed me to share with them. On this basis that I feel Cultural Studies allows for the exploration of methods that seek to identify, address and contextualise social issues.

To conclude this book, I want to hone in on the three themes that have been the anchoring points of my research starting with.

## 10.2 Critical Discourse Analysis: Analysing How Meanings are Fixed

These sections of the book sought to provide how Africans in Australia were perceived discursively. My main motivation for using discourse analysis as a research method was not that a discursive study on Africans in Australia had not been conducted before. Instead in my use of this research method I wanted to have a blank canvas, this meaning, I captured how Africans had been represented over the course of a 12-month period. By conducting a study with no topic limits or specific criteria I wanted to highlight the types of discourse that Africans featured in in Australian media over this period. Previous discursive research into Africans living in Australia, I argued had been conducted for a specific subject, refugee intake fears (Due, 2008; Gale, 2004; Windle, 2008), Sudanese lack of *assimilation* (Gatt, 2011; Nolan, Burgin, Farquharson, Marjoribanks, 2016; Nolan et al., 2011; Nunn, 2010). This type of analysis did not give the full scope of African representations and cut out 99% of the Africans (based on the over-representation of the Sudanese/South Sudanese). Previous data did not provide a suitable corpus in which a fair judgement could be made on how Africans were perceived by Australian ideological institutions or the general public. In my study of media articles over a 12-month period (26 May 2015–2016) my objectives were twofold. First, I established a data criterion which was not bound by specific themes of research; instead, it sought the representation of *all* Africans in Australian media. Second and perhaps most importantly this data was collected during the period of the researcher recruiting research participants. This meant it would be likely that the participants would have been exposed to some of the media articles and could demonstrate how they captured Africanness within them.

In these sections, I demonstrated that language has a *fixing* power in its ability to afford particular groups inclusive and exclusive positions. In the corpus collected there was a profound negative representation of Africans in Australian media, specifically regarding black males. Black males saturated the media reports and when they featured there was a tendency to emphasise the violent and undesirable nature of the ethnic and cultural group. I argued that it is through the oversaturation of media reports with this discourse that certain views become *to be expected behaviours*. This does not display that it is only a small population of Africans that are involved in anti-social or *unAustralian* behaviours. It is through the blanket representations that over time naturalise this type of reporting in some readers minds. When it came to African females they were afforded very little space. Their representations seemed to be based in craft, beauty and domestic positions, to a large degree occupying non-threatening positions. This discourse of the violent African male and his passive African female, I maintained, seems to fit into the colonial perspective. It is through the writing of these groups into roles that it becomes easier to control how these groups are perceived in society. It is through this *controlled discourse* that spaces that Africans occupy in Australian discourse are *limited*. In this limited space, African immigrants cannot contest, comment or rebuke how they are represented because they are not afforded

the space as *subjects* of discourse. In their positioning as *objects* of discourse they continue to be spoken about and not to, thus positioning them as a subordinate group in Australian society.

### 10.3 Surveying the Demographic: A Snapshot of Everyday Lives

In this chapter, I aimed to introduce African immigrants as *subjects* within their written discourse. To this date, there is no study in Australia that has sought to record the media uses and attitudes of Africans. This is a highly imperative component to researching how the group responds and uses the media in which they are represented. In this chapter, I continued to argue the case that in the controlled discourse of Africans, who were the intended audience? In the way that Africans were represented and discussed as objects, it would seem the intended audience would be non-African. In the African immigrant's consumption of these images, to a degree they were being *re-presented* with the Australian view of what Africanness is. The data compiled in this section is the first snapshot of how this ethnic and cultural group respond and make use of these representations. It also highlights the degree to which the African immigrants actively seek, ignore or discuss how they are represented which is data which is novel. Another novel element of this research is that 101 African respondents also shared their opinions on how they think they are regarded in Australian society based on how they are represented in the media. This data is original and could be of significant use to media houses in their models of migrant reporting and outreach. This chapter provided a base level of how Africans respond and negotiate their mediated representations and the social consequences of them. However, this chapter did not capture the day-to-day negotiations and challenges that the research participants face. This is what I went on to develop in chapter seven: Oral Testimonies of Africans Living in Australia, where I sought to capture in-depth everyday experiences and perspectives of the African immigrants.

### 10.4 Oral History: I Shall not be Silenced

This chapter displayed how Africans living in Australia consumed social and mediated discourses about themselves and how they appropriated them into their everyday lives. I sought to uncover the negotiation of *perceived* ideas of what it means to be African and the conflict and regulation of certain behaviours on the part of the individual as a result of this. This chapter was the ultimate step in attempting to bridge the gap between the mediated representations of Africans and their actual lived realities. This was largely revealed in the way that the data was gathered for this chapter. In the bid not to have yet another anthropological or ethnographical study where

the researcher approaches the field with the predetermined hierarchy or assumed knowledge, I wanted to the participants to occupy the dominant position. This was a productive inversion the way that the data was collected is largely reflective of this; I sought to digitally capture the *voice* of African immigrants living in Australia as empowered subjects. Sharing their experiences as owners of their past, present and future, is what influenced the use of the oral history method. In this method, I aimed to capture the *moments* as the participants recalled them, in their own words and in their own voice. The use of audio recordings to capture the voice made it so their words were *immortal*, their words could not be tampered with nor misinterpreted by the researcher. Again, this presents an original way of studying the group, for the first time African immigrants are presented as empowered creators of their presentations.

My initial intent was to show how Africans responded to their mediated representations and social perceptions, however much richer data yielded from the interviews. As personal details about their day-to-day lives emerged, in some cases, this was the first time that the participants had shared it with anyone. The internal struggle and conflict was finally released and captured on a recording as they *recalled* and *experienced* it again at that moment. In keeping with the academic nature of this book, I transcribed the audio recordings so that I could include excerpts of the document into the document. In this chapter, I argued that two forms of the participants' data differed. In the audio recordings, these are the unadulterated words of the participants, no amount of theory can ever capture the personal experience of the individual. Whereas, in the transcript, by committing the words of the participants to a stable, hardcopy form the words become open to interpretation. Sections can be deconstructed to achieve specific goals by critically examining the words through a theoretical lens. In this regard, the data is transformed and injected with new meaning.

A standout observation is that there seemed to be a consensus amongst the participants that they did not want to be associated or to be considered to be Sudanese or a humanitarian refugee. This was a common utterance in the interviews and I argued was a strong form of xenophobia against people from these nations. In their mentions of these groups, it seems they were drawing from the representations that they had seen in the media of the negative representations of Sudanese immigrants. In a way, the representations could be said to fuel the same type of controlled decoding on the parts of the participants of the oral history interviews. This I argued, was a preliminary result into how negative portrayals of particular groups can become *common* knowledge and can be seen as a way to contain certain groups.

## 10.5 Recommendations and Future Research

This study laid a foundation in the study of the gap between mediated representations of Africans and their actual lived realities. It has been my aim to highlight that the African population in Australia are not merely a passive group, who do not notice the injustices done to them through ideological dominance. Just because they are not presented as empowered subjects in mediated representations does not mean that

that they do not note nor feel that they are not a valued ethnic and cultural group in Australian society. In saying so the argument remains, is the media the best locus to obtain a rendering of society? Granted the media has its flaws, however, it has been regarded as the mirror of society (Cottle, 2000; Durham, 2004; Jakubowicz & Seneviratne, 1996; Jeffres, 2000; Mainsah, 2009; Rasinger, 2010; Trebbe & Schoenhagen, 2011). For this study, the media was a key starting point because this is one of the dominant platforms in which Africans feature. Other avenues I could have pursued were the representation of Africans in the economy of Australia, professional capacities or even consumerism. These are all viable areas of research that have not been explored. However, in my academic capabilities, I feel I might not have done them justice.

The study of media and ethnic groups has a long research tradition. However, I have argued in the Australian context the data on how African immigrants are portrayed or how they use the media is largely unknown. Since 1996, (22 years ago) when Africans became a statistically recognised population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008; Hugo, 2009) research into the group has been sparse. This book has been an explorative investigation into the relationship between African immigrants and the media. The key extraction from this book is the value given to certain lives over others, through the way that they are discussed, perceived and esteemed socially. In terms of ethnic integration in western communities there seems to be a currency in terms of value put on immigrants (Ainslie, 2009; Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2015; Hall & National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants, 1967; McGuire, Casanova, & Davis, 2016; O'Doherty & Lecouteur, 2007; Pehrson, Brown, & Zagefka, 2009; Tormala & Deaux, 2006). This is classified in ways they can benefit their new society; however, the social benefit evaluations can be biased. In the case of African immigrants living in Australia, they are ranked in the top three of the highest immigrant income earners (Masanauskas, 2015). Economically this is a great feat; nevertheless, this aspect is rarely discussed. Instead of discussing issues of unAustralian refugees, trouble seekers and crafts seem to be the best way to document African people, pacifying any meaningful contributions that African immigrants make. Perhaps this immigrant group is viewed as a threat because of the skill sets that they possess and the ability to be worthy adversaries. Africa as continent suffered largely from the injustices of colonisation through events such as the slave trade, apartheid, stealing of precious minerals and more recently a drive to recolonization. To some degree, it seems Africa and Africans were meant to stay in this posttraumatic state with nothing more to offer, however, this has not been the case. In researching Africans, it seems that they *ought* to be studied through their history of pain and suffering with very little regard paid into the continent's prevalence since colonisation or as people who are not held hostage by totalitarianism regimes. Africans are amongst some of the most innovative population on the planet pioneering in industries such as mobile banking (Hughes & Lonie, 2007; Jack & Suri, 2011), green energy (Kousksou et al., 2015). These world firsts are not acknowledged instead deaths, disaster and disease seem to be more interesting. I argue that future research into Africans at large should not try to *contain* a culture or ethnic group. They are not isolated people who live in a vacuum, the same social influences, economic decisions and education achievements

are also available to most Africans. They are not a native, primitive, untouched, tribe waiting for a pioneer to tell their story. They have the full capabilities to do so. I recommend that the primitive investigations of ethnic populations stop. Ethnic populations are as contemporary, dynamic and intelligent as any colonising, dominant population and must start being regarded as equals.

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