MONASH University

Voices of Acceptance

Understanding the Acceptance of 'Boat People' by Young Australians

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Abstract

In Australia, the issue of asylum seekers arriving by boat is a contentious topic that has divided both political and public opinion. Some Australians believe that all steps necessary should be taken to ensure that these asylum seekers are stopped, whereas others believe that Australia should be more accepting. In the past, the attitudes of Australians towards asylum seekers have been the focus of numerous studies with most focusing on explaining negative perceptions of asylum seekers held by adult Australians. In contrast, relatively little research has been undertaken to theorise the inclusionary viewpoint and to explore the views of younger Australians. The purpose of this study is to redress this research bias.

Using interview data collected from a group of young people participating in the ongoing longitudinal project titled 'Social Futures and Life Pathways of Young People in Queensland', the thesis explores how young Australians who have accepting attitudes towards 'boat people', express these beliefs. First, I isolate narratives that exemplify the accepting perspective. Next, I consider how young people who possess such a viewpoint, describe the Australian identity and their attachment to it. I then explore the correlation between holding inclusionary views on the 'boat people' issue and the voting behaviour of these participants in the 2013 Australian federal election.

The analysis of data suggests that those participants who argue for the acceptance of 'boat people' refer to principles consistent with a cosmopolitan viewpoint which include themes relating to responsibility, openness, and compassion. The findings also show many of the accepting participants not only expressed a strong sense of 'being Australian', they also referred to characteristics traditionally considered to be inherent to the Australian identity in order to support their cosmopolitan views. However, while the accepting young people clearly articulate an inclusionary stance, the data suggest accepting attitudes do not necessarily translate into action consistent with accepting views.

By drawing on these findings I present an analytical model by which the acceptance of asylum seekers by members of an established population can be operationalised in empirical research. This proposed model of cosmopolitan acceptance comprises four analytical dimensions: (1) an acknowledgement that the *responsibility* of the individual (or their nation) extends beyond national boundaries and into the global sphere; (2) *openness*, whereby a person demonstrates attitudes of inclusiveness towards asylum seekers; (3) *compassion* for the problems experienced by asylum seekers, and; (4) a *commitment* to act in support of asylum seekers. Finally, I discuss how the knowledge gained from this research contributes to a theoretical and practical understanding of the mechanisms that encourage attitudes of acceptance by members of settled populations towards asylum seekers and other displaced persons.

Declaration by Author

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Publications During Candidature

Journal Articles

Laughland-Booÿ, J, Skrbiš, Z & Tranter, B 2015, 'Crossing boundaries: Understanding the pro-asylum narratives of young Australians'. *Ethnicities* doi: 10.1177/1468796815583341

Laughland-Booÿ, J, Mayall, M & Skrbiš, Z 2015, 'Whose choice? Young people, career choices and reflexivity re-examined', *Current Sociology*, vol. 63, no.4, pp. 586-603.

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Professor Zlatko Skrbiš in his role as principal advisor contributed to the conceptual framing of this study and provided written feedback on thesis drafts. He also authorised the use of data collected by the ARC Discovery Projects DP0878781 and DP130101490 on which he is the Principal Chief Investigator.

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J Laughland-Booÿ was responsible for 80% of conception and design, 90% of analysis and interpretation and 80% of writing and editing. Z Skrbiš was responsible for 20% of conception and design, 10% of analysis and interpretation and 15% of writing and editing.
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J Laughland-Booÿ was responsible for 60% of conception and design, 30% of analysis and interpretation and 60% of writing and editing. Z Skrbiš was responsible for 30% of conception and

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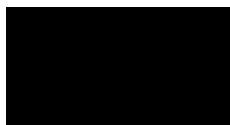
Jacqueline M. Laughland-Booÿ
 4 September 2015

The undersigned hereby certifies that the above declaration correctly reflects the nature and extent of the candidate and co-authors' contribution to this work.
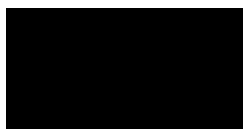
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Keywords

Asylum seekers, 'boat people', cosmopolitanism, acceptance, young people, Australia

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List of Abbreviations

AES	Australian Election Survey
ASRC	Asylum Seeker Resource Centre
CAT	Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
CRC	The Convention on the Rights of the Child
EU	The European Union
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IMA	Irregular Maritime Arrival
NMAC	National Multicultural Advisory Council
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
SAR Convention	The International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue
SIEV	Suspected Irregular Entry Vessel
SOLAS Convention	International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNHCR	The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
1951 Convention	The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees

Preface

As I prepare to submit this thesis, an unprecedented humanitarian crisis is engulfing Europe. Displaced persons from the Middle East and Africa are crossing the Mediterranean in ever growing numbers. They are making their way overland through the Western Balkans and towards Northern Europe. As the number of asylum seekers reaching Europe increases, the mood of people in the countries through which these asylum seekers are travelling, is changing. More and more, we are seeing sympathy being replaced by frustration and anger. As the scale of this human movement escalates it is difficult to imagine how this situation will eventually play out.

The title of this thesis is 'Voices of Acceptance'. These are the voices of young Australians who speak of the importance of remaining mindful of our responsibilities towards the global community. They speak to the universality of humankind and remind us of the need to show compassion. Irrespective of where in the world we live, these are valuable lessons to remember when bearing witness to the desperation and suffering of others.

1. Introduction: Acceptance Matters

It's going to be down to one stick that breaks the camel's back and it's coming. It can't be far off before Christmas Island just sinks under its own weight and there will be another hundred people lost at sea. There'll be another boat crashing on the rocks. One hundred people lost at sea – and that whole, 'Oh, Australia didn't react fast enough!' Well – it's not our problem! (James)

I think it's easy to just say, "Oh that's not really an issue, it doesn't really have anything to do with us", or even if there is an issue, "It's not our problem". If people actually thought about, "If I was in that situation, what would I want people to do?" They would want people to accept them. They wouldn't want people to turn their boats around with their kids. Maybe you wouldn't have made the decision to get on the boat, but if you found yourself in that position of being on a boat with your kids – what would you want people to do? (Emma)

On December 15 2010, a boat sailed towards Christmas Island. Aboard were 89 asylum seekers from Iraq and Iran hoping to start a new life in Australia. As it approached the coastline, the boat struck rocks and began to sink. The majority of those aboard were flung into the sea and, despite frantic rescue efforts from Christmas Island residents, Australian Customs, and the Australian Navy, 50 people drowned (Hope 2012). Over the years, countless individuals are believed to have died attempting to come to Australia by boat to request asylum. Sadly, this is unsurprising. The people hired by asylum seekers to arrange these passages are often unscrupulous, and the boats used to make the journey to Australia tend to be overcrowded and unseaworthy. What made this event different, however, was that it played out directly in Australia's backyard. Australians bore witness to the images of people desperately struggling in the ocean trying to save their own lives, and the lives of their children. In the aftermath of this event, debate ensued over the extent to which Australia should accept responsibility for the event and the obligations the country had towards the dead, the survivors, and their families. As Marr (2011) describes, the political backlash was particularly swift, with politicians from the opposition Liberal/National Coalition highly critical of what they argued was the Labor government's mismanagement of the asylum seeker issue and its failure to implement measures that would stop asylum seekers from attempting to reach Australia by boat.

Such arguments are not uncommon in Australia. Since the first boat carrying asylum seekers reached Australia in 1976, Australians have been questioning their responsibilities towards those who arrive uninvited onto Australian shores to claim asylum. As a signatory of the *1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* and its associated *1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees* (UNHCR 2010), Australia has a responsibility to offer sanctuary to individuals who enter its territory and request humanitarian protection (Department of Immigration and Border

Protection 2014). This means 'boat people' who successfully arrive on the Australian mainland and ask for refugee status must be given due consideration by the Australian authorities.

Public concerns surrounding the asylum seeker issue have resulted in successive Australian governments implementing strict measures against those who attempt to enter the country via irregular means (McAdam 2013; McAllister & Pietsch 2011). Some Australians consider policies of deterrence as crucial for the protection of Australia's borders (Louis et al. 2007; McKay et al. 2011; McKay et al. 2012). Exclusionary and punitive policies against 'boat people', it has been argued, are important for the protection of life at sea and people who choose to make that voyage must face the consequences (Kenny 2013; LNP 2013). Others in Australia disagree. They believe that to punish and exclude the people aboard these boats is to punish and exclude some of the world's most vulnerable individuals (Burnside 2014; Every 2008; Fraser 2009; Jupp 2003).

Searching for Asylum

An asylum seeker is defined by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] as 'an individual who has sought international protection and whose claim for refugee status has not yet been determined' (UNHCR 2015). In 2014, there were approximately 866,000 applications for asylum made in the world's 44 western industrialised countries, 269,400 more than the total claims made for asylum in 2013 (UNHCR 2015).

Syria was the top country of origin for asylum seekers in 2014. This is due to the ongoing armed conflict occurring in this country, which has led to a mass exodus of the Syrian population. According to the latest UNHCR (2015) figures, 149,641 Syrians requested asylum from an industrialised country in 2014, up from 56,346 the previous year. The next four countries of origin for asylum seekers in 2014 were Iraq (68,719), Afghanistan (59,472) Serbia/ Kosovo (55,668) and Eritrea (48,402). The industrialised country that received the most asylum seekers in 2014 was Germany, registering 173,070 claims, up from 109,600 in 2013 and 64,540 in 2012. The other top receiving industrialised countries in 2014 were The United States (121,160), Turkey (87,820), Sweden (75,090) and Italy (63,660) [Figure 1.1]. The UNHCR (2015) also reports that while these and other advanced countries have experienced significant annual increases in asylum seeker registrations, by contrast, Australia saw a decrease. In 2014 Australia registered 8,960 asylum applications down from 11,740 in 2013 and 15,790 in 2012.
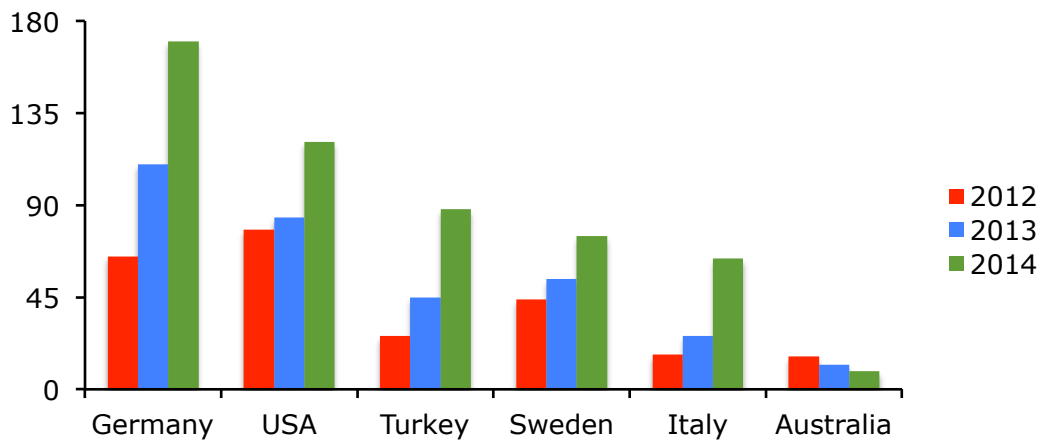
Figure 1.1: Comparison of asylum seeker registrations 2012-2014
Registrations (000's) received by the top five asylum seeker receiving industrial countries compared with registrations received by Australia (UNHCR 2015).

The rights of people who have left their country due to fears of persecution and harm are safeguarded under several different international declarations and covenants. These are overseen by the United Nations and stipulate the responsibilities of signatory States in their dealings with displaced persons. Entitlements include safety, freedom from arbitrary detainment, and the right not to be expelled if their safety or freedom would be jeopardised as a result (Australian Human Rights Commission 2015). Key instruments include, but are not limited to:

(a) The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

In the aftermath of World War II, it was recognised that international governance over the protection of human rights was a necessary step towards preventing a repeat of the atrocities that had occurred during the war. Drafted in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (the Universal Declaration) outlines the fundamental rights and freedoms to which all people are entitled (UN 2014). While not binding, the Universal Declaration provides the foundation that much international law pertaining to the protection of human rights has been based upon (Australian Human Rights Commission 2014; Donnelly 2013).

(b) The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees

The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, and its associated 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, is the key legal framework that outlines the rights of the displaced. In this convention a refugee is a person who:

> owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. (UNHCR 2010)

It delineates the treatment that must be accorded to refugees by Member States. The principle of non-refoulement is an important aspect of this convention. Those seeking asylum cannot be sent back to their country of origin or to another country where their life would be threatened.

(c) The International Bill of Rights

The Universal Declaration and two treaties, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights [ICCPR], and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights [ICESCR], are collectively referred to as the International Bill of Rights. While the Universal Declaration itself is not binding, the two associated covenants are. Nations, like Australia, that have ratified or acceded to these instruments are obliged to act in a manner that respects the intention of these covenants.

(d) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Adopted in 1966, the ICCPR (OHCHR 2014b) puts into force principles outlined in The Universal Declaration. These relate to the right to life and self-determination, as well as freedom of expression and freedom from torture. It also protects against arbitrary arrest and imprisonment.

(e) International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Also expanding on the principles of the Universal Declaration, the ICESCR (OHCHR 2014c) focuses on protecting human rights within other domains. These include the right to an education, to make a living through work, and to have access to health care.

(f) Convention on the Rights of the Child

Adopted in 1989, the Convention on the Rights of the Child [CRC] is a treaty that expands on the ICCPR and the ICESCR by specifically recognising the needs of children. It declares that a child has the right to be protected from harm and to live with their parents. Moreover, any actions and laws that impact a child must be beneficial to that child (UNICEF Australia 2014).

(g) Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment [CAT] was adopted in 1984. It compels signatory states to prevent torture from occurring within their own areas of control and prohibits the forced transfer of an individual to their country of origin or to another state when there is likelihood that person will be tortured (OHCHR 2014a).

(h) United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

There are also various laws in place that relate to how asylum seekers should be treated when they are at sea. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea [UNCLOS] outlines the jurisdictions and responsibilities of nations and vessels flying under their flag when in international waters. The UNCLOS stresses the responsibility of nations to act in manner that ensures the preservation of human life at sea. It also outlines the actions a Party State may take in response to a vessel entering its territorial waters and rules for boarding a foreign vessel (United Nations 1982).

(i) International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue

The International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue [SAR Convention] requires a Party State to provide resources to assist any vessel in distress within its search and rescue region. This is regardless of the origin or circumstances of those aboard (United Nations 1979).

(j) International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea

Also intended to preserve life at sea, the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea [SOLAS Convention] obligates the master of a ship that has the capacity to assist, to redirect their boat and render aid to a vessel in distress. If passengers from the stricken vessel are brought aboard that ship they must be taken to a place of safety (International Maritime Organization 2014).

Barriers to Asylum

The movement of asylum seekers across the borders of other countries poses a challenge to the physical and social boundaries of many nations (Benhabib 2006a; Fine 2007; Morris 2009; Grande 2006; James 2014). While international laws exist, which acknowledge the right of asylum seekers to request and receive protection, their efforts are often curtailed via the construction of physical, legal, and symbolic boundaries intended to hinder their efforts to seek sanctuary. Many nations simply do not want to make provision for large numbers of asylum seekers arriving into their territory (Gibney & Hansen 2003; Levy 2010). While countries may be committed to agreements made with the international community to consider applications for asylum, domestic agendas often demand the implementation of policies regarding those requesting sanctuary (James 2014; La Caze 2004). Essentially, the philosophy is, if a strong enough obstacle can be created and put in place, a nation need never encounter the asylum seeker.

There are a number of strategies by which countries might deter asylum seekers. Tight border control and the implementation of non-entrée border policies is one way of stopping people from entering another sovereign state. If people are unable to cross into a country's territorial borders, they will be unable to call upon that country to fulfil its legal commitments (Bubb et al. 2011). Although there is an obligation to provide protection to asylum seekers who successfully cross their borders, there is no obligation for Member States to be welcoming or to provide those requesting refugee status with a high degree of comfort. Nor does international agreement dictate the processes by which countries will determine the refugee status of a person who has entered their territory to request asylum (Bubb et al. 2011).

Instead of being permitted free movement, asylum seekers might be subjected to mandatory detention while their refugee status is determined. Given that the conditions in asylum seeker detention/processing facilities are often rudimentary and the processing times protracted, this tends not to be an attractive prospect. In Canada for example, legislation has been passed to permit the detention of 'designated foreign nationals' (James 2014). This means that any person who attempts to enter Canada where it is determined 'either that their claim to stay cannot be processed 'in a

timely manner' or that they may have been assisted in their passage by a person who may have profited by the boundary-crossing' is subject to mandatory detention (James 2014, p. 210).

Moreover, an asylum seeker residing within a host nation might be subjected to policies of deprivation. The United Kingdom and some countries in Western Europe, for example, tightly control welfare payments to asylum seekers. Access to social services is also limited, and asylum seekers may not be permitted to obtain employment. Asylum seekers may also be dispersed to regional areas and prevented from living in major metropolitan areas. The supposed rationale for such a policy is that the cost of hosting asylum seekers is shared, however, outside of metropolitan areas, asylum seekers can find themselves both isolated and subjected to discrimination from unsympathetic locals who perceive them as a threat to their way of life (KhosraviNik 2010; Lynn & Lea 2003).

… As a signatory state to the aforementioned international laws intended to provide protection to the displaced, Australia has international human rights obligations towards anyone who enters its territorial jurisdiction and requests consideration as a refugee (Australian Human Rights Commission 2015). However, as the number of asylum seekers attempting to come to Australia has increased, so too have the levels of political and public antagonism toward them. As with some other countries, Australia has responded by implementing policies designed to deter and dissuade asylum seekers from entering its borders and, as the years have passed, these policies have become increasingly exclusionary and punitive.

Understanding Acceptance

As more people attempt to reach Australia, and as successive governments introduce policies to prevent them from doing so, debate continues over how Australia should fulfil its obligations towards humanitarian entrants. Some Australians believe exclusionary and punitive policies are necessary for the protection of Australia's sovereignty, whereas others argue that policies intended to prevent boats carrying asylum seekers from entering Australian territory disregard the country's human rights obligations. While several studies suggest that some Australians are more accepting of asylum seekers than others (e.g. Fozdar & Pedersen 2013; Hartley & Pedersen 2007; Markus 2014; McAllister & Pietsch 2011; McKay et al. 2012), we do not yet understand what motivates such diversity of views. Although much research has previously been undertaken into the attitudes of adult Australians towards asylum seekers, the emphasis has primarily been on identifying mechanisms of exclusion that are active within the Australian settled population. In this thesis, I shift the focus towards understanding mechanisms of acceptance.

My research began in 2011 whilst I was working as a qualitative researcher on the ARC DP-funded project titled the 'Social Futures and Life Pathways of Young People in Queensland' study (also known as *Our Lives*). Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, this longitudinal study

has been following a single aged cohort of young people from Queensland, Australia from adolescence into adulthood since 2006 (Our Lives 2015). Its goal is to track the attitudes and behaviours of this group of young Australians as they transition from adolescence into adulthood. My role on the project has been to carry out qualitative research on topics such as future educational plans (e.g. Laughland-Booÿ, Mayall & Skrbiš 2015), partnership and parenting plans, and Australian politics. When searching for a research topic for my doctoral studies, my broad interest was in how societies construct and respond to victims of traumatic experience. I hoped to use this cohort of young people to help me explore this idea. As I perused the *Our Lives* project metadata my attention was drawn to an item that had been added to a survey in 2010 which read: '*All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back*' and asked the participants to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with this statement. This survey item served as the catalyst for this current study.

After some preliminary reading on Australian's attitudes towards asylum seekers, it was apparent that a substantial body of research had been devoted to understanding why Australians tend to be rejecting of asylum seekers, but less was known about the accepting viewpoint. Allport's (1954) observation that phenomena of rejection are the primary focus of social scientists still holds true and even now, researchers tend to place greater emphasis on explaining why minority groups are excluded. Less attention, however, has been paid to theorising the presence of more positive and accepting orientations in populations. Approaches such as those associated with social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner 1979), realistic group conflict theory (Sherif et al. 1961), and social dominance theory (Sidanius & Pratto 1999) have all been extensively used to understand and predict the formation of negative attitudes by dominant groups. Little attention, however, has been paid to theorising the presence of more positive orientations. As Lamont and Aksartova (2002, p. 18) argue, while significant effort is expended on investigating how symbolic boundaries are being constructed and thereby result in the social exclusion of some groups, such research 'should be accompanied by parallel studies of the reverse process, where the elimination of social boundaries begins with the deconstruction of symbolic ones'. Instead of investigating phenomena associated with the rejection of asylum seekers, my research focuses on concepts that relate to the nature of acceptance. In doing so, this thesis develops a framework of understanding that will better theorise the processes and problems surrounding the future acceptance of asylum seekers by populations living in the world's more advantaged nations.

My PhD project investigates the expression of accepting attitudes towards 'boat people' by young Australians. The goal is to explore how they respond to the challenge of accepting people who have been framed through public discourse as representing a threat to Australia's sovereignty. To this end, my guiding question throughout this thesis is:

How do young Australians express accepting attitudes towards 'boat people'?

This question encompasses three research questions, each of which is addressed in a separate findings chapter:

RQ1. What narratives do young people use when discussing the rejection or acceptance of 'boat people'?

RQ2. How do young Australians who express inclusive views towards 'boat people' relate this acceptance to notions of 'being Australian'?

RQ3. To what extent did holding accepting views towards 'boat people' influence the voting behaviour of young Queenslanders at the 2013 Australian federal election?

This research considers an important issue currently facing Australia and will address a number of gaps in current knowledge. First, as mentioned, while a considerable body of literature offers theoretical insight into why members of a settled population might exhibit exclusionary attitudes towards asylum seekers, fewer studies have considered the factors that facilitate their acceptance. The primary goal of this thesis is therefore to develop a theoretical understanding of mechanisms that promote accepting views. It also aims to develop a framework by which 'acceptance' of asylum seekers by members of settled populations might be operationalised and measured empirically.

Second, although I take a particular interest in the theoretical nature of acceptance, I will report both pro-asylum and anti-asylum views. Past studies have documented the views of older Australians towards asylum seekers (e.g. Louis et al. 2007; McKay et al. 2012), but little is known about how young Australians are responding to this issue. Young people act as a gauge for measuring societal change (Miles 2000; Mokwena 2001). They are, as Mokwena (2001, p.29) argues, 'barometers through which we can measure the level of social cohesion, democratization or lack thereof'. This study, therefore, contributes to the knowledge of the views of younger Australians on this important issue.

Third, in the past, qualitative investigations into Australian attitudes towards asylum seekers have typically involved an analysis of printed and online media (e.g. Lueck et al. 2015; McKay et al. 2011; O'Doherty & Lecouteur 2007; Pickering 2001) or of the language used by Australian politicians (e.g. Every & Augoustinos 2007, 2008a). Where a qualitative investigation of the views of everyday, 'ordinary' Australians has been undertaken, this has usually been in the form of open-ended questions on survey instruments, or written questionnaires which ask respondents to express their opinions (e.g. Klocker 2004; McKay et al. 2011; McKay et al. 2012). Surprisingly, despite this being such a topical subject in Australia, it is difficult to locate evidence that researchers have entered the field and actually listened to how everyday Australians speak about this issue and how they are personally affected by it. This study addresses this deficit by using semi-structured

interviews to allow a group of 'ordinary' young Australians an opportunity to express their thoughts and views on the matter. The result has been that I have collected data which contribute a perspective which, to date, has been largely overlooked.

Finally, documenting the opinions of young Australians on this issue has additional theoretical relevance. Given Australia's current cohort of young adults have been raised in a socio-political atmosphere saturated by debate on this issue it is interesting to document the narratives they have adopted when speaking on the topic. Australia's young people were raised in the shadow of the events of September 11 and the 2002 Bali bombings. During their formative years they were exposed to a socio-political environment where they were cautioned by government and media to be suspicious and vigilant. For more than a decade, media reports on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and stories of the 'invasion' of 'boat people' attempting to 'unlawfully' reach Australia have been commonplace. Consequently, it would be difficult to sustain an argument that these young Australians have not, in some way, been exposed to such messages. This research therefore also documents how this single age cohort have integrated these messages into their understandings of the asylum seeker issue in Australia, and how they are responding to them.

This study is informed by, and extends, a solid body of research that has been undertaken in Australia into attitudes towards asylum seekers (e.g. Every & Augoustinos 2007, 2008a, 2008b; Hartley & Pedersen 2007; McKay et al. 2012; O'Doherty & Augoustinos 2008; Pedersen et al. 2005 Pedersen et al. 2006). Discursive representations of asylum seekers as a threat to Australia have reinforced the belief that asylum seekers are not welcome. The legitimacy of their claims, for example, is questioned with the suggestion that they are 'illegals' not entitled to sanctuary in Australia, or that they are economic opportunists who are untruthful about having fled persecution. Moreover, asylum seekers are sometimes accused of being terrorists or 'extremists', intending to cause disruption, or impose their own religious and cultural beliefs upon the Australian nation. Such constructions make it difficult for asylum seekers to be accepted by the residents of this country (Every & Augoustinos 2008b; Hartley & Pedersen 2007; Haslam & Holland 2012; McKay et al. 2012). Some studies have also described pro-asylum discourse. Research into pro-asylum discourse, for instance, has found that Australian politicians who advocate for a more inclusionary Australia use more accepting language (Every & Augoustinos, 2008a; Rowe & O'Brien, 2014). Also, Fozdar and Pedersen (2013, p.317) describe a 'counter-hegemonic discourse' being used on blog sites to counteract anti-asylum sentiment. However, while such studies provide valuable evidence of 'accepting' rhetoric being used in Australia to challenge exclusionary views, researchers have yet to expand on the mechanisms that lead some people to challenge symbolic boundaries and to instead advocate for the acceptance of asylum seekers in Australia. My goal is to therefore undertake a

study that deconstructs the narratives of young people speaking on the issue of 'boat people' in order to better understand the motives that underlie the accepting viewpoint.

In this thesis I also use the concept of cosmopolitanism as an explanatory framework to guide my research. According to Nussbaum (2002, p.4), the cosmopolitan is 'the person whose allegiance is to the worldwide community of human beings'. Similarly, Calhoun (2008, p. 428) describes, cosmopolitanism as an act of 'focusing on the world as a whole rather than a particular locality or group within it'. When speaking of 'being cosmopolitan', Skrbiš and Woodward (2007, p. 734) believe the cosmopolitan individual is one who 'possesses skills to negotiate cultural diversity, hybridity and otherness'. The cosmopolitan individual understands that the people who inhabit this world are becoming increasingly (and often inextricably) interconnected. Moreover, they possess the skills that allow them to cross boundaries between what is familiar and what is not. Although cosmopolitanism has been identified as a useful construct for observing and understanding everyday engagement with difference (e.g. Lamont & Aksartova 2002), few empirical studies have systematically applied the framework for understanding the acceptance of asylum seekers. One exception is Morris' (2009, 2010a, 2010b) work in which she recounts the rulings made by British judges on issues surrounding welfare payments to asylum seekers in the United Kingdom. She observes instances of either a 'national' or 'cosmopolitan' paradigm in these judgments, describing the approach taken by judges who emphasise the importance of human rights over national concerns, as a 'judicial cosmopolitan outlook' (Morris 2009, p. 218). While the research undertaken by Morris makes an important connection between the empirical applicability of the cosmopolitan framework and understanding the acceptance of asylum seekers, the views described were those of elite members of their society. It is more difficult, however, to locate accounts that describe a more 'ordinary' cosmopolitan outlook towards asylum seekers – where a 'cosmopolitan' acceptance of asylum seekers is articulated within the everyday talk of everyday people.

In this study, I have adopted a methodological framework in line with an abductive research strategy proposed by theorists such as Blaikie (2007), Ong (2012) and Timmermans and Tavoury (2012). This approach uses the accounts of social actors as a primary basis for constructing a theoretical explanation for the phenomena being observed. While existing theory helps guide the researcher and support this explanation, this takes a secondary role to the concepts produced by the social actors themselves (Blaikie 2007). In this instance I use data from interviews undertaken with 53 young Australians to construct a theoretical framework to explain the acceptance of asylum seekers by members of a settled population. During this process, the concept of cosmopolitanism takes a supporting and framing role, guiding my understanding of emerging themes where appropriate.

Although I take a qualitative approach to my research, at various points throughout this thesis I report and comment upon relevant quantitative data collected from the entire *Our Lives* cohort in 2010 and 2013 on the question of whether 'boat people' should be rejected or accepted by Australia. The quantitative perspective is useful in that it demonstrates and acknowledges the broader scope of opinion held by the cohort on the topics addressed in this thesis. It also positions my PhD research and its findings within its wider frame of reference. My point of departure from the quantitative paradigm, however, is to consider this issue via an interpretivist lens.

Definition of Terms

Definitions applied by both researchers and in everyday discourse are not always consistent. I therefore pause to define key terms. Ambiguity often surrounds the categorisation of people who are seeking asylum in Australia (O'Doherty & Lecouteur 2007). The UNHCR (2014) defines an asylum seeker as someone who is seeking international protection, but whose status as a refugee is yet to be determined by either the country from whom they have requested asylum or the UNHCR. When referring more broadly to people seeking humanitarian refuge, I will apply the term 'asylum seekers'. When discussing asylum seekers who attempt to reach Australia by boat, I will refer to them as such, or use the terms 'boat people' or 'unexpected arrivals'.

Also, the descriptors 'young people' and 'young adults' are used interchangeably in this document. Whilst I acknowledge that these terms could refer to a quite broad range of ages, the individuals I am referring to were in their late-teens and early-twenties when they were interviewed.

The Use of Published Material in this Thesis

As has been declared in the statement of 'Published Works by the Author Incorporated into the Thesis', two journal articles have already resulted from the work undertaken during my candidature. I commenced my PhD at The University of Queensland in October 2011, but in March 2013 I transferred to Monash University. Originally, the intention was to submit a Thesis-by-Publication, but the move to Monash University meant that I needed to revisit my original plan to accommodate alternative submission requirements. A decision was then made to produce and submit a PhD thesis in the standard format. As a Thesis-by-Publication allows for the inclusion of co-authored work, it was originally intended that one article would relate to a statistical analysis of survey data collected from Wave 3 Our Lives data which was undertaken in the pre-candidature stage of the research process. While I was responsible for the conceptualisation of this study, the statistical analysis of data was undertaken with the assistance of my associate supervisor, Professor Bruce Tranter. Given the change in format, this preliminary project and its findings are described in the methods chapter and the associated article is presented as an appendix to the thesis document

(Laughland-Booÿ, Skrbiš & Tranter 2014; Appendix N). Sections from this paper also appear in other parts of the thesis. Any co-authored content from this article that is included in the main document has been appropriately acknowledged. Another paper from my research has also been accepted for publication (Laughland-Booÿ, Skrbiš & Tranter 2015; Appendix O). This work is featured substantively in Chapter 5, however sections of this paper also appear in other areas of this thesis and are also acknowledged.

Thesis Structure

This thesis is comprised of eight chapters. In Chapter 2, I will provide a background to seeking asylum in Australia. I begin with an historical account of Australia's immigration and asylum policies. This chapter ends with a review of literature relating to the attitudes of Australians towards asylum seekers and, more specifically, 'boat people'.

Chapter 3 lays out the theoretical dimensions of the research. The concept of cosmopolitanism has been used to help guide my analysis of data during this research process. I provide a broad overview of relevant literature, which speaks to how cosmopolitanism currently informs a theoretical understanding of accepting attitudes by young Australians towards 'boat people'.

Chapter 4 is concerned with the methodological approach I used in this study. I first detail the *Our Lives* study and present the findings from a quantitative analysis of the attitudes of the *Our Lives* cohort towards 'boat people' which was undertaken at the commencement of my PhD journey. I then describe the research design for this current project, the sample characteristics, and the methods of data collection and analysis.

Chapter 5 is the first findings chapter. Here I address RQ1 by comparing and contrasting the discourses of those young people who have strong views on the issue of asylum seekers coming to Australia. I demonstrate how symbolic boundaries against the acceptance of asylum seekers are constructed in the language of young people who believe boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned away from Australia. The narratives employed by young people who are accepting of asylum seekers are then presented. In doing so, it is suggested that where the former group of participants engages in discursive strategies of rejection, the latter group apply cosmopolitan principles in order to argue for the acceptance of asylum seekers into Australia. Such narratives, I argue, were used to challenge anti-asylum rhetoric common within Australian public discourse and to countervail current exclusionary language.

Chapter 6 addresses RQ2 and describes how perceptions of national belonging and the Australian identity inform the participants' attitudes towards asylum seekers. My specific focus is on how the accepting participants reconcile their views with notions of being Australian. The analysis of data in this findings chapter suggests that national attachments and the observance of

cosmopolitan principles can be compatible. Furthermore, it is possible that attachments to the Australian identity are the basis upon which a cosmopolitan acceptance of 'boat people' is formed.

Chapter 7 is the third and final findings chapter and reports data from pro-asylum participants collected during the run-up to the 2013 federal election. This chapter addresses RQ3, which asks if young people who hold accepting views towards asylum seekers would use their vote in the 2013 Australian federal election as a way of expressing their views. The findings suggest that they would not, which therefore raises a question as to whether young people who express accepting views are prepared to translate those attitudes into action.

Chapter 8 discusses the broader findings of the study and then brings the thesis to its conclusion. First, I provide an overview of the key findings. I then propose a theoretical model by which a 'cosmopolitan acceptance' of asylum seekers might be empirically observed. Finally, I discuss the implications of the research and suggest some directions for future research on this topic.

2. Literature Review: Seeking Asylum in Australia

> We have had a single irrevocable view on this, and that is that we will defend our borders and we'll decide who comes to this country. But we'll do that within the framework of the decency for which Australians have always been renowned. (John Howard, Prime Minister of Australia, 2001)

During the run up to the 2001 Australian Federal Election, Prime Minister John Howard vowed to protect Australia's prerogative to control and regulate who may enter its territorial borders. Fourteen years on, asylum policy remains in the political spotlight and the Australian government has put in place a raft of measures intended to deter 'boat people' from reaching Australia. While Australia may be bound by international agreement to provide assistance to individuals who enter its territorial jurisdiction to request asylum, it has also taken steps to curtail the ability of 'uninvited arrivals' to reach those borders and resettle in the country.

After providing a history of immigration policy in Australia at the beginning of this chapter, I discuss different exclusionary regimes that have been enacted over time to restrict the entry of asylum seekers. I then review literature pertaining to the responses of everyday Australians towards asylum seekers. While some Australians support government measures to 'stop the boats', other Australians do not. I summarise empirical literature on how these two groups might be differentiated – with a particular focus on literature relating to those who possess a more accepting viewpoint.

Immigration Governance in Australia

From the turn of the 20th century until the early 1970's, the exclusion of migrants on the basis of ethnic difference was common practice in Australia (Jayasuriya 2002, 2012). In 1901, under Protectionist Party leader Edward Barton, the newly federated Commonwealth government took steps to ensure racial homogeneity by passing laws that collectively became known as the 'White Australia' policy. These laws were intended to control immigration and maintain the dominance of a white, British derived nation (Forrest & Dunn 2006; Jayasuriya 2002). The *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* (Government of the Commonwealth of Australia 1901) was the cornerstone of Australia's policies of exclusion and was designed to prevent non-white migration into Australia (Jupp 2002; van Krieken 2012). Under this law, anyone hoping to settle in Australia could be subjected to a dictation test in any European language selected by an immigration officer. This test was intended to give immigration officials discretionary power to select who to allow into Australia and who to exclude, and effectively meant officials could handpick those they considered 'white' enough for entry into Australian society (McNamara 2009). The existence of this test therefore

proved an effective tool in dissuading people unlikely to be deemed suitable for admission into Australia from even arriving at Australian ports. The result was, as Jupp (2002, p.10) explains:

> A message was sent out to the world that 'coloured' people could not settle in Australia. They did not. By 1947 the non-European population, other than Aborigines, was measured by the Census as 0.25 per cent of the total. Australia had become one of the 'whitest' countries in the world outside northwestern Europe.

Following the end of World War II in 1945, a decrease in the Australian population led to a concern that Australia's economy and security was weakening (Jupp 2003, 2011). Faced with an option to either 'populate or perish' (Jupp 2002, p.11), Australia saw a need to increase its population. Overseen by Minister for Immigration Arthur Calwell, the Ben Chifley Labor government commenced a tax-payer funded migration program to help achieve a population growth of 2 percent per year (Zubrzycki 1995). Immigrants were still, however, expected to fit into what was perceived to be a culturally homogenous Anglo-Celtic environment. If not British, people from Northern Europe and Eastern Europe were the preferred choice of migrant. They were also selected on the basis of whether they could contribute to the workforce and re-populate the nation. In short, those accepted for resettlement in Australia were young, able-bodied and white (Jupp 2003; Zubrzycki 1995).

If the White Australia policy was 'the official racialisation' of Australian national identity (Stratton & Ang 1994, p. 142), a policy of assimilation ensured that this identity would be protected. Concerned that the addition of non-British individuals would compromise the Australian identity, the expectation was that all new migrants would not only follow the laws of Australia, but also its cultural practices (Stratton & Ang 1994; van Krieken 2012). Governmental philosophy (both Labor and Liberal/National Coalition) was that if new Australians learnt to blend into the Australian way of life, there would be less public backlash against their arrival. By achieving homogeneity through assimilation, the 'Australian way of life' could be preserved and Australia's settled population would be more inclined to accept these new arrivals (Stratton & Ang 1994; van Krieken 2012).

In the face of international and some domestic pressure to be less discriminatory, the Australian government eventually began to phase out its White Australia policy. The *Immigration Act 1901* was replaced by the *Migration Act 1958* which revised the conditions under which people could enter Australia, and while still restrictive, contained fewer racist overtones than its predecessor (Jayasuria 2012). By 1966, legislation had been amended to allow for non-European migration and individuals from more diverse cultural backgrounds began to enter Australian society (London 1967). Many immigrants showed little intention of assimilating to the Australian way of life or divorcing themselves from their own cultural roots and as the number of non-British migrants to Australia increased, so did the need to better accommodate these new Australians. Furthermore,

political parties soon realised that if the vote of Australia's newest citizens was to be won, policies of governance needed to recognise migrants as being full members of Australian society (Koleth 2010; van Krieken 2012). Between 1966-1972, immigration policies were orientated towards a philosophy of integration rather than assimilation whereby new migrants could retain their own ethnic identity yet, at the same time, participate in Australian society (Jupp 2011; Koleth 2010). As London wrote in 1967:

> While it recognizes the right of groups to retain differences it also demands a greater commitment to social unity through institutional loyalties, national allegiance and direct communication. And the fact that each group feels it has contributed its traditions to the cultural pool, provides it with a sense of pride and allegiance to the whole. The principles of this process preserve the right of Harry Chan to retain Chinese culture in his home, but it imposes on him an obligation to his community more demanding than just perfunctory tasks that facilitate the operations of state. It demands another loyalty: an Australian nationalism. (London 1967, p. 344)

The assumption was that with time and gentle persuasion and 'giving the migrant exposure to the new culture … and engendering a loyalty to Australia that does not assume the rejection of traditional values' (London 1967, p. 345), migrants would eventually begin to favour the habits of Australian living and forget their past allegiances. However, as van Krieken (2012, p. 500) explains, it was eventually realised that any expectations of integration still served to politically irritate and alienate new Australians and with time integration was abandoned for a more multicultural trajectory.

By the 1970's, the vestiges of the White Australia policy were abolished and Australia had begun actively promoting itself as a country that valued and respected cultural diversity (Forrest & Dunn 2011; Jayasuria 2002, 2012). In 1973, upon declaring Australia to have become 'one of the most cosmopolitan societies on earth', Minister for Immigration Al Grassby in the Whitlam Labor government announced it was time the country unreservedly rejected the 'chauvinistic view which conveniently devalues the presence and activity of ethnic groups as being somehow 'un-Australian'' (Grassby 1973, p. 3). At this time multiculturalism was touted as a way of 'reimagining' the Australian national identity (Moran 2011, p. 2154) and ensuring that all Australians, regardless of origin, were treated equally.

As outlined in a 1977 submission to government titled *Australia as a Multicultural Society* (Zubrzycki 1977), the goal of Australia was to achieve social cohesion, equality, and respect for the diversity of cultural identities. To attain this, it was argued:

> What we believe Australia should be working towards is not a oneness, but a unity, not a similarity, but a composite, not a melting pot but a voluntary bond of dissimilar people sharing a common political and institutional structure. (Zubrzycki 1977, p. 14)

Multiculturalism was adopted as a federal public policy in 1978 under Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser's Liberal/National coalition government (Jupp 2011). The Galbally Report outlined a new

strategy for receiving migrants, which included a provision of services to ensure they would receive equal treatment in Australia. As Jupp (2011, p.42) describes, this policy was informed by four key principles: equality for all, the prerogative of every person to maintain their own culture, the provision of services to meet the needs of migrants, and the provision of services that would enable migrants to become self-reliant.

The next 20 years saw a number of multicultural policies implemented in Australia at the federal level (Koleth 2010). While multicultural policies were also taken up at a state level, some states were more resistant than others. One such state was Queensland, where multicultural policy was not officially incorporated into Queensland state legislature until 1993 (Koleth 2010). This is perhaps not surprising given that Queensland had a reputation for being highly conservative, particularly under Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen who led Queensland from 1968-1987 (Jupp 2011). While there had been 'a watershed in the shift towards a more multicultural conception of Australian society' in the 1970's (van Krieken 2012, p. 509), enthusiasm for more inclusive policy did not necessarily mean all Australians would wholeheartedly embrace cultural and ethnic diversity. Although multiculturalism was intended to build social cohesion, in a country where a generation earlier there had been policies of overt discrimination, some political and public resistance could perhaps be expected.

Anti-immigration sentiment increased in Australia during the 1990's, spurred on by Queensland politician Pauline Hanson (Jakubowicz 2002; Jupp 2011). Calling Australia 'immigration's soft touch' (Hanson 1997), Hanson warned that Anglo-Australians were at risk of being outnumbered by Asian immigrants (Hage 2000). Hanson declared it time to redress what she saw as the imbalance caused by government immigration policy and if elected to government she promised to abolish multiculturalism, place stricter controls on immigration, and stop welfare support being given to people on the basis of their ethnic background (Jupp 2011). These measures, she argued, would offer Australians:

> The chance to stand against those who have betrayed our country, and would destroy our identity by forcing upon us the cultures of others.
> The chance to turn this country around, revitalise our industry, restore our ANZAC spirit and our national pride, and provide employment for all Australians who have given a fair break would seize the opportunity for a better way of life, for themselves, and for their families.
> The chance to make sure the Australia we have known, loved and fought to preserve will be inherited intact, by our children, and the generations that follow them. (Hanson 1997)

Although Hanson's One Nation party failed to gain majority support in Australia, it won more than one million votes in the 1998 federal election. Most of these votes came from either Queensland, or from Australia's rural communities. From these figures, the indication was that a significant number of Australians still did not wish their country to move away from its mono-cultural past, and supported steps to curtail Australia's multicultural philosophy (Jupp 2011). The presence of

Pauline Hanson and One Nation also played a significant role in determining the direction multiculturalism was to follow. Not only was multiculturalism being contested on the political fringe, but concerns that multicultural policy was jeopardising national integration could also be heard in more mainstream political rhetoric (Koleth 2010).

Critics have argued that multiculturalism not only threatens Australia's social cohesiveness, but it also devalues the importance of Australia's cultural identity, makes allowance for behaviour that is objectionable, and costs the Australian taxpayer billions of dollars (NMAC 1999; Roth 2007). In response to criticisms such as these, the Howard Liberal/National coalition government commissioned the National Multicultural Advisory Council [NMAC] to 'develop a report which recommends on a policy and implementation framework for the next decade, that is aimed at ensuring that cultural diversity is a unifying force for Australia' (NMAC 1999, p. vii). The resulting report, titled *Australian Multiculturalism for a New Century: Towards Inclusiveness*, highlighted the need for an 'enhanced and refocussed multicultural policy' (NMAC 1999, p.58) which encompassed four principles: civic duty, cultural respect, social equity, and productive diversity. Although NMAC recommended the term 'multiculturalism' be retained, it suggested this concept be rebranded as 'Australian multiculturalism' which acknowledged ethnic diversity, but was built upon the foundations of Australian democracy and citizenship (NMAC 1999), and located Anglo-Australians and British heritage as being central (Fozdar & Spittles 2009, p. 498).

Over the course of the next few years, Australia's multicultural polices were revisited and revised. Soon the concepts of integration returned to immigration discourse (Koleth 2010). In response to concerns regarding Australia's security and vulnerability to terrorism, the Howard government in 2003 released a policy entitled *Unity in Diversity*. The position taken by the government was that loyalty to Australia rested in citizenship (Koleth 2010). In a press conference in December 2006 (Parliament of Australia 2006), Prime Minister John Howard announced that the federal government would put in place a 'citizenship test' whereby immigrants to Australia would be expected to learn and acknowledge their responsibilities as citizens (Koleth 2010; Roth 2007). As Koleth (2010) explains this was intended to acknowledge and address concerns amidst some sectors of the Australian community that multiculturalism posed a threat to Australian 'core values'. All migrants to Australia were required to not only demonstrate that they were competent in the English language but also possessed, as Prime Minister Howard put it, 'an understanding of basic aspects of Australian society, our culture, and our values and certainly some understanding of our history'. When asked what he believed Australian values to be, Prime Minister Howard responded:

> Well Australian values will be I guess debated by many people, but I think we all agree that democracy, we all agree that a belief in a free media, the equality of men and women, the concept of mateship, the concept of having a go and the concept of looking after the very

vulnerable in our community. I think they are common Australian values on which most of us can agree. (Parliament of Australia 2006)

John Howard also believed that these values had not been fully appreciated by migrants coming to Australia and that steps were necessary to ensure these values were made clear:

> When you look at the source countries for Australia, migrants now, they come from all around the world. Some of them come from countries that don't, as much as we do, respect the equality of men and women for example. They come from some countries where the levels of democracy are not as high as they are in this country so there's all the more reason why it's important that we emphasise these things, because they are things that it's commonly accepted bind the Australian community together. (Parliament of Australia 2006)

In February 2011, *The People of Australia: Australia's Multicultural Policy* was launched by Labor Prime Minister Julia Gillard's government, which slightly softened the multicultural position of the federal government (van Krieken 2012). Acknowledging the diversity of Australia's population, this policy was designed with the intention of complementing Australia's 'national characteristics of equality and a fair go for all' by making a commitment to ensure 'fairness and inclusion' for all Australians. Key initiatives introduced under this policy included the establishment of the Australian Multicultural Council, the implementation of a National Anti-Racism Partnership and Strategy, and the strengthening of access and equity strategies to ensure all Australians could benefit from government services and programs (Department of Social Services 2014).

According to the most current census figures collected by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012), 26 per cent of the Australian population was born overseas. A further 20 per cent of Australians have at least one parent born overseas. Reflective of Australia's past migration policies, the most common country of birth for Australians born overseas and the most common country of origin for Australia's long-standing migrants is the United Kingdom (ABS 2012). The top ten birthplaces of more recent arrivals (defined as people who arrived between 2007-2011), however, reflect the fact that many new Australians were born in Asia (ABS 2012). For the period of 2014-2015 the number of people accepted in to Australia on the migrant program will be 190,000. A further 13,750 individuals will be accepted on the Humanitarian program (Department of Immigration and Border Protection 2015).

Despite the dismantlement of the White Australia policy and the implementation of multicultural policies, it has been argued that discrimination 'continues to maintain its indelible impress on Australian society' (Jayasuriya 2012, p. xiii). Additionally, as Forrest and Dunn (2011, p. 436) explain, prejudice may well be now 'expressed more covertly, as varying levels of threat to 'social cohesion' and 'national unity' as perceived according to the cultural values and hegemonic integrity of the dominant (receiving) society'. It is a 'new racism' – one framed around the belief that the 'cherished values' (Dunn et al. 2004, p. 422; Louis et al. 2013, p.157) of an Anglo-

Australian culture must be preserved, which is now thought to influence both political and public beliefs about who belongs and who does not (Jayasuriya 2012; Louis et al. 2013). Such sentiments are often directed towards asylum seekers – in particular, those who come towards Australia by boat (Dunn et al. 2007; Every & Augoustinos 2007, 2008a, 2008b; Louis et al. 2013).

Australian Asylum Policy

Australia has a long but varied history of accepting refugees for resettlement. The first significant intake of refugees occurred in the 1930's when Australia, under international pressure, begrudgingly agreed to accept Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany (Gibney 2004; Jupp 2003). Prior to the outbreak of war in 1939, 7,000 European Jews were given refuge in Australia, however public response to this group was not welcoming. Anti-Semitic sentiment in Australia was rife and these humanitarian entrants met some antagonism. The belief was that Jewish people simply did not fit into Australian society. Moreover, these humanitarian entrants were provided no material support from the government. Instead they were left to their own devices or cared for by Australia's small existing Jewish population.

After WW2, between 1947 and 1954 an excess of 170,000 refugees were accepted into Australia (Refugee Council of Australia 2014). Decisions regarding who would be offered sanctuary, however, were dictated by the Australian domestic agenda and not purely for 'humanitarian' reasons (Gibney 2004; Jupp 2003). The government also took control over the resettlement of these 'New Australians', overseeing their settlement; giving them access to education and employment, and imposing upon them an expectation that they would learn and adopt Australian practices of living (Gibney 2004; Jupp 2003). Like Australia's broader immigration policy, the refugees accepted were pre-screened and chosen on the basis of their racial suitability and on whether they were considered to be able to contribute to Australia's economic success. At this time Australia's high degree of selectivity drew criticism from the International Refugees Organisation who suggested that Australia's humanitarian program was motivated more by what Gibney (2004; p. 177) describes as a desire to repopulate Australia with people who were 'healthy and industrious' rather than a concern for those rendered homeless and vulnerable.

Strict control over who would be permitted into Australia helped curtail animosity among the Australian public about allowing refugees to resettle in their country. As these new migrants did not challenge Australia's 'white' identity and were able to make an economic contribution, refugees accepted into the country during this era were not considered to pose a significant threat to the established Anglo-Australian population and were less likely to be subjected to discrimination (Gibney 2004). By the 1970's Australia had resettled in excess of 350,000 refugees (Gibney 2004), yet it was uncommon for asylum seekers to arrive into Australia unexpectedly (Neumann 2004).

The first 'boat people' were five men from Vietnam who arrived in Darwin in 1976. These were individuals who had fled communist Vietnam and, after two months at sea, arrived in Australia (Betts 2001). An account of their arrival told on SBS News explains how the men sailed into Darwin and how Australian officials were at a loss to believe that this boat had sailed from Vietnam:

> In the morning, they slipped into the harbour, asked a fisherman on a nearby boat where to find 'immigration people' then borrowed 10 cents to call from a public phone onshore. 'My brother called the police, and they said: "Oh, this is not the way how to do it". We had to call (the Department of) Immigration and Quarantine (the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service). "You stay there. Don't move around. Stay in your boat. Wait. We're coming". Stay in the boat, wait here, they're coming. And, first, we were coming in to Quarantine,' Lam said. When Immigration arrived, the idea that the five men could have travelled 3,500 kilometres from Vietnam on an ageing, 20-metre boat was so unimaginable the officials refused to believe it. (Sutton 2013)

With more than 2,000 individuals arriving by boat over the next five years, such a trip did become believable and the term 'boat people' was soon common in the Australian vernacular (Betts 2001; Stevens 2012). Initially, an accepting stance was taken towards boat arrivals, but concern soon mounted as to what was the most appropriate course to be taken against a growing number of unauthorised arrivals (Stevens 2012). While Australia was open to the resettlement of refugees from the Indo-Chinese regions of Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and China who had been processed by overseas refugee camps, the government became less inclined to welcome those who arrived upon Australian shores unexpectedly.

As time passed, asylum seekers who reached Australian shores by either plane or boat in the late 1980's and early 1990's were subjected to harsher conditions. By this time Australia, led by the Bob Hawke/ Paul Keating Labor government, had begun exercising its right to place those wishing to apply for asylum in detention while their eligibility as a refugee was being assessed. At times this process took more than two years to complete (Betts 2001).

Since 1992, Australian governments have also passed increasingly rigid laws to reduce the country's obligation to accept 'irregular maritime arrivals' (Australian Human Rights Commission 2013; Betts 2001; Phillips & Spinks 2011). The *Migration Amendment Act 1992* introduced mandatory detention in mainland facilities of 'designated persons' (i.e. 'boat people') and prevented courts from ordering their release. At this stage asylum seekers could only be detained for a maximum of 273 days (Parliament of Australia 1992). By 1994, legislation was amended by the Paul Keating Labor government to remove the 273-day limit and to ensure all non-citizens who arrived in Australia without appropriate documentation could be subjected to mandatory and indefinite detention (Australian Human Rights Commission 2013).

While the One Nation party was not supported by the majority of Australians, the type of language being endorsed in this era had, according to Gibney (2004, p. 187), 'created a new space

to express views on immigrants and asylum seekers that bordered on the racist'. Although many people distanced themselves from Pauline Hanson, she had articulated some sentiments that had been echoing in federal politics since the introduction of a multicultural immigration policy. Whilst Hanson's career in federal politics was relatively brief, long after her departure from Canberra her 'populist rhetoric continued to resonate in debates and policy developments, such as those concerning asylum seekers and refugees' (Koleth 2010, p. 30).

In October 1999 legislation was passed by the Howard coalition government, which meant those who arrived in Australia without a visa (i.e. by boat) and requested recognition as a refugee would have their application processed by Australia, but should they be found to be a refugee they would not be entitled to permanent residency. Temporary Protection Visas (TPV) were introduced which meant that 'unauthorised arrivals' determined to be refugees would only qualify for a three year visa with a possible option for renewing for an additional three years. Anyone who applied for permanent protection would not qualify if they had spent more than seven days in another country where they could have requested protection (Gibney 2004; Phillips 2004). TPV holders were eligible to work and receive government support payments (Phillips 2004).

In August 2001, a Norwegian ship *MV Tampa* rescued 438 asylum seekers from a sinking vessel. Upon hearing claims from those rescued that they might jump overboard if they were returned to Indonesia, the captain made the decision to sail to Christmas Island. Declaring a state of emergency, the *Tampa* anchored just outside Australian territory and was boarded by members of the Australian Special Air Service Regiment (O'Doherty & Augoustinos 2008). What followed was a highly publicised standoff between the *Tampa*'s captain and the Australian government. Despite considerable international criticism, Australian Prime Minister John Howard maintained that it had a sovereign prerogative to protect its territorial borders and refused to allow any asylum seeker aboard the *Tampa* to set foot on Australian territory. The incident was not resolved until Nauru and New Zealand agreed to process those aboard who were asking to have their applications for refugee status considered (ABC 2015).

Two months later, following an Australian Defence Force (ADF) interception with a 'suspected irregular entry vessel' (SIEV), the government released a media statement advising there was evidence that during the course of this operation asylum seekers aboard this vessel had thrown their children into the ocean as a way of forcing the ADF to rescue them and accept them for processing. This accusation was ultimately found by a senate enquiry to be false, however these accusations succeeded in increasing public animosity towards asylum seekers in Australia (Klocker & Dunn 2003; Mares 2002; Tazreiter 2003)

The events of late 2001 saw a raft of policies put in place by the Coalition government led by John Howard. While prior to this event, policy was to intercept vessels carrying asylum seekers

inside of Australian waters and to take them to an Australian port; the Australian government quickly implemented more measures to deter 'unauthorised boat arrivals' (Parliament of Australia 2015). Under international maritime law, a country may turn away a vessel which has entered its territorial waters and whose purpose is not 'innocent' (i.e. if the persons aboard these vessels intend to commit a crime or to offload without the consent of the nation who has territorial jurisdiction). While the Australian government could not interfere with the passage of a vessel if it was in international waters, it did have a legitimate right to turn a boat around if the vessel is located in its territorial jurisdiction. Again the *Migration Act 1958* was amended, this time excising a number of Australia's offshore territories from the Australian Migration Zone – the designated boundary where, when entered, an asylum seeker could make a valid visa application for entry onto the Australian mainland. Named 'Operation Relex' the ADF was charged with conducting surveillance and response operations to deter 'unauthorised boat arrivals' from reaching Australia (Parliament of Australia 2015). As is outlined in Senate Committee documents:

> Operation Relex's strategic aim was an extension of the Government's new border protection policy: to prevent, in the first instance, the incursion of unauthorised vessels into Australian waters such that, ultimately, people smugglers and asylum seekers would be deterred from attempting to use Australia as a destination. (Parliament of Australia 2015)

The policy also gave the ADF the authority to intercept vessels and escort (or tow) them back into international waters. In testimony given to Senate on this operation, a lead component commander for 'Operation Relex' Rear Admiral Smith stated any requests for asylum made by people aboard these vessels were not factored in during encounters between the ADF and unauthorised vessels in Australian territory:

> It had no relevance for us. Our mission was clear - that is, to intercept and then to carry out whatever direction we were given subsequent to that. The status of these people was irrelevant to us ... Claims from the UAs [unauthorised arrivals] were not factors to be taken into account in terms of how we conducted that mission. (Parliament of Australia 2015)

Another strategy used by the Australian government to deter boat arrivals was the introduction of offshore processing. Under John Howard's 'Pacific Solution' asylum seekers arriving by boat would not necessarily be transferred to the mainland for processing, but could instead be sent to offshore processing centres either upon Australia's Christmas Island or at detention centres operated by Nauru or Papua New Guinea (Phillips & Spinks 2011).

When coming into power in 2007 the Labor Party had set out to adopt a more lenient stance towards asylum seekers than the former Coalition government. Fulfilling an election promise to adopt a more humanitarian position, the ALP under the leadership of Kevin Rudd, abolished the Howard government's 'Pacific Solution' and the practice of turning back the boats. However, a policy of mandatory detention for asylum seekers without documentation remained, requiring that they be detained either in onshore detention facilities or in the processing facility situated on

Christmas Island. They were, however, given assistance in making their claims and were provided with options for recourse should their claims be unsuccessful. Furthermore, temporary protection visas introduced by the Howard government in 1999 were abolished. Instead, the Rudd government introduced the Permanent Protection Visa (Parliament of Australia 2008).

An ALP leadership spill in 2010 saw Julia Gillard take over the role of Prime Minister. In the same year, steps were being taken by the Gillard Government to re-establish off shore processing of refugees and, by 2012, offshore detention centres had commenced operation in Nauru and at Papua New Guinea's Manus Island. The 'Malaysia Deal' was also proposed – a plan whereby Malaysia would accept 800 asylum seekers in exchange for Australian agreeing to resettle 4000 refugees. After much debate as to the legality of coming to such an arrangement with Malaysia, the Australian High Court, however, eventually declared such an action to be unlawful (Rowe and O'Brien 2014).

In April 2012, leader of the opposition Tony Abbott introduced 'The Coalition's Plan for More Secure Borders', a plan for 'stopping the boats' and one he vowed to implement should he become Prime Minister. In an address to the Institute of Public Affairs, Abbott declared that 'Australia's foreign policy should have a Jakarta focus, not a Geneva one', and stating that Australia should take a tougher stance against 'Indonesian boats disgorging illegal arrivals in Australia' and that Australia would be 'taken more seriously in the world at large if we were coping better with "backyard" issues in which we have a vital national interest and for which we have prime responsibility' (Liberal Party 2012). Tony Abbott also promised to instigate a number of measures to prevent asylum seekers from making the voyage to Australia by sea. These included: the reopening of offshore processing centres at Nauru; approaching the Indonesian government to propose a cooperative effort in the prevention of people smuggling; the recreation of temporary visas for 'illegal' boat arrivals; and lastly he would give orders for the Australian navy, 'where it is safe to do so', to turn boats back into Indonesian waters (Liberal Party 2012).

At this point in time the Labor government, under Prime Minister Julia Gillard, had reached an impasse with regards to its asylum policy due to the proposed arrangement with the Malaysian government being upturned by the Australian High Court. As such, 'irregular maritime arrivals' (IMAs) were still being processed onshore under the same rules as asylum seekers who had arrived in Australia by plane using an entry visa (Karlsen & Phillips 2014). A Refugee Review Tribunal was assessing their applications and those who received unfavourable verdicts had the right to appeal those findings. Those granted refugee status were being permanently resettled in Australia.

During this time there was also a constant flow of boats carrying asylum seekers attempting to reach Australia. This was raising concern in Australian public opinion not only about the ability of Australia to cope with these arrivals, but also about the fact that people were drowning at sea trying

to attempt this voyage. There was also a problem with overcrowding in Australia's detention centres. As a consequence, detainees had been protesting against their treatment and the conditions they were being kept in. At times these protests resulted in violent encounters with security staff and the damage of property (Karlsen 2012).

In June 2012, Prime Minister Julia Gillard commissioned the Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers to provide advice to the government on policy options regarding asylum seekers. Released in August 2012, the Report of the Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers (Australian Government 2012) made recommendations which it believed would discourage asylum seekers from 'high-risk maritime migration' and to instead use 'regular migration pathways and established international protections' in order to seek protection (Australian Government 2012, p. 8). The 22 recommendations made by the Expert Panel included: the application of the principle of 'no advantage' whereby no IMA would be better off than an asylum seeker who used 'regular migration arrangements' to apply for refugee status; the need for the government to foster opportunities for regional engagement in dealing with issues of asylum; an increase of Australia's Humanitarian Program quota to 20,000, with a higher proportion of those places being reserved for refugees who have been processed through refugee centres; the removal of family reunion options for those who use 'irregular' means to reach Australia (i.e. boat); and the implementation of regional processing arrangements in Nauru and Papua New Guinea. By September 2012, acting on these recommendations, the Gillard government had signed memorandums of understanding with the governments of both Nauru and Papua New Guinea to accept asylum seekers for processing (Karlsen & Phillips 2014).

With the return of Kevin Rudd as Labor leader in 2013, stricter measures were implemented against asylum seekers arriving by boat. Under what was named the *Regional Settlement Arrangement* any unauthorised arrivals requesting asylum would be taken to Papua New Guinea for processing. Those determined not to be refugees would be sent back to their country of origin. Genuine refugees would be offered residency in PNG. None, however, would be permitted into Australia (Karlsen & Phillips 2014). Shortly after the implementation of the Regional Resettlement Plan, a memorandum of understanding was also signed with Nauru for that country to provide a similar asylum seeker processing arrangement. Upon winning the 2013 Australian federal election, Tony Abbott's Coalition Government has retained these policies but has incorporated them into its own policy 'Operation Sovereign Borders'. While offshore processing has been retained under the latter policy, the first response to asylum seekers travelling to Australia by boat was for the ADF to, 'where it is safe to do so', turn boats carrying asylum seekers around and to provide them with life boats if their own vessels are deemed unseaworthy. Laws were passed that those who attempt to reach Australia by boat would be sent offshore to have their claims for asylum processed. Even if they were found to qualify as a refugee, they still would not be permitted to resettle in Australia.

Rules for refugee resettlement were also changed. After July 2014, anyone who registered with the UNHCR in Indonesia was automatically ineligible for resettlement in Australia (Australian Customs and Border Protection Service 2014).

The new Coalition government also took steps to ensure those who may be considering making a voyage to Australia were warned of the consequences that would now befall them should they do so. The 'No Way' campaign, for example, features predominantly on the Australian Department of Immigration website warning of the 'toughest border protection measures ever' (Australian Customs and Border Protection Service 2014).

Figure 2.1: Australian Government Campaign Poster – 'No Way'
(Australian Customs and Border Protection Service 2014)

Late 2014 saw other significant changes made to asylum seeker laws in Australia. The Australian Parliament passed legislation to reintroduce TPVs (Department of Immigration and Border Protection 2015). New arrangements were implemented for dealing with individuals who had arrived in Australia without a visa (i.e. Unauthorised Maritime Arrivals and others not cleared by immigration) and who, as the government website puts it, arrive in Australia 'illegally and engage Australia's protection obligations'. The TPV is the only visa that would allow a person who attempted to reach Australia by boat onto the Australian mainland, and may be granted to people who Australia recognises as having a claim to protection under the 1951 Refugee Convention and its associated protocol. A TPV lasts for three years and after that time the holder must reapply to have the visa extended and their situation reassessed. The holder of this visa is eligible to work and does have access to all aspects of welfare support. Their children also have access to public education. Travel outside of Australia (with the expectation to return) is restricted and must be approved. TPV holders are also not permitted to sponsor family members for an Australian visa

under the Australian Humanitarian or Family Migration Programs. Moreover a holder of a TPV is not eligible to apply for a permanent visa (Department of Immigration and Border Protection 2015).

The Attitudes of Australians Towards Asylum Seekers and 'Boat People'

> 'we' are soon to be 'awash', 'swamped', 'weathering the influx', of 'waves' 'latest waves', 'more waves', 'tides', 'floods', 'migratory flood', 'mass exodus', of 'aliens', 'queue jumpers', 'illegal immigrants', 'people smugglers', 'boat people', 'jumbo people', 'jetloads of illegals', 'illegal foreigners', 'bogus' and 'phoney' applicants, and 'hungry Asians' upon 'our shores', 'isolated coastlines', and 'deserted beaches' that make up the' promised land', the 'land of hope', the 'lucky country', 'heaven', 'the good life', 'dream destination' and they continue to 'slip through', 'sneak in', 'gathering to our north', 'invade' with 'false papers' or 'no papers', 'exotic diseases', 'sicknesses' as part of 'gangs', 'triads', 'organized crime', and 'Asian crime'. (Pickering 2001, p. 172)

The first strains of 'anti-asylum' rhetoric were heard soon after the arrival of those first 'boat people' in 1976. Accounts suggest the Australian public quickly began to express concern that Australia no longer had control over who was coming to their country. There was also suspicion that those aboard the vessels were not refugees, but people simply not wishing to be subjected to the Australian immigration process. It was thought that any leniency shown by the government would only encourage more to board boats sailing towards Australia and make the country seem weak (Stevens 2012).

The attitudes of Australians towards asylum seekers have often been the subject of empirical investigation. Researchers have undertaken a range of studies, both quantitative and qualitative, to help better understand how Australians perceive this issue and what motivates these views. The *Australian Election Studies* are a series of studies, which first started in 1987 and have since been regularly carried out directly after the Australian federal election on a representative sample of Australian voters (AES 2014). The national sample is drawn randomly from the electoral register and participants are asked to complete a survey. These surveys are designed to document the voting patterns of Australians and their views on relevant social issues. In 2001, the AES first measured the attitudes of Australians towards 'boat people'. This was subsequent to the events of September 11 and the *Tampa* incident, and the survey asked the question about the extent to which Australian voters either agreed or disagreed with the statement *'All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back'*. In 2001 more than 62 per cent of respondents agreed with the statement (n=1967). Since then that number has decreased, however, the most recent survey taken in 2013 (n=3840) indicates 48.5 per cent of Australians still support this action (McAllister & Cameron 2014).

Australians' views toward 'boat people' have also been reported by the *Scanlon Foundation Surveys*, which measure indicators of social cohesion within Australia (Scanlon Foundation 2015). The national sample is selected using randomly generated telephone numbers. In 2014 an Internet-based survey was also administered. In the past five annual surveys, respondents have been asked

what they consider is the most appropriate government response to asylum seekers attempting to reach Australia by boat (Markus 2014). In the most recent survey (n=2596), Markus (2014) reports that 31 per cent of Australians believe boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned around and another 10 per cent support the suggestion that 'boat people' should be detained and deported. Among those who were accepting of asylum seekers, 30 per cent of respondents indicated they believed 'boat people' should be given temporary visas and 24 per cent thought the arrangement should be permanent.

The Scanlon Survey also provides insight into the predictors of Australians' attitudes towards asylum seekers. In terms of gender, males (34 per cent) were more likely to support a policy of turning back boats carrying asylum seekers than females (29 per cent). Other predictors of rejection were age (35-44 years), education level (trade apprenticeship or below Year 11), financial situation (struggling to pay bills), and party affiliation (Liberal/National supporter). Australians more likely to disagree with this statement as well as support a policy that granted asylum seekers permanent residency in Australia were young people (18-24 years), those with a high level of education (Bachelors degree or higher), those in a comfortable financial situation, and supporters of The Australian Greens political party. In terms of region this survey also found that people living in Queensland were less likely to agree that asylum seekers should be granted permanent residency visas than Australians residing in other states (Markus 2014).

Researchers have applied various explanatory frameworks to account for the origin of negative attitudes by some Australians towards asylum seekers. Pedersen et al. (2005) for example, have demonstrated how 'false beliefs' (e.g. factually incorrect beliefs about asylum seekers) are associated with negative public attitudes. Louis et al. (2007) have further suggested intergroup processes related to social identity can lead to the endorsement of exclusionary behaviours. Taking another perspective, Pietsch and Marotta (2009) have drawn on the classic sociological concept of 'the stranger' to explain exclusionary beliefs. Other accounts suggest that the origin and maintenance of these negative attitudes are the discourses and narratives that reverberate in political rhetoric, the media, and in the talk of everyday Australians, which construct asylum seekers, particularly 'boat people', as being undesirable and thus unwanted (e.g. Every & Augoustinos 2008a, 2008b; Hartley & Pedersen 2007; Haslam & Holland 2012; McKay et al. 2012).

In many Western nations, politicians and the media have been accused of inciting fear by framing asylum seekers as presenting a threat to settled populations. As Castles and Miller (2003, pp. 102-103) put it, when referring to refugees and asylum seekers, 'sensationalist journalists and right wing politicians map out dire consequences, such as rocketing crime rates, fundamentalist terrorism, collapsing welfare systems and mass unemployment'. These constructions induce anxieties among citizens who believe they will be disadvantaged by adopting an accepting and benevolent stance

(Every & Augoustinos 2008a, 2008b; KhosraviNik 2010; Lyn & Lea 2003; Pickering 2001). Discursive representations of asylum seekers as a threat to Australia have reinforced a conviction that asylum seekers are not welcome, thus building barriers to their acceptance into Australia. Some literature describes, for example, how politicians and some elements of the media engage in anti-asylum rhetoric, which perpetuate the idea that asylum seekers have transgressed against Australia (Every & Augoustinos 2008a, 2008b; Hartley & Pedersen 2007; Haslam & Holland 2012; McKay et al. 2012). As Haslam and Holland (2012, p.107) have described 'public figures have frequently demonised asylum seekers as economic opportunists, terrorists, disease vectors and criminals'. These constructions, it is suggested, strongly influence public opinion on the asylum seeker issue and can reinforce a belief amongst the Australian public that 'boat people' should therefore be treated with contempt (e.g. McDonald 2011; McKay et al. 2011; Pedersen et al. 2005; Turoy-Smith et al. 2013).

Political rhetoric in Australia has often cast 'boat people' as a menace. The connection between Australian national security, terrorism, and asylum seekers, for instance, has often been reinforced in Australian political rhetoric particularly since September 11, 2001 and the *Tampa* Crisis (Cameron 2013; Clyne 2005; Gleeson 2014 , Klocker & Dunn 2003; McDonald 2011; O'Doherty & Augoustinos 2008). As Gleeson (2014, p. 85) describes, 'a blurring of the boundaries between issues of asylum-seekers and terrorism' was a calculated securitisation strategy employed by Prime Minister John Howard and the LNP Coalition in the early 2000's. Just prior to the 2001 election, for example, Howard likened 'boat people' to war criminals who had sneaked into Australia after World War II (Cameron 2013). By portraying 'unauthorised boat arrivals', as a security threat, the intention was to 'construct the mega-issue of border protection' and persuade the public to be more supportive of steps being taken to enforce the exclusion of this 'undesirable' group (Gleeson 2014). Similar strategies were adopted in the 2010 federal election campaign. As leader of the LNP opposition, Tony Abbott spoke of how 'in a world where crime and terror are international in scope' Australia had a responsibility to its own citizens to carefully vet who should be permitted in the country (McDonald 2011, p. 288).

Political anti-asylum rhetoric has also depicted boat people as being immoral and behaving in a manner inconsistent with Australian values. A radio interview given by Tony Abbott in 2012, for example, demonstrates how he frames 'boat people' as 'unChristian' and capable of doing the 'wrong' thing:

> I don't think it's a very Christian thing to come in by the back door rather than the front door…
> think the people we accept should be coming the right way and not the wrong way…
> If you pay a people-smuggler, if you jump the queue, if you take yourself and your family on a leaky boat, that's doing the wrong thing, not the right thing, and we shouldn't encourage it.
> (Burnside 2012)

Other parliamentarians have used similar language. Referring to 'boat people' as 'queue jumpers' is a common accusation in political anti-asylum rhetoric (Cameron 2013; Clyne 2005; Rowe & O'Brien 2014). The suggestion that boat people are attempting to sneak into Australia ahead of others who are waiting to be invited into Australia has often been used to raise the ire of Australians and make them less sympathetic to the plight of 'boat people'. As Clyne (2005, p.184) explains, 'the queue (first come, first served) is one of the bases of Anglo-Australian 'fairness''. The suggestion that 'boat people' are 'jumping the queue' serves as a way of differentiating them from other immigrants who applied for, and were granted, permission to come to Australia to live. It also implies that by coming to Australia by boat, another displaced person, one who has been waiting for a visa to come to Australia, will miss out (Clyne 2005).

Calling 'boat people' 'illegals' is another common strategy used by politicians to reinforce the belief that 'boat people' are undesirable (Clyne 2005; Rowe & O'Brien 2014). 'Illegal entry' is defined as entering a country without an appropriate visa, however, under Article 31 of the 1951 Convention, people are not breaking any laws if they 'show good cause for their illegal entry or presence' in a timely manner. It is, therefore, not a criminal offence to enter a Member State if your intention is to immediately request asylum. Continually referring to asylum seekers as 'illegal' arrivals reinforces a mistaken public belief that they have committed a crime (Cameron 2013). One of the most recent deliberate uses of this term is by former LNP Immigration Minister Scott Morrison who, in 2013, issued an instruction to his departmental staff and detention centre staff to refer to people who have tried to reach Australia by boat, and who have been detained as their applications for refugee status are being processed, as 'illegal arrivals' (Hall 2013). Claiming that it was merely his intention to 'call a spade a spade', Morrison argued that he was not referring to the validity of the claims of 'boat people' under the 1951 Convention, but merely their attempts to enter Australia without documents.

The media have also played a pivotal role in both shaping and perpetuating the attitudes of Australians on the issue of asylum seekers (Klocker & Dunn 2003; Pickering 2001). Research on media discourse on this topic has shown how asylum seekers and boat people have been negatively represented. Using examples from the Australian press, for instance, Pickering (2001, p. 184) found accusations against asylum seekers were generally going 'unchecked in the majority of press coverage'. Similarly Klocker and Dunn (2003, p. 83) reported that terms such as 'illegal' and 'illegitimate' were often used by the press to characterise asylum seekers as presenting a danger to Australia. In response to complaints about the press using terms that may be 'inaccurate' and 'derogatory', The Australian Press Council in 2004 issued guidelines cautioning its members against using 'such unqualified terms in reports and headlines' (Australian Press Council 2004).

Although some sectors of the media are respecting these industry guidelines (McKay et al. 2011), other media outlets have continued to apply pejorative terms in their reporting of events relating to 'boat people' and asylum seekers (see Media Watch 2009).

Research into the attitudes of Australians towards asylum seekers describes how many everyday Australians also express concerns about 'boat people'. They are concerned about the identity of these individuals, the quality of their character, and their motivations for wanting to live in Australia. Just like in political and media discourses, 'boat people' are frequently accused of being 'illegal immigrants' who have attempted to enter Australia without permission, and who 'jumped the queue' ahead of others who have applied for refugee status overseas and have waited to be granted an Australian visa (Gelber 2003; Hartley & Pedersen 2007; Rowe & O'Brien 2014; Schweitzer et al. 2005). Some members of the Australian public express fear that 'boat people' might be terrorists, wishing to inflict harm on Australia (McDonald 2011; McKay et al. 2011; Turoy-Smith et al. 2013). There are also concerns that people aboard these boats are economic migrants and not people fleeing their homeland in fear of their lives (McKay et al. 2011), and that unexpected arrivals will place an unreasonable financial burden upon Australia (Pedersen et al. 2005). Moreover, public concerns have also been expressed that the asylum seekers aboard these boats present a threat to the national integration of Australia, because of perceived incompatible cultural differences (Every & Augoustinos 2008a; Turoy-Smith et al. 2013).

In terms of challenging the exclusion of asylum seekers and 'boat people', there are, as Pickering (2001, p.184) puts it, 'some spaces for resistance and the reconstruction of borders and boundaries'. Although accepting rhetoric has been less common in public debate (Mason & Hayes 2012), not all Australians agree that boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned away. Many have been outspoken in their disapproval of the government's actions to curtail any efforts by 'boat people' to seek asylum in Australia. In his research into the political language used to vilify 'boat people' during the Howard era, Clyne (2005), for instance, noted the presence of an 'alternate discourse', whereby politicians and others who opposed government policies to exclude boat people, challenged the accusations being made against this group of asylum seekers. These 'accepting' individuals complained that the treatment of asylum seekers by the Australia government was tantamount to criminal behaviour. They also objected to the absence of 'Australian fairness', and felt that the government's actions had brought discredit to Australia's international reputation (Clyne 2005, pp. 188-189). Every and Augoustinos (2008a) have also documented examples of pro-asylum political discourse, describing how some politicians advocating for asylum seekers frame their arguments around the lack of choice facing the displaced, who were compelled to leave their country of origin for fear of persecution (Every & Augoustinos 2008a).

The Australian Greens (The Greens) are a political party who have consistently and publicly advocated for the acceptance of asylum seekers. Describing themselves 'as the voice of compassion' in the asylum seeker debate, arguing that asylum seekers will stop boarding boats to Australia only when there are 'safe, official ways for them to seek asylum in countries like Australia' (The Greens 2015).

Figure 2.2: Website banner – 'End Cruel Detention'
 (The Greens 2015)

Asylum seeker advocate and former Prime Minister, the late Malcolm Fraser was also critical of the Abbott government and what he saw as its inhumane treatment of asylum seekers. In arguing for the need for Australia to be more compassionate towards those who have escaped their homeland in fear for their lives, he frequently challenged the stance the government had adopted and the arguments used to justify its actions. As he argued:

> The Refugee Convention, signed by Menzies in 1954, recognised that genuine asylum seekers or refugees often flee without papers, often without any formal identification, because if your parents have been killed by Saddam Hussein's thugs, if your sister has been raped and then killed by some of his military or whatever, you can't really go along to some government department and say 'I want papers and a passport please so I can escape your wretched regime, you've killed the rest of my family'. And so if you are genuinely fleeing terror it is quite common to have no papers. It was political leaders who called these people illegals, queue jumpers, wrongdoers, maybe prostitutes, maybe drug runners, possible terrorists, and they try to teach Australians that they were not really people and therefore the government was justified in treating them without respect, not as people (Short 2012).

Some media outlets have also actively challenged the exclusionary beliefs of some Australians towards 'boat people'. Demonstrating that the 'the flow of meaning' attributed to asylum seekers, is 'by no means unidirectional', Klocker and Dunn (2003, p.89), for example, have noted instances of newspapers challenging the negative political rhetoric, and taking a more sympathetic stance. Television has also been used to advocate for a more open response to asylum seekers. First broadcasted in 2011, a television series produced by the SBS entitled *'Go Back to Where You Came From'* followed six Australians taken to trace (in reverse) the journey typically taken by 'boat

people' who attempt to seek asylum from Australia (SBS Australia 2011). As Cover (2013) describes, this documentary depicts how Australians who previously held strong anti-asylum sentiments, underwent a process of attitudinal change to a more compassionate stance after witnessing first-hand the experiences faced by asylum seekers.

The internet has also been used to advocate for a more open stance. Online news sites such as *'The Conversation'*, for example, provide a channel for more humanitarian discussion on the issue, allowing a forum for more 'academic' views to be made available to the Australian public (e.g. Burnside 2014; Pickering 2013). Blogs are also a forum for pro-asylum seeker discourse. Fozdar and Pedersen (2013, p. 383), for instance, describe how this medium has been used to bring pro-asylum rhetoric into the public sphere demonstrating that blogs can 'make it quite clear to those expressing anti-asylum seeker opinions that their views are not shared by all' and that many Australians adopt an accepting stance.

There is also substantial pro-asylum sentiment among the Australian public that is reflected not only in survey data, but also by the support offered to asylum advocacy groups at pro-asylum rallies and via social media. The Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (2015), for example, offers a very different viewpoint to that offered on the anti-asylum pages, advocating for the rights of asylum seekers and voicing concern over the federal government's treatment of those who attempt to reach Australia by boat. Comments on the ASRC Facebook page show how supporters of the centre voice care and compassion towards asylum seekers:

> While we focus on treating people as the problem, we just sow the seeds for further problems in the future. Please, please, let's get back to looking at the causes of the movement of peoples, while remembering to treat people as though they were human beings!
>
> I have always thought that eventually our children and our children's children will have to atone for our disgraceful treatment of asylum seekers ... Remember ...the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing ....
> (Asylum Seeker Resource Centre 2015)

As I have explained above, inclusive attitudes by young Australians towards asylum seekers will be the primary focus of my investigation. Despite there being a strong culture of 'rejection' of asylum seekers in Australia, an accepting perspective still features strongly in the public narrative. It is this 'alternative discourse' that I wish to document and examine. Furthermore, I wish to identify the underlying principles that inform this viewpoint and to develop an explanatory framework that accounts for the presence of these views.

Figure 2.3: Poster – 'Real Australians Say Welcome'
 (Asylum Seeker Resource Centre 2015)

Conclusion

This chapter has set out to provide context for the investigation into attitudes towards the asylum seeker issue in Australia. I began by providing a historical account of Australian immigration policy. As I have explained, from the establishment of the Australian federation in 1901 up until the 1970's, Australian immigration policy was largely designed to maintain and protect the Anglo-Australian cultural hegemony. More inclusive policies have since been put in place, but this does not necessarily mean that Australia and all Australians have embraced an open and accepting perspective. I also explored Australian history with regards to the country's preparedness to accept asylum seekers and refugees for resettlement. Although the country's legal framework recognises that it has obligations towards the displaced under international law, Australian political establishment with considerable support from its public, has acted to protect what it believes to be its sovereign right to control its borders and to ultimately decide who shall be permitted entry. As a consequence, a number of policies have been put in place to ensure that asylum seekers, who attempt to reach Australia by boat, are discouraged from attempting such an endeavour.

Literature relating to the attitudes of Australians towards asylum seekers was also reviewed. I outlined quantitative studies that have been used to identify demographic and social factors that predict attitudes, as well as qualitative studies that investigate how those views have been expressed. Of particular interest is the literature that describes the language used to construct asylum seekers in a way which makes them appear undesirable and has reinforced a belief that asylum seekers, in particular 'boat people', should be kept out of Australia. Not all Australians, however, subscribe to such language or share this position of exclusion. There is a section of

Australian society that holds more inclusionary views and it is the nature of these accepting views that I wish to further explore and understand.

In the next chapter I will continue my review of literature pertinent to this thesis by providing an overview of theory relating to the concept of cosmopolitanism. I argue that this framework can conceptually advance the understanding of the strategies some people employ to actively deconstruct social and symbolic barriers and instead advocate for the acceptance of asylum seekers in Australia.

3. Literature Review: Cosmopolitanism

> The right to visit, to associate, belongs to all men by virtue of their common ownership of the earth's surface; for since the earth is a globe, they cannot scatter themselves infinitely, but must, finally, tolerate living in close proximity, because originally no one had a greater right to any region of the earth than anyone else. (Kant 1983, p. 358)

In the previous chapter, I reviewed literature relating to the Australian response to the asylum seeker issue. I provided an overview of the measures successive Australian governments have undertaken to ensure uninvited arrivals are prevented from reaching the country's shores. Past research documenting the attitudes of Australians towards asylum seekers was also reviewed. As explained, my research goal is to focus on accepting attitudes towards asylum seekers and to demonstrate how current regimes governing the exclusion of asylum seekers are being challenged. This is important, because while there is a considerable body of literature which discusses the mechanisms associated with the exclusion of asylum seekers in Australia, to date few research studies have explored and theorised the mechanisms associated with a more accepting disposition.

This chapter offers a broad overview of how the concept of cosmopolitanism can inform an understanding of this acceptance. Cosmopolitanism as an explanatory framework is useful to help guide my argument, because it speaks to an outlook that can facilitate an accepting disposition towards the displaced by members of a settled population. Whilst this chapter does not aim to provide a comprehensive overview of cosmopolitan thought and cannot do justice to the broad range of cosmopolitan literature, I begin with a brief history of cosmopolitan thought, before summarising how the concept is being applied in contemporary theory and specifically in relation to asylum seekers. This chapter then considers arguments suggesting that the concept could be applied in addressing global issues, before specifically looking at literature that connects notions of cosmopolitan responsibility to issues of human displacement. After discussing the relationship between cosmopolitan views and attachment to nation, I conclude by reviewing research relating to how cosmopolitan views have been observed in the attitudes and actions of everyday Australians.

A History of Cosmopolitan Thought

Cosmopolitan theory is over 2000 years old. Its origin is traced to Cynic philosopher Diogenes (circa 412-323 BC) who, when asked of his origins, responded 'I am a citizen of the world'. This statement has since been interpreted as meaning that Diogenes perceived himself to have no specific local affiliations, but instead saw himself as being a member of a global community (Kleingeld 2012, p.2). In the 3rd century AD, Greek and Roman Stoic philosophers refined the concept of cosmopolitanism, developing the perspective as a principled ideal whereby humankind recognised their obligations to one another as members of a single moral community (Kleingeld 2012; Kleingeld & Brown 2014). Stoic philosophy asserted that knowledge and experience of the world

was vital and that a sense of a collective global identity would reduce factional division and conflict (Kleingeld & Brown 2014; Nussbaum 2002).

The concept of cosmopolitanism was an important element in the 18th century writings of philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Writing on international ethics and politics, Kant observed that while nations frequently invoked the concept of 'right' within their own territorial boundaries, there had been little engagement as to what entitlements should be afforded to nations and individuals at the global level (Fine 2006; Kleingeld & Brown 2014). Written in response to political upheavals occurring in 18th century Europe and the ensuing violence, Kant spoke of the need for sustained accord between nations. In his disquisition *Perpetual Peace*, Kant proposed that nations adhere to a set of principles, presented in three 'Definitive Articles' (Doyle 1986; Kant 1983). In the First Definitive Article, Kant spoke of the need for the state to uphold 'republican' principles, which has been interpreted as meaning a combination of 'moral autonomy, individualism, and social order' (Doyle 1986, p.1157). The Second Definitive Article contended that the rights of nations should be predicated on a 'federation of free states'. Kant believed that a collective goodwill and cooperation should be fostered between states, while still respecting the integrity of an individual state's sovereign rights. This, he thought, 'would create the conditions necessary for the realization of cosmopolitan order' (Fine 2006, p.52). The Third Definitive Article spoke of the 'cosmopolitan right' – the right of all people to enter another country and to not be treated as an enemy (Kant 1983, p.357). Kant considered this prerogative to be based upon the principles of 'universal hospitality', whereby those who are 'alien' to a particular territory, nation or domain should not be met with aggression, but must instead be made welcome. He reasoned that if these principles were upheld and protected by international consensus, a global culture of peaceful transnational interaction would ensue (Brown 2010b).

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, some social theorists treated the concept of cosmopolitanism with a degree of caution (Delanty 2006; Kleingeld & Brown 2014). In this period the world had become more interconnected and the patterns of production and consumption became thoroughly globalised. Social theorists commonly asserted that 'cosmopolitan' engagement with the global market by the privileged was done at the expense of the less fortunate who were subject to exploitation. They perceived cosmopolitanism as an elitist ethos used to justify the pursuit of self-interest. Consequently, there was a high degree of scepticism that the supposed freedom, egalitarianism and benefit espoused by cosmopolitan philosophical stance would be of any benefit to broader social interests (Delanty 2006; Kleingeld & Brown 2014). The Manifesto of the Communist Party by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels (1848), for instance, described how:

> The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. To the great chagrin of Reactionists, it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-established

national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilised nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. (Marx & Engels1848, p.16)

Notwithstanding these concerns, sociological thought at this time still reflected a cosmopolitan perspective and some theorists believed there might be some social benefits to adopting such an outlook (Kendall et al. 2009; Turner 2006). Émile Durkheim, for example, foresaw a time when national loyalties would be complemented by universal connections and spoke of societies being 'made up of circles of increasing diversity' (Durkheim 1986, p. 195), where greater connectivity would increase a need for 'world patriotism' (Durkheim 1986, p. 204).

For the better part of the 20th century, however, interest in cosmopolitanism remained quiescent and it was not until the 1990's that theorists such as Hannerz (1990) and Nussbaum (1994) began to revitalise the concept. This was, in part, due to rapid social changes occurring around this time such as the breakdown of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the transition of South Africa from a system of apartheid to one of majority rule, and the reunification of Germany (Delanty 2012b). Speaking of increased global interconnectivity, Hannerz (1990), for example, wrote of the role cosmopolitanism might take in bringing about an understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. Describing cosmopolitanism as being 'a willingness to engage with the Other', he hypothesised cosmopolitan skills would be useful in negotiating a world where people are more likely to be exposed to an array of cultural understandings (Hannerz 1990, p.230).

Moving this argument into the political realm, American philosopher Martha Nussbaum reasoned that people, and young people in particular, should be taught to appreciate they had obligations to the global community rather than solely to their own state (Nussbaum1994, 2002). Responding to an article published by the *New York Times*, which had warned against the presence an 'unpatriotic left' residing within the halls of American academia teaching the 'politics of difference' to youth in The United States (Rorty 1994), Nussbaum (1994, 2002) maintained it was crucial that young people learn cosmopolitan values. While not needing to disregard their personal ties, she argued individuals:

> …must also, and centrally, learn to recognize humanity wherever they encounter it, undeterred by traits that are strange to them, and be eager to understand humanity in all its strange guises. They must learn enough about the different to recognize common aims, aspirations, and values, and enough about these common ends to see how variously they are instantiated in the many cultures and their histories (Nussbaum 2002, p.9)

Theorists who disagreed with Nussbaum's normative assertions, thought her idealistic and accused her of underestimating the importance of national affiliations. Himmelfarb (2002, p.76), for example, considered the cosmopolitan aspiration to be a mere fantasy as it was 'utopian, not only in its unrealistic assumption of a "commonality, aspirations, and values", but also in its unwarranted

optimism'. Himmelfarb also argued the importance of patriotic allegiances should never be undervalued. Similarly, Glazer (2002) expressed doubt that loyalty and obligation could be easily extended beyond national allegiances to the degree Nussbaum had suggested. Although he acknowledged the need for consideration towards others, Glazer also argued 'there is meaning and significance to boundaries, in personal and political life, as well as practical utility' (Glazer 2002, p. 63). Nevertheless, despite the criticisms and debates, the concept of cosmopolitanism has become an integral part of the contemporary academic repertoire within the social sciences (Jazeel 2011).

The concept of cosmopolitanism now has a multitude of meanings. The term may, for example, refer to a philosophical ideal or political agenda (Delanty 2006). It could also refer to the demonstration of competencies across the international stage (Roudometof 2005) or a preparedness to accept ethnic and cultural difference (Appiah 2006; Lamont & Aksartova 2002; Skrbiš & Woodward 2007). Moreover, contemporary literature comprises both theoretical (e.g. Appiah 1997; Beck & Sznaider 2010; Delanty 2006, 2012a, 2012b) and empirical (e.g. Lamont & Aksartova 2002; Morris 2009, 2010a, 2010b; Skrbiš & Woodward 2007) accounts of cosmopolitan phenomena.

Although use of cosmopolitanism is now broad, a full discussion of the concept lies beyond the scope of this review. In the remainder of this chapter I therefore limit my focus to literature that speaks to how this explanatory framework can guide a theoretical understanding of accepting attitudes towards asylum seekers by young Australians. First, I look at how the concept has been applied to issues of asylum seeking. Second, I review varying theoretical accounts of what it might mean to be 'cosmopolitan'. Third, I outline the argument that a cosmopolitan viewpoint and an attachment to one's own nation need not be mutually exclusive. Finally, this chapter summarises empirical accounts of how the cosmopolitan viewpoint has been observed in everyday Australians.

Cosmopolitanism, Hospitality and Issues of Asylum Seeking

Globalisation has brought about significant transformations in human connectivity. While people have always travelled and interacted, the 'intensification of worldwide relations' as Giddens (1990, p.64) describes it, has changed how people from different corners of the globe relate to one another (Beck 2006; Giddens 1990; Held 2010). Transnational encounters have meant boundaries are more porous and people are more closely linked than ever before (Beck 2000b; Castles 2001; Held et al. 1999; Parekh 2003). Whether it is due to tourism, business or migration, an encounter with others from outside of one's own country is, at some level, within the realms of most peoples everyday experience. Previous assumptions about what might constitute distance and separation have changed considerably, and many can now imagine themselves as belonging to an expansive and mutually interconnected global community (Appiah 2008; Kendall et al. 2009).

Global interconnectivity has also meant that the problems of others may more easily become the problems of all. Events on distant shores can now instigate a ripple effect that spreads across the globe (Amin 2004; Held 2010). Issues such as financial crises, environmental disasters, terrorism and human displacement, for example, are problems that cannot always be contained within the borders of individual nations. International collaboration and cooperation are therefore necessary to address such matters (Anderson-Gold 2001; Beck 2006; Habermas 2001; Held 2010).

People do not always share the same values, priorities or belief systems. Globalisation has brought this truth to the fore, highlighting dissimilarities and posing challenges as to how those who have different cultural understandings might effectively coexist and address global issues. It also provides the opportunity for people to appreciate the unprecedented levels of interconnectedness and to actively engage with the global community (Beck 2006; Held 2002; van Hooft 2009). As Beck (2006) argues, the cosmopolitan outlook allows us to comprehend these new social and political realities and to appreciate our broader international obligations. Held (2002, p. 58) agrees, saying that those who endorse such a viewpoint are 'better equipped to resolve, and resolve fairly, the challenging trans-boundary issues that create overlapping communities of fate'. It may therefore be that those with a cosmopolitan outlook are well equipped to face the challenges brought about by global displacement.

A contemporary notion of cosmopolitanism is predicated upon some fundamental human rights principles. First, is the belief that all people are entitled to certain considerations, regardless of who they are and where they live. These include certain freedoms and the basic necessities of life and safety (Anderson-Gold 2001; Fine 2003; Held 2010; Parekh 2003). Cosmopolitan ideology takes the position that all people and nations with the material capacity to do so, have an obligation towards ensuring human rights are both respected and protected. This responsibility is not limited by national boundaries but extends into the global domain (Appiah 2006; Parekh 2003). From the cosmopolitan perspective there is a duty to help others in need if there is the ability to do so (Appiah 2006; Beck 2006; Parekh 2003). As Parekh (2003, p. 9) explains, the 'basis of the duty in each case is the same, to relieve human suffering and to help others secure those primary goods without which no good life is possible'. While we do not necessarily have to put our own vital wellbeing behind others, if there is no *substantial* cost to self, it is a cosmopolitan responsibility to provide assistance where possible (Parekh 2003). The principles of cosmopolitanism can therefore be used to inform the standard of interaction that should ideally take place between nations and the displaced, and the actions countries should take when they are asked by asylum seekers to provide sanctuary support (La Caze 2004).

Kant's 'laws of hospitality' inform cosmopolitan understandings of how displaced persons should be treated (Brown 2010b; Derrida 2001; Dikeç 2002; La Caze 2004; Morris 2010b). Kant

asserted that all people should be extended basic entitlements, such as the right to free movement, personal safety, open communication and the freedom to engage in commercial ventures as long as they behave peaceably (Brown 2010b). As Benhabib (2006a) points out, Kant did not see the extension of hospitality as being a voluntary act of generosity. Instead, it was seen as being the obligation of all nations to provide temporary sanctuary to strangers in need, and not to treat them with hostility. Furthermore, while visitors were not necessarily entitled to remain permanently in the host country, Kant argued they should not be compelled to leave if their lives would be put at risk (Benhabib 2006a; Kant 1983, Kleingeld 2012).

Kantian theory offers some relevant guidelines for a present-day cosmopolitan approach to the appropriate treatment of asylum seekers. As Brown (2010b) argues, Kant's laws of hospitality provide the minimal level parameters for initial contact between individual nations and the displaced. However, it has also been acknowledged that Kantian cosmopolitanism does not fully meet the requirements of asylum seekers in the present day. Firstly, while Kant introduced the principle of *non-refoulement*, whereby people should not be forcibly expelled from a country if they would be harmed as a consequence (Brown 2010b; Kleingeld 2012), there remains some ambiguity regarding what he considered might actually constitute 'harm'. If harm meant death, then any less fatal consequences of expulsion, such as imprisonment might not be seen as being a legitimate reason to grant individuals asylum (Kleingeld 2012). Another problem relates to whether asylum seekers should have a universal right to permanent resettlement in their host country. Although Kant argued all people have a right to *visit*, he maintained that the host retains the prerogative to determine who may ultimately *reside* in the territory (Brown 2010b). Asylum seekers, however, have needs different to those of other migrants (Derrida 2001). A 'cosmopolitan' response towards asylum seekers requires a readiness to accommodate those requirements, including the preparedness to accommodate asylum seekers permanently. Any condition that hospitality be an impermanent and provisional arrangement can be highly problematic considering the complex requirements of the displaced and stateless. As La Caze believes (2004, p. 322), while a Kantian understanding of hospitality may guide initial encounters, it fails to fully 'articulate the terms of a continuing interaction, where people may stay for many years and eventually become citizens in a new community'. Applying the concept of Kantian hospitality to the present day context, asylum seekers can be expelled in order to satisfy national agendas. Without international agreement on the rights of permanent residence for asylum seekers, some countries can be highly selective (and at times discriminatory) in their choice of who can ultimately remain in their country and who must leave. Such actions, it is argued, are inconsistent with a contemporary cosmopolitan ideal (Darling 2009; Derrida 2001; La Caze 2004).

In Chapter 1, I outlined the various international laws and covenants currently in place to protect the interests of the displaced. As Colic-Peisker (2011, p. 21) explains, after World War II, and the atrocities carried out 'in the name of nation', there was 'an acute political need to acknowledge human rights and human solidarity beyond national borders'. Given agreements such as The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees are underwritten by the fundamental principles of universal human rights, they are essentially 'cosmopolitan' in design (Beck & Levy 2013; Benhabib 2006a; Colic-Peisker 2011; Fine 2003). There is, however, debate regarding the extent to which human rights laws such as those related to the protection of asylum seekers, are effective in safeguarding the rights of vulnerable individuals against countries who ultimately seek to run their own agendas and protect their own self-interest. As Benhabib (2006a, p. 30) suggests, the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees 'can be brazenly disregarded by non-signatories, and, at times, even by signatory states themselves'. Many nations have domestic policies that treat asylum seekers in a manner inconsistent with cosmopolitan ideals. For example, by actively deterring asylum seekers, subjecting them to mandatory detention or enforcing policies of deprivation, nations put their own sovereign interests ahead of any universal right to seek asylum and are not respecting cosmopolitan principles (Derrida 2001; La Caze 2004).

Despite international laws acknowledging the importance of human rights, the sovereign power of nations often takes priority (van Hooft 2009). The United Nations is the organisation charged with enforcing these laws, but, as van Hooft (2009, p.135) points out, the United Nations is exactly that – a conglomeration of independent nations. Under this arrangement each nation will ultimately act to protect their own interests and those of their allies. The argument has also been posed that international human rights agreements are merely a demonstration of power by some dominant nations. This does not mean they themselves are prepared to succumb to this international control (Anderson-Gold 2001; Douzinas 2007). As Anderson-Gold (2001, p.4) writes:

> Human rights declarations represent a kind of international code and can be useful tools to criticize and induce public embarrassment for one's enemies. Coercive implementation procedures do not exist to ensure the realization of individual human rights because from this perspective states do not intend to allow international regulation of their interests.

Citizenship is a valuable asset in terms of being able to exercise one's rights. As Douzinas (2007, p. 99) puts it, 'politics creates rights and only civil rights created politically and enforced legally by domestic legal systems give protection to political actors, in other words citizens'. Citizenship, described by James (2014, p. 214) as 'the globally taken-for-granted base condition for political normalcy in the world', provides the individual the right to prioritised entry into his or her own country. It also provides states the mechanism by which they can classify who to allow across their borders, who to regulate and who to forbid (James 2014). By virtue of the fact that asylum seekers

have left the state where they may have had citizenship and have not been officially accepted by another nation, they only have the protection offered under international law. Yet, if the global organisations that claim to be protecting the stateless are also committed to defending the sovereign autonomy of nation states and the rights of their own citizens, universal human rights (and the rights of asylum seekers) cannot be adequately safeguarded under these present arrangements (Anderson-Gold 2001; Douzinas 2007; van Hooft 2009).

Although human rights norms are espoused at the international level, it is ultimately the responsibility of individual nations to implement these standards (Morris 2010). This arrangement creates disjuncture between the intention behind laws designed to protect asylum seekers and the enforcement of these laws. For the rights of asylum seekers to be better protected, one solution might be to follow the suggestion by Habermas (2001) and establish a 'transnational institution' that exists beyond the nation state and would be better able to enforce cosmopolitan law and cosmopolitan justice (Habermas 2001; Fine 2007). An alternative option would be to foster a more cosmopolitan perspective using current institutional arrangements (Fine & Smith 2003) or, as Benhabib (2006, p.162) suggests, 'mobilize all the institutional, normative, and cultural resources within the system of membership to undermine the logic of exclusions'. Within existing national boundaries those with rights might advocate for those without (Amin 2004; Brown 2010a; Cheah 2006). This calls for a local approach, whereby problems arising from global connectivity are addressed using national institutional arrangements. This 'at home' response, as Amin (2004, p. 42) explains:

> …is based on combating racism, protecting the rights of displaced people and asylum seekers, and fostering intercultural dialogue and commitment to distant strangers. It frequently involves local groups developing voice and impact through worldwide solidarity networks and social movements in order to shape and influence cultural politics both 'at home' and in other regions.

If there is inconsistency between the principles that nations have agreed to at an international level and how they are being carried out in practice, then it is the citizens of those nations who can hold their governments to account in terms of ensuring they honour the human rights imperative and that such considerations are protected (Morris 2010b). A citizen with a deep cosmopolitan consciousness therefore potentially occupies a critical position in transforming the cosmopolitan ethos into national political policy.

The cosmopolitan framework has also been used previously to describe attitudes of inclusion showed by some members of a settled population towards asylum seekers. A particularly relevant empirical account comes from Morris (2009, 2010) and her description of how cosmopolitan ideals are upheld by some (but not all) judges in the United Kingdom. In a study involving an analysis of legal rulings on welfare entitlements to asylum seekers in Britain, Morris (2009, p. 230) describes more sympathetic judges often engaging in an 'act of imagination which goes beyond deliberation',

and how 'this process of deliberation was brought to its close by a reflexive exercise to determine the concrete meaning of human dignity, and hence the boundaries of our moral responsibility and collective humanity' (Morris 2009, p.232). However, while this research makes an important connection between the empirical applicability of using cosmopolitan framework to explain accepting attitudes towards asylum seekers, empirical accounts that describe a more 'ordinary' cosmopolitan outlook – where acceptance of asylum seekers is articulated within the everyday talk – are rare.

Being 'Cosmopolitan'

What does it mean to have a cosmopolitan outlook? In the past a 'cosmopolitan' was often seen as a rootless individual with no national ties. Such a person was considered a 'deviant' due to their perceived unwillingness to commit their allegiance to a particular group. This was the case in early-mid 20th century, where some European countries such as Nazi Germany, fascist Italy and the communist Soviet Union saw cosmopolites as traitors and persecuted them for having no national allegiance (Fine & Cohen 2002; Vertovec & Cohen 2002). Cosmopolitanism has also been previously associated with an elite lifestyle, a characteristic of a well-heeled traveller visiting exotic locations, experiencing unusual cultures and sampling unfamiliar cuisine. In this context, the cosmopolitan was a person possessing both the financial and cultural capital to appreciate the benefits international connection and travel had to offer (Kirwan-Taylor 2000).

From a theoretical standpoint, there are varying levels of contemporary cosmopolitan engagement. These range from an inclination towards engaging in rather 'shallow' cosmopolitan encounters, to where people are prepared for challenging experiences with difference (e.g. Beck 2006; Skrbiš & Woodward 2007). Skrbiš and Woodward (2007), for example, describe three main cosmopolitan dispositions. The first relates to transnational mobilities made more common through air travel and increased exposure to other culture through media and technology. The second cosmopolitan disposition relates to cultural competency and knowledge that a person can apply when circumstances demand. Finally, these authors describe a third type of cosmopolitan practice. This, they argue, involves a valuing of foreign others and a 'conscious attempt to be familiar with people, objects and places that sit outside one's local or national settings' (Skrbiš & Woodward 2007, p.732).

Developing this model further, Kendall and colleagues (2009) describe what they believe to be three broad 'styles' of cosmopolitanism. A *sampling* style of cosmopolitanism typically results from temporary encounters with foreign otherness. This may be from engagement with the media, the consumption of 'foreign' goods, or because of travel to unfamiliar locations. These exposures are often brief and the purpose for the engagement is personal gratification (e.g. entertainment, recreation, profit). The *immersive* style of cosmopolitanism shows more active engagement where

people associate cultural interaction with an opportunity for self-growth, but is still fundamentally self-serving.

The contemporary cosmopolitan, however, is not necessarily a person who simply travels or has had a transnational experience (Calhoun 2002; Hannerz 1990; Roudometof 2005, 2012; Vertovec & Cohen 2002). As Vertovec and Cohen (2002, p. 8) write, 'a bit of dabbling in, or a desire for, elements of cultural otherness in itself does not indicate a very deep sense of cosmopolitanism'. The concept can also describe a 'reflexive, open inclusive normative consciousness' (Calhoun 2008, p. 442). A 'deeper' level of cosmopolitanism is perhaps more closely aligned to what Kendall et al. (2009) refer to as the reflexive style. It is at this level where an individual 'shows a genuine commitment to living and thinking beyond the local or national' (Kendall et al. 2009, p.121) and demonstrates what Skrbiš and Woodward (2013, p. 104) refer to as 'conscious forms of action based on political and ethical reasoning which steps outside the established power categories of the self and the nation in favour of a desire to engage with humanity'. Individuals who embrace this style display a more considered engagement with foreign otherness. They consciously choose to interact with cultural diversity and are receptive to the experience of difference. This 'reflexive actor' can therefore play a significant societal role as they have the capacity to 'act as decision maker and an agent of change, as a voter, an engaged citizen, [and] a contributor to local community initiatives' (Kendall et al. 2009, p.121). What creates this deeper cosmopolitan disposition is reflexive capacity. This conscious awareness and deliberate engagement with transcultural experiences differentiates this style of cosmopolitanism from the others. This theoretical focus on deliberate and calculated 'cosmopolitanisms' is salient, as it frames this style of cosmopolitanism as being a deliberate, rather than a latent inclination. As such, it can be articulated, advocated and acted upon (Kendall et al. 2009; Skrbiš & Woodward 2013).

There is, as Beck & Sznaider (2010, p. 389) argue, 'a cosmopolitan condition of real people', brought about from 'global awareness' from either the consumption of internationally sourced commodities, via the media, or through personal experience with cultural diversity. A person also does not have to be wealthy or well travelled to possess a cosmopolitan outlook (Datta 2012; Lamont & Aksartova 2002; Werbner 1999, 2014). Furthermore, expressions of cosmopolitan openness can vary across different structural and geographical conditions (Lamont and Aksartova, 2002; Werbner 1999). As Vertovec and Cohen (2002, p.5) write, migration flows and increased opportunities for travel have resulted in 'cheek-by-jowl relationships between diverse peoples at work or at street corners, and in markets, neighbourhoods, schools and recreational areas', and everyday people have responded to these new interactions with attitudes of openness. As such this 'ordinary' or 'everyday' cosmopolitan outlook, described by Noble (2009, p. 47) 'as an open-ness to cultural diversity, a practical relation to the plurality of cultures, (and) a willingness and tendency

to engage with others' is grounded in the events of people's everyday experiences (Lamont & Aksartova 2002; Noble 2009; Skrbiš & Woodward 2013).

Researchers can observe and document cosmopolitan perspectives via empirical research (e.g. Beck & Sznaider 2010; Phillips & Smith 2008, Skrbiš et al. 2004). While cosmopolitan attitudes and practices have been empirically observed (e.g. Phillips & Smith 2008; Haller & Roudometof 2010; Skrbiš & Woodward 2007; Woodward et al. 2008) there have also been a multitude of ways in which cosmopolitanism has been operationalised. The attempt to break the concept of cosmopolitanism down into discrete constitutive parts has resulted in an assorted range of descriptions being used for this purpose (Phillips & Smith 2008).

One example of how cosmopolitanism might be operationalised comes from Held (2002) who identifies three cosmopolitan attributes. These include: recognition of the increasing interconnectedness of political communities in diverse domains including the social, economic and environmental; development of an understanding of overlapping 'collective fortunes' that require collective solutions – locally, nationally, regionally and globally; and the celebration of difference, diversity and hybridity while learning how to 'reason from the point of view of others' and mediate traditions.

Theorising the existence of a 'cosmopolitan–local' continuum, Roudometof (2005) believes there are dimensions across which 'cosmopolitans' and 'locals' might vary and be identified. These relate to the degrees of attachment a person has to their community, country and the extent to which a person endorses 'economic, cultural and institutional protectionism' Roudometof (2005, p. 128). On the whole, cosmopolitans are assumed to be less attached and protectionist than their more 'local' counterparts (Roudometof 2005).

To measure cosmopolitan dispositions via a survey instrument, Phillips and Smith (2008) separated 'cosmopolitan practice' (i.e. action) from cosmopolitan outlook (i.e. attitudes). The scale of cosmopolitan practice used by these authors was determined by measuring the extent to which their respondents might travel overseas, speak on the phone to a person overseas, keep in contact with friends living overseas; spend time on the internet and watch the SBS (a multi-lingual broadcaster in Australia). In this research, the cosmopolitan outlook was operationalised by asking respondents their level of unease with the prospect of having neighbours who were ethnically different from them.

While these studies provide examples of how cosmopolitanism is explored and tested in empirical research, I am mindful of an argument put forward by Skey (2013) that although attempts have been made to operationalise the concept of cosmopolitanism, its analytical dimensions are still too broad. He argues that without paying attention to this, we risk turning the concept into a mere 'dumping ground for the bewildering array of social interactions that involve some form of

'openness towards others' (Skey 2013, p. 250).

As is evident in this review of literature the use of the term is broad. In applying cosmopolitanism as a framework for understanding an acceptance of asylum seekers it is therefore important to clearly delineate what 'being cosmopolitan' would look like in this particular context. It is equally important to identify where the limitations of such an outlook may lie.

Cosmopolitan Principles and National Connections

It is sometimes assumed that a person who embraces a cosmopolitan ethic and recognises their roles and responsibilities towards the global community must somehow divorce themselves from their national roots. The argument was based on a conviction that a loyalty to national ties must take precedence over global considerations. As Brett and Moran (2011, p. 189) explain, this view has been applied in sociological studies relating to the concept of nation and national belonging being used a tool to exclude others. The reasoning is that those with cosmopolitan views would be accepting of foreign others whereas those more parochial in outlook, would not.

Cosmopolitanism and nationalism, however, need not be seen as being diametrically opposed. Contrary to the assertion that cosmopolitan and national affiliations are mutually exclusive, the argument has been made that a cosmopolitan awareness can co-exist alongside national loyalty and attachment (e.g. Appiah 1997, 2006; Beck & Levy 2013; Brett & Moran 2011; Calhoun 2008; Kendall et al. 2009). Appiah (1997), for instance, speaks of 'cosmopolitan patriots' – people 'rooted' in their own place of belonging, and yet demonstrating a capacity to appreciate and negotiate places of difference. For Appiah, people are well suited to having a strong sense of belonging to that which is close by and familiar. These connections are important for all – including those with a cosmopolitan outlook:

> It is because humans live best on a smaller scale that we should defend not just the state but the county, town, the street, the business, the craft, the profession, the family as communities, as circles among many circles narrower that the human horizon that are appropriate spheres of moral concern. We should, as cosmopolitans, defend the right of others to live in democratic states, with rich possibilities of association within and across their borders; states of which they can be patriotic citizens. And, as cosmopolitans, we can claim that right for ourselves. (Appiah, 1997, p.624)

Consistent with this perspective Beck (2006, pp.72-73) speaks of a 'dialectical process' occurring between attachments to local and attachments to global. He believes 'the global and the local are to be conceived not as cultural polarities, but as interconnected and reciprocally interpenetrating principles'. Likewise, Beck and Levy (2013, p.8) have argued 'that meaningful identifications express particular attachments: one's identity, one's biography of belonging, is always embedded in a more general narrative and memories of a group'. They go on to argue that without such meaningful connections it is difficult for one to develop a cosmopolitan outlook. From this

perspective, cosmopolitan outlook grows from a local imaginary, and national connectedness informs global connectedness. As they put it:

> Cosmopolitanism does not negate nationalism; national attachments are potential mediators between the individual and cosmopolitan horizons along which new identifications unfold. (Beck and Levy 2013, p.8)

Not all people however, are willing to be so open. As Beck (2002, p. 29) warns, 'Even the most positive development imaginable, an opening of cultural horizons and a growing sensitivity to other unfamiliar, legitimate geographies of living and coexistence, need not necessarily stimulate a feeling of cosmopolitan responsibility'. Despite increased transnational interactions, other allegiances prevail (Beck 2002, 2006; Vertovec & Cohen 2002). If an individual is in a situation where they must make a choice, they may favour those they know over those who are strangers. Close attachments and vested interests remain the priority, and as Vertovec and Cohen (2002, p.10) put it, 'family and neighbourhood come first, humanity as a whole comes second'. Furthermore, just because people show cosmopolitan openness towards some foreigners they may not show it towards others. As Skey (2012, p. 476) argues, 'showing solidarity with an individual or group at one moment does not preclude the utilization of cultural stereotypes or support for exclusionary practices at another'.

Researching Cosmopolitanism in Australia

Due to its multicultural makeup, Australia is, according to Colic-Peisker (2011, p. 39) 'one of the most diverse and potentially cosmopolitan societies on Earth'. However, this does not mean that there are no strong ethnic, racial and other exclusionist antagonisms. Or, as I have argued in Chapter 2, a fear of the 'Other' still inhabits the corners of Australian national consciousness. To what extent then, might Australians be classified as being cosmopolitan?

A number of empirical studies have set out to address this question with a particular focus being placed on investigating the presence of a cosmopolitan disposition amongst ordinary, everyday Australians. Skrbiš and Woodward (2007), for example, have carried out research into how middle-class Australians perceived globalisation was affecting their lives and have described a cosmopolitan outlook present in 'ordinary' Australians. Interviewing a range of Australian participants from various ages and backgrounds, focus groups were undertaken to document discourses relating to Australians' quotidian encounters with cultural difference. Describing their participants as being 'neither members of the global elite, nor transnational nomads' (Skrbiš & Woodward 2007, p. 733), the goal was to understand how their participants described their encounters with cultural diversity. In the main the ability to access a diverse range of products (e.g. to buy a variety of foodstuffs, enjoy different music, or travel overseas) was viewed as being a generally positive consequence of globalisation. Exposure to different points of view and ways of

living was also seen as being an advantage. There were however, some concerns regarding risk and threat involved in engaging with foreign otherness such as the loss of ones own cultural distinctiveness or a threat of terrorist attack. There was also what the authors believed to be a degree of selectivity demonstrated whereby people choose when they would be 'cosmopolitan' and when they would not. While a person demonstrates cosmopolitan outlook within one sphere, they may not demonstrate the same perspective in different circumstances. Skrbiš and Woodward (2007, p. 731) observed the Australian participants appeared to be inclined towards the more self-gratifying features of the cosmopolitan experience, 'the more difficult aspects of openness such as showing hospitality to strangers, or accepting human interest ahead of perceived national interests' were less obvious in this study.

Brett and Moran (2011) have also isolated instances where Australians demonstrate cosmopolitan attitudes. Investigating the views of Australians towards living in a multicultural Australia, the participants in this study were from the state of Victoria, a region of Australia more commonly known for a having a progressive social outlook (Brett & Moran 2011). The majority of the participants in their study expressed the belief that a multicultural Australia was a benefit to the country, although some concerns were still expressed regarding the inability of some new migrants to speak English, or the tendency of some to isolate themselves from broader Australian society. In the main, however, these authors noted a general resistance to making generalisations about different cultural groups that made up Australia. Pointing out that questions relating to living in a country where there is cultural diversity also raises questions relating to how people frame their own national identity. Brett and Moran (2011) suggest that cosmopolitan Australians can be firmly attached to their own Australian identity. Describing their participants as being cosmopolitan due to their tendency to 'embrace cultural diversity' (Brett & Moran 2011, p. 203), the authors noted a tendency of their respondents to use notions of being Australian to defend their position. To support their argument, they drew on Australian multicultural policies and the fact that a vast majority of Australians are either immigrants or descendants of immigrants. However, Brett and Moran (2011) were careful to stress they had deliberately avoided questioning their participants about issues relating to immigrants and asylum seekers, believing fears relating to economic competition and loss of sovereignty might inspire a less accepting and open reaction.

Searching for evidence of a cosmopolitan outlook in younger Australians, Turner and colleagues (2014) have explored the degree to which a diverse sample of young people from Sydney demonstrated cosmopolitan tendencies. Using the Skrbiš and Woodward (2007) study as a starting point, these authors set out to understand 'the non-elite, 'everyday' and sometimes starkly disadvantaged contexts of … young people's lives' (Turner et al. 2014, p.86). This study showed that, while at one level their respondents demonstrated 'considerable de facto vernacular

cosmopolitanism', in that they articulated an appreciation of Australia's multicultural composition and a preparedness to engage with difference. However, their cosmopolitan outlook was restrained by their own cultural predispositions and obligations. This outlook, they argued, was contained within 'socially and culturally bounded communities defined by ethnicity, language, socio-economic status, shaped by desires for safety, support and belonging, and maintained by propinquity, religion and the persistence of traditional expectations and patterns around gender and inter-marriage' (Turner et al. 2014, p. 96). This study therefore demonstrated both cosmopolitan potential in the outlooks of these young people and yet also highlighted the fact that these young people were still very much constrained by the expectations of their own families and cultures.

Essentially these studies show that while Australians may not always demonstrate a 'robust cosmopolitan consciousness' (Turner et al. 2014, p. 96), there is empirical evidence of a cosmopolitan viewpoint being expressed in Australia with respect to many different encounters with cultural difference. By extension, I wish to argue that the concept of cosmopolitanism offers an opportunity to explain the acceptance of asylum seekers. I therefore use this framework as the starting point for my investigation into these attitudes of acceptance.

Conclusion

The concept of cosmopolitanism delivers a guiding framework for undertaking a sociological investigation into accepting attitudes of Australians towards asylum seekers. At the level of the individual, cosmopolitan literature describes a confidence and ease with cultural difference and diversity. This perspective can counteract fear and antagonism from exposure to people and cultures thought to be different and thus threatening (Appiah 1997; Beck 2006). A cosmopolitan outlook can, therefore, inform understanding of inclusive attitudes toward foreign others who, albeit unfamiliar strangers, are seeking refuge. In Australia a cosmopolitan outlook has been empirically observed through a number of studies that have identified the existence of cosmopolitan patterns in the outlooks and practices of everyday Australians. It is therefore possible that views consistent with a cosmopolitan outlook might inform attitudes of acceptance towards 'boat people' by Australians. I will therefore use this extant theory as a frame on which to base my own investigation into these accepting phenomena. The previous two chapters have provided a broad overview of the literature that informs this study. In the next chapter I will explain the methodological approach I have adopted in my own investigation of this phenomenon.

4. Methodology and Methods: Investigating Acceptance

In this chapter, I outline the methodological approach I have used to address the guiding research question and investigate the acceptance of 'boat people' by some young Australians. As explained in Chapter 1, this research is affiliated to the ARC DP funded 'Social Futures and Life Pathways of Young People in Queensland' study – also known as the 'Our Lives' project (DP0557667, DP0878781, DP130101490). I first provide an overview of the project and summarise quantitative findings from survey data collected in 2010 into the attitudes of the Our Lives cohort towards 'boat people'. These quantitative findings were used as the starting point to this investigation. My own research is informed by an interpretive qualitative paradigm. After outlining my methodological assumptions and research strategy, I go on to describe how data were collected and the methods used to analyse these data. Finally, I explain how the data will be presented in the findings chapters.

Research Background

Our Lives

The Our Lives project is a longitudinal study following, among other things, the social and political orientations of a single age cohort of young people in Queensland, Australia as they move from adolescence into adulthood. For nearly a decade, the study has been collecting both quantitative and qualitative data from this group of young people on different domains of their lives. This includes: their aspirations for the future (e.g. Chesters & Smith 2015; Laughland-Booÿ, Mayall & Skrbiš 2015; Skrbiš et al. 2011; Skrbiš et al. 2014), their social and political views (e.g. Laughland-Booÿ, Skrbiš & Tranter 2014; Laughland-Booÿ, Skrbiš & Tranter 2015; Smith 2014), and their levels of trust in social and political institutions (e.g. Tranter & Skrbiš 2009). To date, four waves of quantitative data have been collected from the Our Lives cohort. The first wave of survey data collection was undertaken in 2006 and involved 7,031 young people who were aged 12/13 years and were then in their first year of secondary school. They were recruited from 213 Queensland schools comprising of government-funded, independent, and Catholic schools. A further 71 schools were approached, but declined to be involved in the project. The final sample of schools was representative of Queensland schools by geographic region, although there was an over-representation of female students and students from independent schools (this sample bias was corrected with post-stratification weighting in the analysis of quantitative data). Since that time another three waves have been undertaken, the most recent being Wave 4 in 2013 when the participants were aged 19/20-years-old (n=2180). Wave 5 survey data collection is underway at the time of the submission of this thesis (i.e. September 2015). In addition, more than 120 qualitative interviews have also been undertaken with a select number of the Our Lives cohort. These have been in-depth, face-to-to face interviews designed to expand on topics addressed in the surveys

[Figure 4.1].
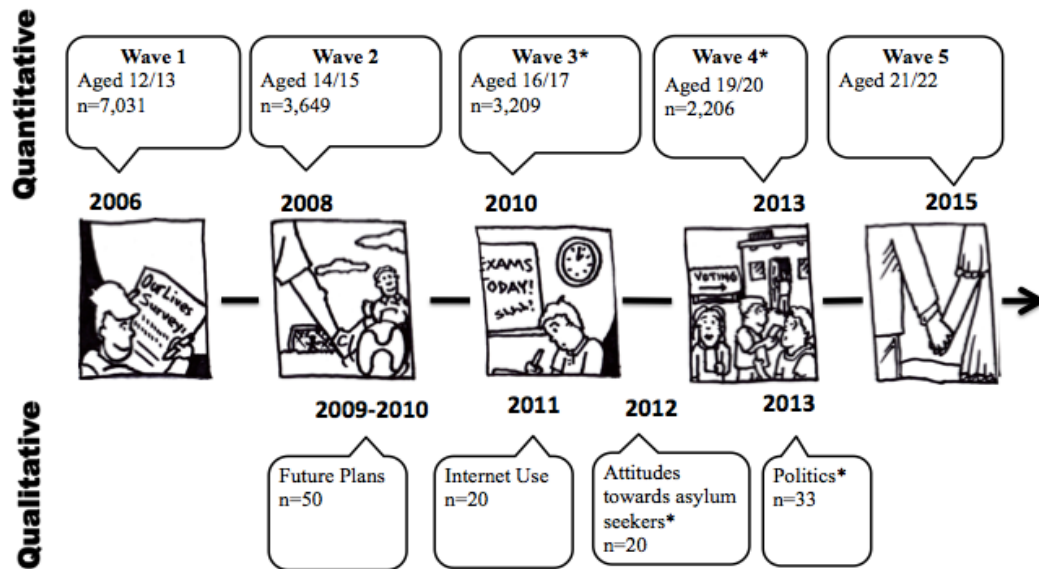
Figure 4.1: 'Our Lives' project timeline
(Our Lives, 2015). * Used to inform aspects of this thesis.

From its commencement in 2006 and until 2012, the project was administered by The University of Queensland in Brisbane. In 2013, the project transferred to Monash University in Melbourne. Although this meant a geographical shift for the Our Lives project, a core group of researchers, including myself, remained with the study. This facilitated a smooth transition between the two institutions and ensured that the overall theoretical and empirical aims of the project were maintained.

My own association with Our Lives began in 2009, when I was employed as a qualitative interviewer on the project. Since that time, I have personally interviewed approximately 80 Our Lives participants. Moreover, I have been actively involved in the planning of Our Lives related qualitative research projects as well as developing and refining procedures for the collection, analysis, and storage of associated data.

'All Boats Carrying Asylum Seekers Should Be Turned Back'

My PhD research journey began in 2011. Having a broad interest in how the social environment shapes individuals and groups who have been subjected to traumatic experiences, I was looking for a topic related to this broad interest which would, at the same time, allow me to make a significant theoretical contribution to the Our Lives project. Inspired by an item used in the Wave 3 Our Lives survey which read 'All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back', I felt that a study which investigated the attitudes of the cohort towards asylum seekers would address both of these interests.

My first (pre-confirmation) year as a PhD student involved a process of literature review and data analysis to help me formulate my research questions and to prepare for confirmation. In

collaboration with my advisors, we analysed the Wave 3 survey findings in order to understand the factors that predicted an acceptance of asylum seekers among members of the cohort. In the section that follows, I will detail this preliminary analysis. These findings are also presented in Laughland-Booÿ, Skrbiš and Tranter (2014), which appears as Appendix N in this thesis.

Our Lives Wave 3 Survey Findings

The Wave 3 Our Lives survey was completed in 2010. At this stage, the cohort was aged 16/17 years old and in their final year of secondary education. The survey included items on participants' attitudes, orientations, and behaviours, as well as questions regarding demographic background. Participants were contacted directly and the survey was conducted using online and hardcopy formats. The Wave 3 survey was administered in two versions. A full version of the survey was sent to participants who completed previous waves of the survey, and a condensed version sent to those from the baseline group who had not participated since Wave 1. There were 2,378 responses to the full version and 761 responses to the shorter version of the survey.

The Wave 3 survey was the first time the Our Lives project included a question relating to the participants' views towards 'boat people'. This item originally appeared in the Australian Election Study AES survey: 'All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back', and was included in the full version of the Our Lives survey instrument. Because data for the AES and Our Lives were both being collected in 2010, the inclusion of this item in the Our Lives survey provided the opportunity for making a direct comparison between an adult national sample and a sample of younger Australians.

Like the AES, the Our Lives cohort was asked to respond to the statement: 'All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back' with responses measured on a 5-point Likert scale: strongly agree to strongly disagree. Dummy (binary 1/0) variables were constructed to examine parental education (father with degree =1; mother with degree =1), respondent sex (women =1), school type (government-funded =0, independent =1, Catholic =1), respondent university intentions (1 = plan to attend university), political party identification (Labor =1; Green =1), the importance of belonging to a global community (important = 1), and the importance of being an Australian (important=1). A composite independent scale variable measured xenophobic attitudes (Hjerm 2001).

When measuring acceptance of 'boat people', the data from the Our Lives study showed a fairly even distribution of opinion. Findings suggested 33 per cent of participants were accepting, in that they either strongly disagreed or disagreed that boats carrying asylum seekers towards Australia should be turned away. Another 36 per cent agreed or strongly agreed with this statement and 31 per cent were ambivalent on the issue. By comparison, the 2010 AES study suggested Australian adults were less accommodating. Fifty one per cent of Australian adults supported the statement that the boats should be turned away, 20 per cent reported they neither agreed or disagreed with the

statement, and 29 per cent indicated they were accepting (McAllister & Pietsch 2011). The most notable difference between these two samples was that while there was a spread of opinion in the sample of young people, with the modal group undecided, the adult sample was skewed towards the rejection of boat people [Figure 4.2].
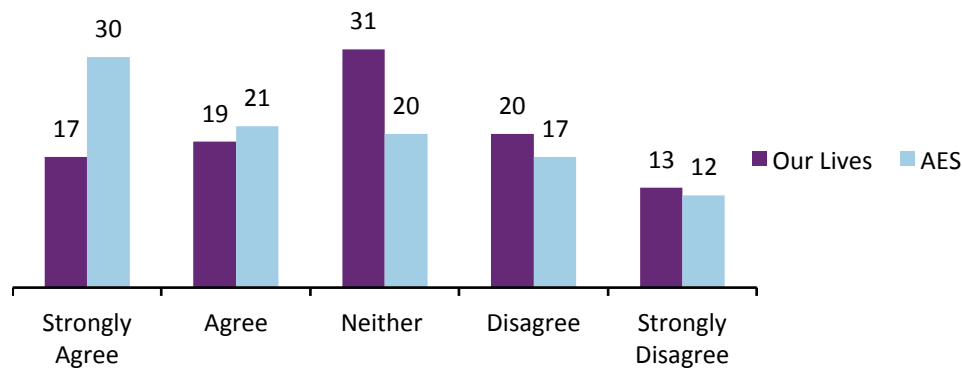
Figure 4.2: 'All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back' 2010
Comparison of Our Lives Wave 3 survey Data 2010 and AES 2010 survey data (McAllister & Pietsch 2011). [Percentages rounded]

The bivariate results indicated young women were more accepting than young men of 'boat people'. Parental education played a role, with the children of tertiary educated parents far more accepting of unexpected arrivals than the non-tertiary educated. Students who attended independent and Catholic schools were also far more accepting than government school students. Educational aspirations also had a strong influence, with those who intended to study at university after leaving school far more likely to exhibit favourable attitudes toward 'boat people'. Young people who saw themselves as belonging to the 'global community' were more accepting of 'boat people', but those who believed in the importance of 'being Australian', exhibited opposite tendencies. Political party affiliation was also a strong indicator. Greens party identifiers were most likely to adopt a more accepting stance toward 'boat people', compared to Liberal supporters, National party supporters, or the non-aligned. Labor supporters were positioned in between these extremes (Appendix A).

The outcome measure was also examined using logistic regression analyses in order to control for associations between the independent variables. The findings suggested that women were more accepting of 'boat people' than men. Other social background effects were also apparent. Parental education had an influence, with the children of tertiary educated parents more accepting of 'boat people'. Planning to pursue a tertiary education after leaving secondary school was also important in the multivariate case. Those who intended to go to university were about twice as likely as other young people to be accepting of 'boat people'. Controlling for differences in social background, young people who attended Catholic schools were more likely than government-funded school students to hold favourable attitudes toward unexpected arrivals, with both independent school and Catholic school effects remaining significant when attitudinal and political party identification

variables were included in the regression analysis.

Attitudinal variables were also found to be strongly associated with an acceptance of 'boat people'. Identification with the global community was associated with increased acceptance, while those who stressed the importance of being Australian were only about half as accepting as others. As might be expected, a high score on the xenophobia scale was strongly associated with rejection of 'boat people'. This finding remained after controlling for social background and political party identification. Political party identification also had a strong impact. The odds for Greens identifiers were over three times as large as those for Liberal and National supporters, suggesting Greens supporters were far more accepting of unexpected arrivals, with a similar, but weaker, effect apparent for Labor supporters. The politically non-affiliated were also more likely than Coalition supporters to accept 'boat people' (Appendix B).

These analyses marked the starting point for my PhD project. The findings of the Our Lives survey data offered valuable insight into the willingness of young Queenslanders to accept asylum seekers into Australia. The results also identified several variables associated with that acceptance. However, while we had statistically determined *who* amongst the Our Lives cohort might be more accepting, I still questioned *why* they were accepting.

Methodological Assumptions

Although my preliminary work involved a quantitative interrogation of the Our Lives survey, the bulk of my PhD project, which aims to determine why some young Australians are accepting of 'boat people', employs an interpretative qualitative methodology. My goal was to undertake a nuanced analysis of phenomena surrounding the acceptance of asylum seekers by interviewing a subset of the Our Lives cohort to better appreciate why some young Australians are accepting of asylum seekers. The methodological assumptions surrounding my project are broadly informed by the epistemological principles of social constructionism (Andrews 2012; Berger & Luckmann 1991; Burr 2003), which are associated with an idealist ontology (Blaikie 2007). Social constructionism considers how knowledge is formed and expressed within a society. In this paradigm, 'reality' is considered subjective and what is deemed to be 'true' is determined through social discussion and consensus (Andrews 2012; Berger & Luckmann 1991; Burr 2003). Language is considered 'the medium of social interaction, and everyday concepts as structuring reality' (Blaikie 2007, p. 131), and is therefore believed to play a crucial role in the construction of social knowledge (Berger & Luckmann 1991; Blaikie 2007; Burr 2003). Via language and discourse, individuals are able to express their version of reality – the version they believe to be accurate and truthful.

The goal of my investigation was to listen to participants speak on the topic of asylum seekers coming to Australia by boat, and to consider how they come to understand what they 'know' about the issue and how this relates to their attitudes and actions towards 'boat people'. While it was not

my intention to discredit the accounts of the participants, or to evaluate the 'validity' of their claims, I took a critical approach to the arguments the research participants posed when justifying their views. As Burr (2003, p. 3) explains, 'the categories which we as human beings apprehend the world, do not necessarily refer to real divisions'. Similarly, it is important to remain mindful that the ways in which the young people participating in this research categorise 'boat people' is their own subjective 'truth' and is one of many 'truths' about how individuals who come to Australia by boat and seeking asylum should be characterised. As discussed in Chapter 2, there is considerable historical and cultural context underpinning how asylum seekers are understood in Australia. Regardless of the extent to which the young Australians participating in this research identify strongly as 'being Australian' they are still a product of their Australian social experience. Their beliefs have been shaped by a socio-political atmosphere that has existed in a particular time and at a particular place. Knowledge is constructed through the course of everyday interactions and experiences (Burr 2003). It is therefore important to understand what those experiences have been, and how they shape the views of the participants. It is also important to be cognisant of the differing constructions extant within one society and that 'each different construction also brings with it, or invites, a different kind of action' (Burr 2003, p. 5).

Adopting a social constructionist methodology also assisted me to engage with my participants in an open and encouraging dialogue irrespective of their (or my) views on the subject. Throughout my project I have often been asked what it was like to listen to young people who openly expressed a dislike (and at times used rather vitriolic language) towards asylum seekers. Viewing my research through this prism allowed me to openly engage with the interviewees without feeling a need to agree or disagree with their stance. Being mindful that my participants were sharing their own personal 'truth' enabled me to appreciate their stories without judging them as 'good' or 'bad', 'true' or 'false'.

Research Strategy

The approach I have adopted is aligned with an abductive research strategy (Blaikie 2007; Ong 2012; Timmermans & Tavoury 2012) [Figure 4.3]. An abductive research strategy involves an analysis of what Blaikie (2007, p. 67) calls the 'everyday lay concepts, and motives' which are produced by social actors to explain social phenomena. Theoretical constructs are developed from these accounts using either existing frameworks of understanding, or by proposing new ones. The researcher first broadly formulates the issue they intend to investigate. They also review relevant literature, but any existing theories only serve as a guide when entering the field. Throughout the research process the researcher remains open to the possibility of applying alternative theoretical explanations should those alternatives prove more appropriate (Ong 2012).

An abductive approach does not require the researcher to detach themselves from theoretical pre-

conceptions as they might from an inductive grounded theory approach. Returning to the subjective nature of 'reality', researchers are not immune from subjective realities. They, like other social actors, are also influenced by their social environments. Abductive research uses the researcher's familiarity with a breadth of theoretical fields and their ability to draw on relevant pre-existing theoretical resources. These ideas are not, however, used to push a particular theoretical agenda, but are instead used as a general guide. The source of any new understanding comes primarily from the accounts of the social actor. The researcher is positioned between their data and what is documented in the theoretical literature. A bridge is built between the two, with the researcher traversing back and forth comparing concepts and categories in order to identify a conceptual framework informed by both social actors and social theory (Blaikie 2007; Ong 2012; Timmermans & Tavoury 2012).

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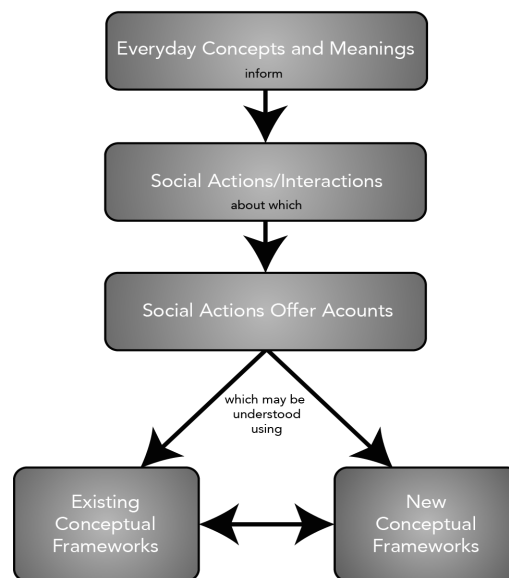
Figure 4.3: The abductive research strategy
Adapted from Blaikie (2007, p.90)

Using the Wave 3 data, I identified the 'social actors' I wished to speak to (as described below) and had collated a significant amount of information on them. This included demographic information, political affiliations and, most importantly, a 'ball park' insight into their position on the asylum seeker issue. There is, of course, a wide body of literature that speaks to the attitudes of Australians towards asylum seekers as well as a considerable amount of theoretical material on how 'acceptance' might be conceptualised. Interviews with participants produced some categories that in turn informed a thematic analysis of the existing literature. This resulted in the construction of a testable model informed by everyday understandings and a re- presentation of extant literature.

Method of Data Collection

Chapter 2 discussed how Australia has a long history of exclusion on the basis of ethnic and cultural difference. It also explained how boundaries to the acceptance of asylum seekers by Australians are

constructed often through language in such a way as to frame 'boat people' as undesirable and thus unwelcome in Australia. While some accounts of pro-asylum discourse have been documented (Every & Augoustinos 2008a; Fozdar & Pedersen 2013; Rowe & O'Brien 2014), there was still scope to better theorise the nature of this acceptance. I was also informed by analysis of the Our Lives survey data undertaken in the year prior to my confirmation as a PhD candidate. During this period, I experimented with a number of theoretical possibilities which might help explain acceptance (e.g. 'toleration' and 'trust', see Laughland-Booÿ, Skrbiš & Tranter 2014). For the purpose of entering the field to collect qualitative data I settled on using the framework of cosmopolitanism as the broad explanatory framework and 'sensitizing notion' (Timmermans & Tavory 2012, p.173) to help guide my research.

After consultation with the Chief Investigators on the project, it was decided that in 2012 I would commence data collection by interviewing 20 young people who had firm views on the asylum issue. I would have another opportunity to re-enter the field in 2013, when interviews for the Our Lives project were being undertaken into the broader political views of cohort members at the time of the 2013 Australian federal election. As I would also be involved in collecting data for these interviews, and since the topic of asylum seekers was expected to be a key issue at the election, this was the opportunity for me to integrate questions for my own project into the broader Our Lives project.

Having been previously involved in the collection of Our Lives interview data, I was able to draw on my experience in undertaking qualitative interviews with this group. During the course of 2012 and 2013, I collected the data for my PhD research via semi-structured interviews conducted with a subset of Our Lives participants. Since 'the goal of the research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied' (Cresswell 2014, p. 8), an in-depth conversation on the asylum seekers issue allowed opportunity for the interviewees to express their views as comprehensively as possible. As asylum seekers are so controversial in Australia, my questioning also needed to be flexible enough to allow for the possibility of change within the Australian political landscape during the course of my research. Furthermore, in line with Burr's (2003) suggestion to always remain aware of the temporal context in which data is collected, I had to be mindful of what was occurring politically in Australia when the interviews were being carried out, and how political events could influence the views of interviewees and the language they used to express their views.

Data Collection Interview Round 1 2012

The first round of interviewing occurred between April and July 2012. To allow for greater comparison and contrast of expressed attitudes on the asylum seeker topic, Wave 3 Our Lives survey respondents who had firm convictions on the topic were sampled for interviews. To this end,

a purposive intensity sampling strategy was applied (Teddlie & Yu 2007) whereby potential interviewees were selected on the basis of their responses to the 2010 Wave 3 survey item, 'All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back'. Potential interviewees were identified from survey respondents who had nominated either the '*Strongly Agree*' (SA, n=351) response, or the '*Strongly Disagree*' (SD, n=317) response. The purposive intensity sampling strategy was intended to maximise the likelihood of obtaining a sample of interviewees that represented both sides of the asylum seeker debate. It was expected that some of the participants' views would have either moderated or changed in the course time. It was, however, seen as the most effective strategy to ensure a good division of opinion.

The Our Lives cohort is dispersed throughout the entirety of the state of Queensland, which covers approximately 1,727,000 square kilometres. However, for logistical reasons, only individuals located within the South East corner of Queensland were selected for interview. This area accounts for approximately two-thirds of the state's population and has a mix of metropolitan, semi-rural, and rural areas.

Initial contact was made via a letter (Appendix E) asking potential participants to take part in a face-to-face interview. The letter outlined the interview goals and provided an opportunity to email or telephone the Our Lives team if they did not wish to be involved. Within two weeks of initial contact, potential participants were telephoned and asked if they would be willing to participate. Twenty-five participants were contacted. Twenty agreed to participate, 5 others declined. Those who agreed were sent a follow-up letter along with additional information on the study (Appendix F) and a copy of the interview consent form (Appendix G). The final sample comprised 20 interviewees (12 'strongly disagree', 8 'strongly agree'; 11 female, 9 male). At the time the interviews were conducted, interviewees were aged 19-20 years old.

Interviewees were diverse in terms of their socio-economic backgrounds, the type of school they had previously attended (independent, Catholic, or state), and their political viewpoints. All were born in Australia and said that English was their main language spoken at home. The majority reported that both parents were born in Australia. The remainder had at least one parent who was born overseas. Whilst religiosity was not diverse, some identified as having a strong Christian faith, whereas others stated they had no religion. Although a small number were either employed or receiving government support, most were attending a tertiary institution. The composition of the sample was consistent with that found in the Wave 3 quantitative analysis of the item 'All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back'. That is, young women, those who had attended independent schools, and higher academic achievers were more predominant in the 'accepters' category than the 'rejecters' category.

The interviews were semi-structured (see Appendix D for interview schedule). They were

conducted at either the participant's place of residence, their university campus, or at a café. Consent forms were collected prior to the start of the interview. The primary focus of the interview was to expand on the participant's response to the suggestion that boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned away from Australia. After asking the interviewee about what they were currently doing, the interview would typically start by asking the interviewee if they could recall their response to the Wave 3 Our Lives 'boat people' survey item and how they would now rate their response. I then explored the reasons for their responses and the factors they considered had influenced their opinions. Broader political issues were also discussed, as were the participant's opinions of current politicians.

The 'strongly disagree' participants (8 female, 4 male) were all enrolled in a tertiary course. Overall Position (OP) is the tertiary entrance rank based on secondary school achievement in Queensland. There are 25 OP ranks with '1' being the highest rank and '25' being the lowest. All but one of the pro-asylum interviewees had achieved an OP score in the range of 1-5, which academically placed them in the top 20% of Queensland OP eligible students in 2010 Queensland Studies Authority (2011). Ten of the 12 students attended a private school (independent or Catholic), and 2 attended a state school.

Among the 'strongly agree' group (5 male, 3 female) there was greater range in terms of socio-economic status, the type of school previously attended, and OP. While most were attending some kind of tertiary institution in this group, there was also 1 sickness beneficiary and 1 young person who was working at a fast-food outlet. Four had attended an independent school, 1 had gone to a Catholic school, and 3 had attended a state school. Some appeared to be quite affluent and conservative in their political outlook. Others were of working class origins and described how life had presented considerable challenges and adversities.

All interviews were audio recorded. The interviews lasted between 40 to 90 minutes and all interviewees were given a $40 gift voucher in appreciation for their time. The interviews were then later transcribed by a third-party transcription service.

Although these participants had been purposively sampled on the basis that they had indicated in the Wave 3 Our Lives survey that they had strong views on the asylum seeker issue, there was still a possibility that their views had changed since the survey had been conducted. I therefore used the interview data to ensure those classifications were still valid. The majority of the interviewees had maintained their opinion, although at times some become more measured in their views. Transcripts were divided into two categories 'pro-asylum' and 'anti-asylum'. The data from two interviewees (Samuel and Kyle) were excluded from analysis as it became apparent over the course of the interview that their views on the topic had changed and that they had become more ambivalent towards the issue and appeared less sure of what their views were on the issue [Table 4.1].

Table 4.1: Classification of Round 1 interviewees 2012

Pseudonym	Gender	School Type	OP	Wave 3 Boat People*
Emma	F	Catholic	1	SD
Daniel	M	Independent	5	SD
Samuel**	M	State	3	SD
Katrina***	F	Independent	2	SD
Alice***	F	Independent	2	SD
Caitie	F	Independent	2	SD
Ben	M	Independent	2	SD
Maddie	F	Independent	3	SD
Lily	F	State	5	SD
Ashleigh	F	Independent	14	SD
Jess	F	Independent	4	SD
Thomas	M	Independent	1	SD
James	M	Independent	11	SA
Rory	M	Independent	6	SA
Mandy	F	Catholic	4	SA
Kyle**	M	State	3	SA
Kimberly	F	Independent	9	SA
Jemma	F	State	21	SA
Callum	M	State	None	SA
Taylor	M	Independent	13	SA

* 5 point Likert scale: strongly agree (SA), disagree (D), neither agree nor disagree (NAND), agree, (A), strongly agree (SA)

** Interviewee's views on this issue appeared inconsistent with response on Wave 3, 2010 Our Lives survey. Data not included in analysis.

*** Katrina and Alice are siblings and asked to be interviewed together.

Data Collection Interview Round 2 2013

During the second half of 2013, Wave 4 of the Our Lives survey was administered to members of the Our Lives cohort. As the timing of the survey coincided with the 2013 Australian federal election, a qualitative study had also been planned by the Our Lives research team to document the political attitudes of the cohort during the run up to the election. For pragmatic reasons, it was decided to incorporate questions for my second phase of data collection into this broader Our Lives undertaking.

As a Queensland-based qualitative researcher on the project, I was responsible for implementing this round of interviews. In consultation with the Our Lives project's chief investigators, I designed the interview schedule (Appendix I) and attended to the administrative details related to the data

collection. The interviews were carried out by myself and one other interviewer. In the instances where I did not undertake the interview, I would speak to the other interviewer by phone afterwards. Transcription occurred within a few days of each interview so that I was able to read and discuss the transcripts, with the other interviewer and make suggestions where necessary.

Potential interviewees were identified from the political affiliation they indicated in the 2010 Wave 3 survey instrument. While it was recognised that their political opinion may have changed since the survey was administered, this was considered to be an appropriate way of ensuring a wide representation of political viewpoints for the broader study we were undertaking into the political views of the Our Lives cohort. Participants were identified using the following categories: Coalition (n=608), Labor (n=443), Greens (n=301) and, 'Don't know/Other' (n=1040) with the aim being to undertake interviews with a total of eight individuals from each category and ensuring the sample was balanced for gender. They were also required to be residing within the region of South East Queensland. Anyone who had previously participated in an interview for the Our Lives study was excluded.

Initial contact was made via a letter (Appendix J) inviting participants to be involved in a face-to-face interview and providing an opportunity to email or telephone the Our Lives team if they did not wish to be involved. Thirty-eight participants were contacted and asked to participate in an interview. Thirty-three agreed to participate, 5 declined. Those who agreed to be involved were sent a follow-up letter (Appendix K), additional information on the study (Appendix L), and a copy of the interview consent form (Appendix M). The final sample comprised 33 participants (17 female, 16 male). This round of interviewing saw greater range in terms of occupational activities than in the Round 1 interviews. Some were still attending a tertiary institution or completing apprenticeships and others were working either casually or full-time.

The interviews were semi-structured and were conducted at either the participant's place of residence, a university campus, or at a café. Consent forms were collected prior to the start of the interview. All interviews were audio-recorded. The interviews lasted between 45 to 80 minutes and the interviewees were given a $30 gift voucher. The interviews were then fully transcribed by a third-party transcription service.

After recapping what the participants were currently doing, the interview typically began with an opening comment that the federal election was soon approaching, followed by the question: 'How interested in politics are you?' In the course of these interviews, the participants were questioned on numerous topics surrounding the upcoming election. These included voting choice, their opinions of politicians, and their thoughts on key social issues. They were also asked to discuss the factors they believed would influence their vote. On issues related to asylum seekers, the participants were questioned on their opinions with regards to the asylum seeker policies of the key political parties,

and the extent to which these policies would influence their vote. They were also asked more general questions on issues such as whether they identified closely with being an Australian.

Although the sampling of interviewees was informed by the 2010 Wave 3 survey data, for the purpose of my analysis I used Wave 4 survey data collected at the same time as the interviews to assist accurate categorisation of interviewee voting intention (Federal House of Representatives) and responses to the 'boat people' item. Of the 33 interviewees, 31 also completed the Wave 4 survey (17 female, 14 male). Transcripts from the 2 interviewees who did not complete this survey were removed from this analysis. At this time the participants were aged 20-21 years old.

When using the survey data to categorise the interviewees as either 'pro-asylum' or 'anti-asylum', I was mindful that changes of asylum policy between the collection of Wave 3 and Wave 4 meant that people who disagreed that these boats should be turned away were not necessarily indicating a preparedness to accept 'boat people' into Australia. Instead, they may be expressing the view that 'boat people' should be given the opportunity to have their claims processed offshore and be resettled in countries other than Australia. The extent to which those participants who disagreed with the 'boat people' item were indicating a belief that how Australia should allow asylum seekers to come to Australia needed to be clarified via analysis of the interview data.

The final sample yielded 7 Coalition supporters, 11 Labor supporters, 4 Greens, 7 unsure, and 2 who were not enrolled. In terms of responses to the Wave 4 'boat people' item, the sample yielded 7 'anti-asylum' participants who either strongly agreed or agreed with the 'boat people' item, 13 'pro-asylum' participants who either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the item, and 11 who were ambivalent in that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement [Table 4.2].

Table 4.2: Classification of Round 2 interviewees 2013

Anti-Asylum				
Pseudonym	**Occupation**	**Gender**	**Wave 4 Boat People**	**Wave 4 Politics**
Alexis	Student	F	A	No Vote
David*	Student	M	A	No Vote
John*	Apprentice	M	SA	LNP
Justin*	Student	M	A	LNP
Lachlan*	Police	M	A	LNP
Ryan	Student	M	SA	Unsure
Sandra*	Student	F	SA	LNP

			Ambivalent	
Pseudonym	**Occupation**	**Gender**	**Wave 4** **Boat People**	**Wave 4** **Politics**
Amber*	Student	F	NAND	LNP
Brooke*	Student	F	NAND	Unsure
Cameron*	Apprentice	M	NAND	Unsure
Erin*	Student	F	NAND	Unsure
George	Armed forces	M	NAND	LNP
Kaelyn*	Student	F	NAND	Unsure
Laura*	Student	F	NAND	ALP
Mia*	Student	F	NAND	Greens
Phil*	Beneficiary	M	NAND	ALP
Rebecca*	Student	F	NAND	Unsure
Sara	Office	F	NAND	ALP

			Pro-Asylum	
Pseudonym	**Occupation**	**Gender**	**Wave 4** **Boat People***	**Wave 4** **Voting**
Anna	Student	F	D	ALP
Ella	Student	F	D	ALP
Emily*	Student	F	D	Unsure
Gabrielle	Student	F	SD	ALP
Jake	Student	M	D	ALP
Aysha	Student	F	SD	ALP
Jennifer	Student	F	SD	LNP
Luke*	Personal trainer	M	D	ALP
Matthew*	Student	M	SD	ALP
Meg*	Retail	F	SD	Greens
Michael*	Student	M	D	ALP
Nicholas*	Student	M	SD	Greens
Troy*	Student	M	SD	Greens

* Interviewed by JLB

** 5 point Likert scale: strongly agree (SA), disagree (D), neither agree nor disagree (NAND), agree, (A), strongly agree (SA)

Analysis of Data

All interview data were coded using qualitative research software NVivo 10. As each interview was completed, it was transcribed and open coded. As concepts emerged from the data I compared them with the literature in order to find any points of similarity or difference. These data then helped guide my direction of questioning in the subsequent interviews. At this stage I also began to treat the literature as 'analysable' material: importing it into qualitative research software alongside the interview transcripts, coding it and searching for similar terms and themes. This was a practical way of widening the theoretical net and reducing the possibility of overlooking relevant theoretical material that might connect to the patterns emerging from the data. This iterative process of moving between the data and the literature occurred throughout the entire analytical phase. In doing so, I identified concepts associated with attitudes of acceptance towards asylum seekers. This strategy also allowed me to follow some alternative theoretical leads, assessing the validity of ideas and explanations against the data I had collected.

Ethics

Ethics approval for data collected in 2012 was granted from The University of Queensland Behavioural & Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee: Social Futures and Life Pathways of Young People in Queensland: Waves 2 and 3 of Longitudinal Study (DP 0878781 Amendment 3/2/12) and appears as Appendix C. Ethics approval for data collection carried out in 2013 was granted from the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval CF13/1552 - 2013000805: Social Futures and Life Pathways of Young People in Queensland: Waves 4 and 5 of a Longitudinal Study) and appears as Appendix H.

All participants were aged over 18 prior to commencing interviews and informed consent was obtained. Given the longitudinal nature of the Our Lives project and the possibility that these individuals may be revisited some time again in the future, all data have been digitally stored on a Monash University hard drive that is password protected. My personal copies of these data were de-identified and password protected.

My challenge was to ensure a space was created for the participants where they felt they could speak freely and without judgment. I always ensured that others could not overhear the interviews. I was also careful to let my participants know that I appreciated their participation and willingness to talk openly on the topic, regardless of their views. Before we started talking about the topic at hand I always spoke to the participants about their lives, what they were doing and what they were hoping to do in their future. We would normally discuss their current studies, where they were working and their interests (on two occasions I was even taken to the car park see a newly purchased vehicle!). These exchanges helped build rapport and trust before we embarked on the

more 'messy' issues of politics and asylum seekers.

There is of course a responsibility not to abuse that trust by reporting the data in a manner that respects my participants and the intent in which the data was provided (Mason 2002). In reporting my data I have been careful not to make inappropriate generalisations (Mason 2002). I chose to omit material relating to the more violent suggestions of some anti-asylum participants regarding how they believed 'boat people' should be treated, as these did not advance my research interests, or the interests of my participants.

Delimitations of Scope and their Justifications

The research sample has been restricted to young people from the state of Queensland. This then, inevitably raises questions about the extent to which the sample is representative of the views of the wider population of young people living in Australia. Queensland is by reputation considered to be a politically and socially conservative state (McKay et al. 2011). In relation to issues of asylum, national data collected by the Australian Election Study [AES] on the attitudes of Australian adults towards 'boat people' confirm Queensland is slightly more conservative than other states (Bean et al. 2013; see Table 4.3). Given that I am researching attitudes of acceptance, I would argue that while young Queenslanders may be less accepting of asylum seekers, this does not prevent an interrogation of what inspires inclusionary views in such an environment. In fact, the setting is potentially advantageous. Despite being raised in a more conservative environ it allows me to ask 'what has motivated some young Queenslanders to adopt an accepting stance?'

Table 4.3: AES 2013 – 'All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back' by state [Percentage] (Bean et al. 2013)

	State							
All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back (% within state)	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
Agree	56.8	52.7	63.9	58.3	57.4	52.6	47.1	39.1
Neither	21.5	27.2	13.4	20	15	28.9	14.7	30.4
Disagree	21.7	20.1	22.7	21.7	27.6	18.6	38.2	30.4

Presentation of Findings

As stated in Chapter 1 the broad question guiding this research is:

How do young Australians express accepting attitudes towards 'boat people'?

The abductive nature of this research process means that I have moved iteratively between my data and relevant literature in order to find patterns and make connections. Interview data were analysed very soon after collection and links were made between concepts brought up by the participants and those discussed in the literature. The emergence of distinctive patterns, not only guided the direction of subsequent interviews, but also gave me a clearer understanding of how I might divide this research question into manageable parts. This helped me to organise and present the data, the literature, and my own reflections in a clear and logical format. My guiding question has therefore been broken down into three research questions, each of which is the focus of a separate findings chapter.

First, in order to develop a better understanding of why some young people are accepting of asylum seekers, it was necessary to document the arguments made for and against allowing boats carrying asylum seekers into Australia. The first research question, addressed in Chapter 5, is therefore:

RQ1. What narratives do young people use when discussing the rejection or acceptance of 'boat people'?

The second research question results from inconsistent accounts that emerged from the initial interviews. Although analysis of the 2010 Our Lives survey data suggested that those who were accepting of asylum seekers were less likely to identify as 'being Australian', the accounts of young people who are pro-asylum, suggested this was not necessarily always the case. This then raised the question of how young Australians who supported 'boat people' reconcile their views with their Australian identity. This led to the next research question, which is the focus of Chapter 6:

RQ2. How do young Australians who express inclusive views towards 'boat people' relate this acceptance to notions of 'being Australian'?

Finally, given that asylum seeker policy features prominently in electoral campaigns, voting on this issue seemed to be a good opportunity for the pro-asylum members of the cohort to express their views in a tangible manner. Knowing the Our Lives participants would be voting in their first Australian federal election in 2013, and that I would have the opportunity to speak to members of the cohort at this time, allowed me to see if those accepting of asylum seekers took their view to the polls. The research question that is addressed in Chapter 7 reads:

RQ3. To what extent did holding accepting views towards 'boat people' influence the voting behaviour of young Queenslanders at the 2013 Australian federal election?

Conclusion

In this chapter I have provided a background to the Our Lives project and summarised a background project completed in preparation for entering the field to speak to my research participants. This work involved a statistical analysis of data relating to the Wave 3 2010 responses of the Our Lives cohort to the item '*All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back*' and was the beginning point for my qualitative investigation into 'accepting' phenomena. Not only did it provide opportunity to identify participants for my PhD research, but it also served to situate the data presented in the following chapters within the larger Our Lives sample.

I then outlined the methodological underpinnings of my research and the methods by which data for the study were collected. I have argued that an abductive research strategy allows me to move between the data and extant theory in order to build up a better theoretical and empirical understanding of the attitudes of acceptance towards 'boat people'. What this means is that the accounts of my participants will be used to inform theory rather than to merely test a theory or hypothesis. Although I have acknowledged that the theoretical framework of cosmopolitanism offers a broad framework on which to construct an understanding of 'accepting' phenomena, the accounts of my participants have driven my interpretation of that theory and have isolated the critical components of the theory, which specifically relate to accepting attitudes by members of an established population towards asylum seekers. Furthermore the participants' accounts help identify critical elements which must be considered when 'acceptance' is being observed and operationalised in empirical research. The following three chapters now present the findings that have resulted from this process.

5. Analysis of Findings: Narratives of Rejection and Acceptance

As I discussed in Chapter 2, asylum seekers pose a considerable political challenge in Australia. Concerns have centred around how to avoid increasing public divisiveness on the issue whilst continuing to meet international humanitarian obligations. Furthermore, public representations of 'boat people' and other asylum seekers have often served to reinforce the belief that asylum seekers are undesirable by suggesting they pose a risk to Australia's territorial integrity and its community.

The following three chapters will be devoted to presenting and providing the analysis of my research data. As I explained in Chapter 4, while an analysis of quantitative data collected from the 'Our Lives' project was initially used to inform my project (Laughland-Booÿ, Skrbiš & Tranter 2014), I have applied qualitative methods to expand upon this discussion. In this first findings chapter, I use data collected from 20 participants in the first round of interviews conducted in 2012 to compare and contrast the narratives of anti-asylum and pro-asylum participants. This chapter therefore addresses the first research question:

RQ1. What narratives do young people use when discussing the rejection or acceptance of 'boat people'?

My analysis of the interview data I this chapter is presented in two sections. In the first section, I present the narratives used by anti-asylum interviewees. They are young people who believe boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned away from Australian shores. In their accounts, reference is made to a number of symbolic representations that portray asylum seekers as being unwelcome because they possess characteristics incompatible with those of the settled Australian population. This language of rejection is consistent with the previous literature which has reported anti-asylum sentiment in Australia (e.g. Every & Augoustinos, 2007, 2008a, 2008b; Louis et al., 2010, McKay et al. 2011; McKay et al. 2012; Pederson et al. 2005).

The second section reports the arguments used by the pro-asylum group – the understudied group who believe asylum seekers should be allowed into Australia and provided with safety, support, and security. By comparing the responses of these two groups, I have identified and isolated narratives particular to the pro-asylum viewpoint. I then discuss how the themes that have emerged from the narratives are consistent with the cosmopolitan framework.

Constructing and Challenging Boundaries

As a theoretical construct, the notion of 'boundary' has been applied extensively in social sciences research, providing a framework for understanding social identity, intergroup interaction, and group exclusion. This concept has featured in the work of theorists such as Barth (1969), Tajfel and

Turner (1979), and, more recently, Lamont and Molnár (2002). A boundary is conceptualised as a barrier that defines, contains, and protects, but also separates and limits. While boundaries may take the form of physical partitions that demarcate territorial possessions, they are often symbolically codified (Barth 1969; Lamont & Molnár 2002).

Boundaries constructed through the use of language, beliefs, and ideas may not be directly visible, but that does not make them any less powerful. Lamont and Molnár (2002, p. 168) have described symbolic boundaries as 'conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space'. This notion of distinction is important – while symbolic boundaries create a sense of similarity and cohesion between members of the same group, they also serve to highlight disparities between groups. By defining their own distinctive characteristics and differentiating themselves from others, a group creates a sense of who they are and what they represent. Those who share similar viewpoints and common goals are seen to 'belong' and they are, as Barth (1969, p. 15) aptly describes, 'playing the same game'. On the other hand, those believed not to have the same views are categorised as being different and possibly incompatible (Barth 1969; Lamont & Molnár 2002; Tajfel & Turner 1979).

Exclusion is an integral component of group identity and boundary maintenance. By excluding others deemed not to belong, the identity and integrity of a group is protected. This can be achieved through the construction of symbolic and social boundaries, including the use of negative categorisations and stereotypes, whereby members of the outside minority are attributed characteristics claimed to be undesirable or threatening. Based on these beliefs, exclusionary action can be considered justified (Tajfel & Turner 1979).

The movement of asylum seekers across state borders poses a challenge to many nations and undermines self-assuredness about the composition of communities (Beck & Sznaider 2010; Fine 2007; Morris 2009). One explanation for anti-asylum sentiment is that the values, cultures, and behaviours of asylum seekers are deemed to be incompatible with those whose borders they are attempting to cross. Consequently, they are seen as undesirable (e.g. Malloch & Stanley 2005; Welch & Schuster 2005). Being a Member State to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its associated 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, Australia must process the requests of individuals who enter its territory and ask to be recognised as a refugee (Department of Immigration and Border Protection 2014b). Asylum seekers, however, are the target of considerable antagonism in Australia. Events such as the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the *Tampa* incident, and the 'Children Overboard' affair, have led to policies of border protection, and asylum seeker deterrence has become a 'wedge' issue in Australian politics. Australians have thus found themselves challenged to meet humanitarian obligations while, at the same time, addressing concerns that asylum seekers present an unacceptable threat to their country (Haslam &

Holland 2012; O'Doherty & Augoustinos 2008).

It has been argued that the way asylum seekers are constructed through narrative can have a profound influence upon how they are perceived and received. The negative rhetoric which characterises those requesting asylum as being disingenuous or dangerous, for example, promotes enmity towards the displaced by settled populations (Every & Augoustinos 2008a, 2008b; KhosraviNik 2010; Lyn & Lea 2003; Pickering 2001). In Chapter 2, I explained how, in Australia, politicians and the media have often been accused of employing derogatory discourse in order to incite fear and suspicion of asylum seekers among the Australian public. These narratives serve to embed negative attitudes into the public psyche. The consequence has been that many Australians support the implementation of harsh exclusionary measures intended to exclude asylum seekers, particularly irregular maritime arrivals. Some Australians believe that 'boat people' are 'illegals' who are 'jumping the queue' in front of more legitimate humanitarian entrants (Hartley & Pedersen 2007; Pickering 2001; Schweitzer et al. 2005). Concerns are also often expressed that 'boat people' are in fact 'terrorists' intending to do Australia harm, or 'extremists' wishing to impose their own religious and cultural beliefs onto the nation, thereby threatening the Australian 'way of life'. Moreover, unexpected arrivals are often accused of placing an unreasonable burden upon Australia, including taking resources from Australians who are seen as more deserving (Pedersen et al. 2005). As I have explained in Chapter 2, however, not all Australians endorse these beliefs. They instead adopt a language of acceptance when talking on the asylum seeker issue, which serves to counteract anti-asylum rhetoric and challenge exclusionary views (Every & Augoustinos 2008a; Rowe & O'Brien 2014). As I have also argued, there is room to expand the understanding of the mechanisms that inspire this perspective. In this chapter I suggest that applying a framework based on principles associated with the concept of cosmopolitanism can help to conceptually advance our comprehension of the strategies some people employ to actively deconstruct symbolic boundaries, and to instead advocate for the acceptance of asylum seekers in Australia.

Narratives of Exclusion

Symbolic boundaries are built and maintained by those who seek to contain and protect 'their' space from outsiders (Barth 1969; Lamont & Molnár 2002). This boundary building can be achieved through the use of language intended to highlight the undesirable qualities of those outside the group, or to provide justification for exclusionary practices. In Australia, the power of language in representing asylum seekers as objectionable is well documented (e.g. Every & Augoustinos 2007; O'Doherty & Augoustinos 2008). Similarly, in the discourses of the participants who hold firm convictions that boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned away from Australian shores, I found evidence of symbolic boundary construction through language designed to obstruct the acceptance of asylum seekers.

'It's not our problem' was the argument made by the anti-asylum participants who were of the opinion that Australia had no obligation to accept 'boat people', and that these asylum seekers are bringing cultural practices which are incompatible with the Australian way of life. Furthermore, this group contended that the characteristics and behaviours of 'boat people', such as their 'untrustworthiness' and 'laziness', made them undeserving of compassion. These descriptions of difference were then used as justification for why those requesting asylum should be excluded. Although some anti-asylum participants acknowledged the condition of asylum seekers was unfortunate, they did not believe it was the responsibility of Australia to take action to address the problem. From their perspective, since the cause of the problem is external to Australian society and politics, the solution should come from outside as well. Taylor, for example, felt asylum seekers were not an issue Australia should '*take on board*'; instead, believing the Australian government should focus on looking after its own citizens. James also thought the government should focus on Australian problems, such as those related to Australia's dealings with Indigenous Australians:

> *Do we need more problems? Haven't we got enough problems? We've got the whole Stolen Generation. We're trying to fix that up… Let's just solve everything going on here before we worry about the rest of the world's problems.*

From James' perspective it was more important to put the affairs of Australia and Australians ahead of those from elsewhere. He also described how he felt resentful that people had made a choice to board these vessels and make the dangerous ocean journey to Australia and yet it is Australia being blamed when these vessels run into trouble. This he thought was not Australia's responsibility. Other anti-asylum participants such as Jemma argued that if Australia accepted asylum seekers, this would create added problems for the country:

> *I don't think it should be our responsibility. We should be sending them back and telling their country to kind of, I don't know, deal with it.*

The anti-asylum participants also expressed a belief that asylum seekers are merely exploiting this country's generosity and the hard work of its people. As it is used in the Australian vernacular, a 'bludger' is a person who aims to get 'something for nothing'. Traditionally, such a term has served to highlight a distinction between those who are in paid work and those who are trying to get 'something for nothing' by exploiting the welfare system. As Archer (2009, p. 178) explains, the 'bludger' is 'the antithesis and the enemy of the worker' who has traditionally received the scorn of those resentful of their taxes being used to provide means to those considered lazy and undeserving. Such views have existed within the Australian discourse since the 1970's as a consequence of efforts to instil more conservative welfare frames into the Australian psyche. During this time, the rights of the taxpayer were brought to the forefront and a dependence on government welfare support was considered tantamount to thievery (Archer 2009). As Archer (2009, p. 186) describes,

taxpayers were encouraged to liken themselves to being 'a victim of a crime' at the hands of welfare beneficiaries. This was an age when welfare recipients became demonised and the only way to be considered an acceptable member of society was to be a 'worker'.

Similar sentiments resonated in the rhetoric of the young people who took an anti-asylum stance. Here, the asylum seeker was framed as a type of person who would take what they do not deserve and is unwilling to work for their own keep. Although past studies have pointed to Australian public resentment with regards to asylum seekers receiving welfare payments (e.g. Hartley & Pedersen 2007; McKay et al. 2012), the participants in this study provided added insight into why people might feel this way. James, a student with a very conservative outlook, argued asylum seekers do not wish to act for the good of Australia but merely intend to be exploitative. He invoked the term '*bludging*', describing asylum seekers as people who wanted to '*sit around and do nothing*'. The contempt he felt towards those he saw as lazy and wanting to take advantage of Australia was strongly evident:

> *It's just somewhere where they can come and bludge for the rest of their lives. They're on Centrelink [welfare support] straight away. They get looked after - nothing like that in Afghanistan, Pakistan, or Iraq, or wherever they come from. They come here, they sit around and do nothing, get everything they want and then get paid for it. If they don't, they can burn buildings down and still get more. They can burn a building down and then be let out into society because they refuse to eat.*

Rory also spoke of how asylum seekers are travelling to Australia with an intention to exploit the country. He used the term '*freeloader*' to reinforce a belief that asylum seekers come to Australia to enjoy the benefits provided by the Australian taxpayer and do nothing in return. As a future taxpayer, he thought he should not have to contribute to their support.

> *I don't like the idea of freeloading and like me having to pay so much as a taxpayer… having to just kind of support them and they get like all these - they get most things handed to them.*

James felt the presence of asylum seekers offered little tangible advantage to the Australian economy or benefit to the Australian people. This being the case, there is no reason to be providing them with financial support:

> *After forking out for housing to be built - that will stimulate a bit of an economy with the builders and that, but after that who then benefits? No one! People making cigarettes, people running the water because they're getting all that paid for them - Xboxes, TVs, phone bills - they benefit - but the guy running the paper shop doesn't…The community doesn't benefit from them. The local soccer club won't!*

Consistent with the findings of other studies (e.g. Haslam & Holland 2012; Louis et al. 2007), the rejecting group also took exception to the amount asylum seekers are receiving in welfare payments. Taylor, for example, said that he had heard asylum seekers receive substantially more in welfare payments than aged Australians and believed this to be unfair. His thoughts were that Australia needed to '*set its priorities straight*' and look after Australians instead of '*trying to keep*

asylum seekers happy'. Likewise, Jemma complained that the current policy of supporting humanitarian entrants in Australia is unjust. As she explained:

> *I think it's a bit unfair on like the pensioners and stuff. They're not getting looked after. The asylum seekers come here and they get it all for free.*

As I have described in Chapter 3, a statistical analysis of survey data collected from the Our Lives cohort in 2010, suggested several predictors of attitudes towards asylum seekers (Laughland-Booÿ, Skrbiš & Tranter 2014). The quantitative analysis indicates a possible relationship between social advantage (i.e. social-economic status and/or educational opportunity) and attitudes towards asylum seekers, suggesting the more advantaged are less concerned about asylum seekers as a material threat. On the other hand, the less advantaged may experience a sense of vulnerability, perhaps believing they would have to compete with asylum seekers for resources such as employment and housing. Asylum seekers are consequently seen as a very real threat to their livelihoods (Laughland-Booÿ, Skrbiš & Tranter 2014). The accounts of the 'rejecting' respondents offer further support for this explanation. Callum and Jemma, for example, young people who both come from underprivileged backgrounds, clearly expressed their concern about having to compete for resources with refugees and asylum seekers. These two young people described the problems of living on government support and were worried that it would become increasingly difficult to access income and housing support.

Jemma, a young woman who had experienced considerable hardship throughout her life, was worried about the welfare of her grandparents and did not think it was right that asylum seekers be supported while her own family members struggled financially. She spoke of her grandfather's failing health, and her concerns for how his care would be paid for.

> *He gets a certain amount for his pension. He's got - he's in a special care because he's got dementia. He has to pay $1000 more than he actually gets for his pension. So my grandma has to take that out of her money to pay for his care.*

On the other hand, Callum, who lived in subsidised housing within a low socio-economic area, was angry about the possibility of humanitarian entrants taking affordable housing from low-income Australians. His parents had recently received a letter from the local state Member of Parliament outlining a proposal that families move to smaller accommodation, or share with another family, to reduce costs and help address the shortage of state-provided houses. He was anxious that housing shortages would be exacerbated by increased numbers of refugees and asylum seekers being accepted into Australia, and that his own family would be made to move to a smaller house or share with strangers because of an increased demand for low-cost housing.

> *Callum: Well they want us to share our house because we go through Housing Commission*
> *Interviewer: Yeah? So what did the letter say?*

Callum: I didn't read it….But, yeah, it was talking about an adventure – sharing your house and sharing your costs….I didn't like it at all. Our house is full as it is. I think Mum's pregnant with her sixth kid, and all of us live in a three-bedroom house.

The argument was also made by the anti-asylum group that 'boat people' are somehow deviant and were breaking, or likely to break, Australian law. They felt that this also negated any obligations on the part of Australia or any need to show concern and compassion. Societal rules are adhered to through a sense of obligation towards the social group and can either be explicit or implicit in nature. Those who abide by the rules are perceived to be considerate of others within that society and are deemed to belong (Barth 1969). Conversely, the 'rule breaker' does not share the views of the group or respect their values. As Becker (1963, p. 1) puts it:

When a rule is enforced, the person who is supposed to have broken it may be seen as a special kind of person, one who cannot be trusted to live by the rules agreed upon by the group. He is regarded as an outsider.

In Australia, 'boat people' are frequently portrayed by politicians and the media as being 'illegal immigrants' – people who have attempted to enter the country without authorisation (Pedersen et al. 2012; Rowe & O'Brien 2014) – and are consequently viewed as 'rule breakers' and the 'outsiders' described by Becker. The subsequent public resentment towards asylum seekers has been well documented. Despite the fact that coming to Australia to request asylum is not illegal under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its associated 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (UNHCR 2010), the construction of asylum seekers as 'illegals' has led to many within Australia supporting their forced removal (Haslam & Holland 2012). Many of the anti-asylum participants expressed a belief that by coming to Australia by boat, asylum seekers are breaking the rules pertaining to legal entry into the country. By not '*doing the right thing*' and '*just trying to sneak in*' they thought 'boat people' are showing little regard for Australia and its laws. For instance, although Mandy acknowledged there might be a legitimate reason for why 'boat people' would want to come to Australia, she also felt '*they just have to go by our way of doing it*', and should adhere to the rules prescribed by the Australian government, rather than '*trying to just sneak in across the border*' in order to circumvent official processes. Furthermore, Kimberly was suspicious of the character of these individuals, describing how '*they've got that kind of vicious streak in them*' and are prepared to go to any lengths to reach Australia.

James, a participant who articulated particularly strong anti-asylum views, employed another negative construction of 'boat people' to support his position. He referred to the 2001 'Children Overboard' incident to show how asylum seekers would deliberately engage in extreme behaviours to force Australia to accept them:

But that whole 'baby overboard' and all that. That just shows how desperate they are to get into the country. It's those radical behaviours that just put their case a lot faster through. They just [say], "Mate! Oh you need so much help!" Like, just come the right way about it!

This comment relates to an incident in 2001 where the Australian government made an allegation that asylum seekers had deliberately thrown their children into the ocean to avoid being turned away from Australian shores (Klocker & Dunn 2003; Mares 2002; Tazreiter 2003). Despite a senate inquiry concluding the accusations were unfounded, this allegation is still used in anti-asylum rhetoric to support the belief that asylum seekers do not share the same moral standards as Australians (Klocker 2004, McKay et al. 2011). James referred to the original version of the event, using it as evidence that asylum seekers were capable of acting badly in order to make the Australian people feel sorry for them. He then argued Australia needed to be firm in its resolve to turn the boats around instead of surrendering to such manipulation. If 'boat people' are not prepared to play by the rules it was argued that compassion was not warranted.

When asked if they were concerned about what might happen to these individuals should they be turned away, the position of the anti-asylum interviewees was that forcible exclusion was warranted because 'boat people' had come through the '*wrong way*'. As Jemma acknowledged, although this position seemed harsh and '*probably sounds wrong*', it did not negate her belief that strict measures were appropriate and Australia is under no obligation to demonstrate compassion.

When providing explanations as to why asylum seekers should be prevented from reaching Australia, the anti-asylum participants argued that Australia should be protected by building and maintaining firm boundaries. They believed that without such boundaries, asylum seekers will place too many demands upon the country, its resources, and its people. James, for example, thought Australia has no choice but to '*draw the line*'. If a firm boundary is not enforced, he believed, the numbers of people seeking to gain entry into the country will overwhelm Australia and change its very fabric. The only option is to enforce policies that are strict and, if necessary, forceful:

Fire a few shots over the bow… they've got to learn that it's not a free ride once you get here. As soon as they get here, they make a phone call; "Oh it's easy we got in, come on over". Then that whole family reunites, I get that, but it can't be Dad came and then his sixteen sons and three wives want to come as well. If Dad came, maybe the wife could come too and their kids together, but, you can't have all your wives, all your sons and your cousins and Granddad – he can't come as well!

Tight control is the only way to protect Australia, it was argued, to discern who can enter and who cannot. As Rory stated:

You don't just open the floodgates and say, "Hey, come here"…Send back the boats, let in people that we think should come in. Like, you know, in terms of what they have to offer and in terms of whether they fit into society.

These accounts have offered insight into the discourses used by the rejecting interviewees in their

anti-asylum rhetoric. Symbolic boundaries were used to highlight differences between Australians and asylum seekers. Because anti-asylum seeker respondents believe asylum seekers have characteristics that are undesirable to Australian society, they argued for the use of exclusionary measures to stop their entry into the country. While I by no means wish to characterise the anti-asylum participants as being 'ugly and bad' (Hage 2000, p. 184), the implications of using exclusionary language and its continued pervasiveness in current discussions on the asylum seeker issue is apparent. Such language serves to reinforce and perpetuate anti-asylum sentiment.

Narratives of Acceptance

In contrast to the anti-asylum participants interviewed, the pro-asylum group drew on a radically different referential framework. Just as theorists have described strategies of differentiation in the construction of symbolic boundaries to exclude minority groups, the pro-asylum participants employed their own strategies to challenge those boundaries and argue for why asylum seekers should be made welcome. When discussing the acceptance of 'boat people', the narratives used by the pro-asylum group centred around three key themes – responsibility, openness, and compassion – themes also broadly consistent with cosmopolitan principles. Where the anti-asylum group argued asylum seekers are not Australia's problem, the pro-asylum participants described a belief that Australia has a responsibility to offer protection to asylum seekers. They also demonstrated openness towards asylum seekers, believing they would contribute to Australia rather than threaten it. Moreover, they expressed compassion towards 'boat people' and other asylum seekers, arguing that people who find themselves in such circumstances, regardless of origin, should be provided protection and support. Finally, the participants made suggestions as to how Australians might be encouraged to change their views on this issue and embrace a more accepting outlook.

Responsibility

From a cosmopolitan perspective, if one has the ability to do so, there is a responsibility to render assistance to others where there is need (Appiah 2006; Beck 2006; Parekh 2003). According to authors such as Appiah (2006) and Parekh (2003), while we do not necessarily have to put our own vital wellbeing behind others, if there is no substantial cost to self, assistance to those in need should be offered. The pro-asylum interviewees articulated the importance of responsibility when speaking of why Australia should be accepting of 'boat people'. They believed that Australia has an obligation towards the global community to offer assistance to 'boat people' and has the resources to do so. In terms of Australia's economy, culture, and security they argued that the cost of acceptance would not be too great.

Critical of any suggestion that boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned away, Daniel described this act as '*a death sentence*' for those on board these vessels. He found it difficult to understand how such an action could be justified.

It's basically saying, "Yeah, sorry, our rules, our government, states that you find your own way back. You're in the ocean on a dodgy boat, good luck!" I don't think that's very ethical.

While the anti-asylum group argued that by allowing asylum seekers into Australia the cost to Australians would be too great, the pro-asylum group believed this was merely an excuse to evade responsibility towards others in need. As with the anti-asylum participants, the pro-asylum group also invoked the concept of fairness, but this time it was the asylum seekers who were seen as not being treated fairly. For these 'accepting' interviewees, fairness was in recognising one's own privilege and taking the steps to share that good fortune. They also argued that, as part of the global community, Australia needed to accept a fair share of the world's displaced. Their sense was that this was not happening and countries less economically privileged were taking on people despite their own hardships. They argued that Australia, currently one of the more economically robust nations in the world, was much better positioned than many other nations to absorb people who required asylum.

As Daniel put it, '*everyone should be treated equally and fairly*' and the rights of all people, regardless of where they are from, is paramount. Ashleigh argued, given Australia's relative wealth, Australia is much better positioned than many other nations to absorb people who required asylum.

> *In my opinion they have it so much worse off than we do. Like, they're running away from their own country because they just can't live there… We obviously have a lot here – you know? We're living – doing whatever we want. So, kind of, why not help them out?*

Fairness was also important to Caitie. She pointed out that because Australians enjoy relative prosperity, they should share that good fortune:

> *Grant them protection. We're living such a nice - we're so comfortable. Why can't we share a little bit - offer them the kind of protection they can't have where they come from - where they're running from?*

Daniel extended this by saying Australia has ample space to share and accommodate asylum seekers:

> *Yeah, I mean I really think that Australia, given the person per capita, person to size of Australia ratio, we do have a lot of land that we can use to support refugees, in a sense. There's a lot of unused - especially around Northern Territory, South Australia, Western Australia - there's a lot of unused land there and I think that they could be using those facilities maybe to educate, maybe, process people.*

Respondents also argued that Australia has an obligation as a member of the international community to take its fair share of the world's asylum seekers and not expect other countries to carry the burden. Lily raised the point that there is plenty of room in Australia to be accommodating but also that, when compared to some other countries, Australia is not accepting a particularly large quota:

I know processing people is hard, but we're a huge country. We have such a tiny population for the area and we take in such a small amount of asylum seekers compared to so many other places… We're actually doing so much better than other countries. Like, other European countries and around that region, that take in so many more asylum seekers and are much smaller, and have failing economies, but are still taking them in.

Jess also argued it was not fair that Australia takes in so few asylum seekers compared to other countries in light of the fact that Australia had done so much better than other countries during the global financial crisis:

I think Europe accepts more than us and you hear about the little countries in Europe that accept way more than us. We have all the facilities and economics to have them and we're not. So it seems pretty like a bad sort of thing to be doing.

Openness

As I have outlined in Chapter 3, openness is an essential component of the cosmopolitan outlook. My research showed how the pro-asylum group expressed a high degree of openness towards the possibility of 'boat people' and asylum seekers in general, living in Australia. Interestingly, although Skrbiš and Woodward (2007, p. 731) did not identify what they called 'the more difficult aspects of openness such as showing hospitality to strangers' in their research, this study has detected this type of openness. Not only did the pro-asylum interviewees show openness towards the added cultural diversity 'boat people' might bring to Australia, they also demonstrated this outlook of openness by highlighting points of commonality between Australians and asylum seekers. From their perspective there was little reason to be concerned that 'boat people' present a realistic threat to Australia.

While the anti-asylum group made the argument that asylum seekers would change Australia, the pro-asylum participants were more open to the prospect of asylum seekers living in Australian communities. This openness was first demonstrated through their willingness to encounter and engage with cultural difference. Ashleigh, for instance, saw Australia's cultural diversity as being the '*soul*' of the nation, and spoke of how the multi-cultural makeup gives Australia its distinctive '*spirit*'. The view was that asylum seekers will add to, rather than detract from, Australia's (multi) cultural identity.

Those advocating for the pro-asylum stance also emphasised the fact that (non-indigenous) Australians share a common bond with asylum seekers on the basis that most within Australia are descended from (or are) immigrants. Their point was that those currently seeking asylum in Australia have as much 'right' to live in this country as most Australians. Since the majority of Australians originated from elsewhere, they suggested people should reflect on whether they have the right to decide who should come here and who should not:

I don't think that we should be prioritised because we came here 20 years ago when there was less restrictions and everything. So I think everyone in Australia has some sort of immigration

stamp to their name in terms of how they got here, so I think that they should learn to be more considerate.

As Caitie claimed it was unreasonable for those living in Australia to say asylum seekers do not belong, particularly when it was likely that in the past their own families would have taken advantage of the hospitality extended to immigrants by the Australian government. Just as Elder (2007, p. 127-128) describes, the 'we are all immigrants' argument can be used to combat anti-asylum seeker sentiment, as Caitie did:

> *Aren't we? We're immigrants. I don't understand. Can you see the bigger picture here people? Instead of assuming that you're - that you belong here and this is your place, and that no one else can be invited in… I can't see why people can't look back if they wanted – look back in history and see well aren't we all kind of the same? Why do you have to treat them differently? I don't know. I just think it's a bit stupid and silly.*

In addition, it was argued that asylum seekers would make a material contribution to Australian society. This is an argument also noted by Every and Augoustinos (2008a) in an analysis of pro-asylum discourse in parliamentary speeches, whereby they described how 'the relationship between refugees, immigrants and Australia' is constructed as being 'mutually beneficial, rather than to the benefit of immigrants and the detriment of Australia' (Every & Augoustinos 2008a, p. 569). In this instance Daniel argued that there is no reason why asylum seekers should not demonstrate the same level of initiative and commitment as migrants from the past:

> *I mean, 20 years ago when takeaway restaurants kicked off it was amazing how the asylum seekers and all the immigrants came in and took over the takeaway restaurant, made a fortune and now they're all retired on the Gold Coast. I find that interesting, I find that's awesome! So I don't know, there's a lot of asylum seekers and people who will take the initiative to start their own company but, there's a lot of them who will just go for the cleaning jobs, the cooking jobs, whatever it is that they're going to do.*

It was also argued that migrants are often more flexible in their job choice and more prepared to be employed in areas that the domestic population is unwilling to do. Katrina, for instance, disputed the claim that asylum seekers' preference is to go on the unemployment benefit, arguing instead they are likely to do the types of jobs some Australians do not want:

> *Most of them are doing the jobs that we don't want to do anyway, like working till 5am at the 7-Eleven or, like driving our taxis. Not many Caucasian Australians want to do those jobs.*

Instead the pro-asylum interviews felt such sentiments were based more on fear and prejudice, rather than an actual lack of resources. As Maddie put it:

> *We have so much to offer here and what a lot of people don't realise - I think there's a big misconception - is that we can actually accommodate them and be the asylum that they seek. There's a lot of prejudice about "Oh these people are taking our jobs" and, "They get more benefits", and everything like that, but it's just not true.*

In terms of asylum seekers posing a terrorist threat, the feeling was that 'boat people' did not present a particularly high risk to Australia. Thomas questioned whether travelling to Australia

under the guise of being an asylum seeker was a likely mode of entry for anyone wishing to enter Australia with the express purpose of engaging in terrorist activities in Australia:

> *If someone was that keen to pose a threat to Australia then they wouldn't be coming here on a boat...I think any sensible terrorist – a bit of an oxymoron - but any sensible terrorist would find a much safer way to get into the country and have better cover than doing the obvious thing being an asylum seeker.*

Emma thought that concerns about Australia having to stop the entry of 'boat people' because of a need to protect the borders and to contain the risk of terrorism was merely an excuse:

> *I think the whole terrorist thing - it's like border protection - border security - I think that's just an excuse because - I just don't think there's actually that much. I know there's a risk, you know we've got to be safe and we've got to protect ourselves, but what's the point if you're not - if you're not prepared to do it for anybody else?*

Referring to concerns that the Australian culture will be put under threat, Alice saw these fears as being merely 'backward thinking' rather than having a rational basis:

> *I think they're scared that if you accept too many, like the actual refugees, I don't know, people get scared of an overrunning of some type of race, I don't know, they're backward thinking Australia.*

The pro-asylum participants suggested the motives behind much anti-asylum sentiment in Australia are racism and prejudice. Previous research identifies prejudice as a motivator behind anti-asylum beliefs (e.g. Every & Augoustinos 2007; Nickerson & Louis 2008; Pederson et al. 2005) and the pro-asylum participants also took the view that this is a likely explanation for the current levels of anti-asylum sentiment. Katrina believed Queenslanders are particularly prejudicial and worried about being out-numbered by people who are not white:

> *I know that Queenslanders have just got that ridiculous perspective that the more foreigners you let into our country, the more they're going to take over our country, they're going to take over the world, they're going to take over our economy…That's what people are scared of definitely. They're scared of having less white people in Australia than other races, I think.*

Lily described the laws designed to keep asylum seekers out of Australia as being parochial. Referring to Australia's past discriminatory immigration policies, she said the current situation was '*like going back to the White Australia policy*'. Caitie believed politicians and the media are deliberately exaggerating the numbers of people from the Middle East aboard the boats in order to arouse prejudice and fear.

> *They seem to paint the picture that all asylum seekers are from the Middle East. I swear a lot of them will be European as well. You never really hear about that. I think there's this prejudice against people from that background.*

Although noticeably uncomfortable with making such an accusation, Emma thought prejudicial sentiments are the source of much animosity by Australians towards asylum seekers. She felt the scenario might be different if asylum seekers were white. It is because Australians associate 'boat

people' with racial and religious difference that they are so exclusionary:

> *Emma: It sounds horrible, but I think a lot of people have a – a fear of – it just sounds ridiculous and I can't say it out of my mouth, but people have a fear of people with dark coloured skin... there's still a sense that they're not – that people aren't equal. So I think it definitely plays a part in the whole asylum seeker issue because a lot of time they come in from Muslim countries.*
> *Interviewer: Do you think it would be different if they were white?*
> *Emma: I think it would be which is really sad. It makes me really upset, but I think it might be a bit different. You know, again, not like a conscious thing - it wouldn't be a conscious, "Oh they're white, therefore" - it would just be that if we saw white people on a boat coming that we might just feel more – I don't know we'd probably feel more comfortable and we wouldn't think about it so hard. I think – which is sad, but I think it's true.*

Compassion

Compassion is a response to the distress of others (Fine 2012; Sznaider 1998; van Hooft 2009). This emotion involves the belief that this suffering is bad and that help is warranted (Nussbaum 2001). Furthermore while feelings of love and loyalty may be limited to those we know, compassion can be extended beyond those close ties and as such can motivate us to 'act well' towards strangers (van Hooft 2009, p. 2).

For the pro-asylum group the thought of the situations people would have to have endured in order to decide to board a boat in the hope of being granted asylum by Australia, invoked a highly compassionate response. Instead of expressing feelings of fear and anger as the anti-asylum participants had done, they expressed feelings of care and concern. From their perspective, it was simply inconceivable that people in such dire circumstances should be turned away and not be offered assistance. Thomas, for instance, spoke with concern about the desperation 'boat people' must experience in order to decide to make such a voyage:

> *Turning them away, I know that it's an illegal way to get into the country but I also think that it's a desperate way, the way of people who have got no other way of doing it. I mean you'd obviously be mad to try and do it unless you had no other option because the boats are so dodgy and there's weather and pirates and everything that you hear about. So I don't think that we should turn them around and send them back if they get here by boat because they're actually that desperate to come here, there's a reason for that.*

Empathy can be associated with compassion. According to Nussbaum (2001, p.301), empathy is an 'imaginative reconstruction' whereby a person envisions having the same experiences as another. When the imaginary experiences are unpleasant, this process of placing oneself in 'somebody else's shoes' can elicit feelings of concern and compassion (Pedersen, Walker et al. 2011, p. 56). Empathy has been described by Hartley and Pedersen (2007, p.122) as a process which 'bridges in-group and out-group distinctions', and is therefore considered important in promoting acceptance of others, building positive intergroup relationships, and reducing prejudice (Butrus & Witenberg 2013; Finlay & Stephan 2000; Hartley & Pedersen 2007; Pedersen, Paradies et al. 2011). Empathy may even inspire positive attitudes towards asylum seekers (Hartley & Pedersen 2007). Emma argued

that Australians should show more empathy towards 'boat people' and expressed frustration with those who believe Australia has no ownership of the issue. She pointed out that if Australians found themselves in the same situation, they would also ask for help. Emma then went on to challenge those with anti-asylum sentiments to imagine themselves in the same situation before they abdicated their responsibility in finding a solution. If they were to show empathy and put themselves in the position of those aboard the boats, she believed they might change their views.

The pro-asylum participants also debated the arguments for rejection currently present in the public discourse. As was demonstrated by the accounts offered by the anti-asylum participants, and by the literature (e.g. Clyne 2005; Pickering 2001; Rowe & O'Brien 2014), asylum seekers are often categorised in Australia as illegal immigrants – a strategy intended to cast the asylum seekers as somehow deviant. In the case of the pro-asylum participants, the act of travelling to Australia by boat to seek asylum was most categorically not considered deviant behaviour. In fact they argued this action was understandable given the circumstances they believed 'boat people' had experienced.

Where interview data from anti-asylum participants showed how 'boat people' were constructed as representing a threat to Australia, the more accepting young people spoke of vulnerable individuals who are entitled to protection. Given the situation 'boat people' were in, Thomas felt they have little choice but to transgress when survival is at stake.

> It's a bit of a case of a beggar stealing a loaf of bread, because he can't buy it. It's a bit of a case of that…you can't expect them to stay somewhere where they're in fear of their life and if their only way to get out is to do it illegally then what choice do they have?

Emma also spoke of there being no '*right way*' to be a refugee, pointing out those who board these boats are desperately looking for a better life:

> I think if you're a refugee, you're a refugee and you're obviously fleeing from something horrific otherwise you wouldn't put yourself on a boat. You wouldn't - and people say, "Oh, like how could they do that? How could they risk their lives like that?" That's how desperate they are. They're risking their lives because they think they're going to die if they stay where they are.

Changing Minds

The accepting group also suggested strategies as to how more Australians can learn to appreciate the importance of responsibility, openness and compassion when it comes to considering Australia's responses to the 'boat people' issue. When asked what they thought needed to be done to resolve tensions in Australia surrounding asylum seekers, they argued this could only be achieved if the current discursive constructions used to describe asylum seekers were changed, and if public perceptions were challenged. Maddie, for instance, felt that one way to change public views is to address the way asylum seekers are being represented and '*change the language*' surrounding asylum seekers.

Alice argued that many Australians would take a more sympathetic stance only if they were made aware of what was really happening and the extent of the problem. She also thought that many Australians do not know what they can do to help:

> *We underestimate the amount that people do care, it's just the fact that they're just not proactive about it or they don't really know what to do.*

The suggestion the participants gave was that Australians are too insular in their views and need to witness for themselves the circumstances others have to endure. If Australians saw first-hand the conditions people are living in, then they may be more compassionate towards those who make the journey to Australia by boat in search of a new life. Australia's remoteness from the rest of the world was seen as a primary reason Australians could not empathise with the experiences asylum seekers are facing. Alice thought Australians needed to become more 'worldly' in experience and outlook, suggesting as they are isolated from the realities others in the world face that they are unable to comprehend what others were going through:

> *It's really hard for Australians. It's hard that people are coming from a country so different from Australia to Australia; it's hard for us to understand what their life is like back there. We can't actually comprehend what they're coming from. People! Like, their country is that bad they have to leave and they don't know where they're going. Most people just say, most of our friends would just say, "Why don't they just go back to their country? There's plenty of room there – they should go back?" We're so big and isolated we just need to become more worldly.*

Katrina argued along similar lines, suggesting that if Australians travelled more and witnessed first-hand the experiences of those who are less fortunate, then they would become more compassionate:

> *Travel more. Travel overseas. Like, it's not easy to travel to those countries, but still you can travel to poor countries, understand what people … Just get more of an understanding of what these people are going through.*

Discussing the role media plays in shaping public opinion, some pro-asylum interviewees pointed out that the media could be used to promote more compassionate views towards asylum seekers. '*The Go Back to Where You Came From*' series (SBS Australia 2011) mentioned in Chapter 2 was a common example. Emma particularly felt that the program had sent a powerful message:

> *I don't know if you ever saw that programme Go Back to Where You Came From? Oh my gosh, that was amazing, I loved that show… Oh my God, it was intense. It was sad. It was just really upsetting I think. Even - and I thought that I knew a lot about it, and then when I was actually had to watch people talk about it on a show and the family who'd been re-settled in Australia - like the family when they started out - like the first episode and there was that family who were settled refugees in Australia and then that mum talking about how those men came and raped her sisters and all that. I was just like, 'This is just so upsetting', and I don't see how we could know - like what I said before, I don't know how we can - if we knew that about people, I don't understand how we couldn't welcome them.*

Ultimately, the consensus amongst the 'accepters' was that we are all human and we should extend

to others a degree of cosmopolitan consideration:

> *So I think yes, we've got to protect ourselves and all of that, but I mean there's just no point if you're not willing to do it for anybody else. You can't say this principle applies for you people because you happen to live in this country, it doesn't apply for those people because they live over there. It just doesn't make sense. To me it doesn't.*

When asked if she was optimistic that things would change and if she thought Australians would become more accepting, Emma was hesitant. She did, however, point out that she was not alone in her views and there are many in Australia trying to change the current laws:

> *I think I'd like to believe that it would change. I hope it will for the sake of everybody really, not just the sake of people fleeing, but everybody. I'm optimistic. I'd like - yeah I'd like to be optimistic about it. There's a lot of people, you know - for everybody who doesn't agree and all that, there are people who do and there's people who are writing petitions and writing letters. There's people out there, so I, you know, hopefully, fingers crossed, some action comes.*

Ashleigh was also hopeful that views toward asylum seekers would change in Australia. When asked if she thought the situation would change, what she said highlighted the importance of education in increasing levels of acceptance:

> *I'm not sure. I hope that there are more people who are educated and who are more tolerant of differences, look past them and just see a person. I think there are more of those people. I think there will continue to be more of those people. So hopefully we will move forward.*

In the main, amidst the pro-asylum participants, the consensus was that we are all members of collective humanity and need to extend our focus beyond Australian borders. There was also optimism that Australians could eventually learn to look past their concerns and '*just see a person*' who needed support and assistance. After all, as Ashleigh poignantly commented:

> *We're all here; we may as well help each other out. We all just die in the end.*

Discussion

In this chapter I have used interview data to compare and contrast the discursive strategies employed by young people who 'reject' 'boat people' with those who 'accept' them. In doing so, I have addressed my first research question:

RQ1. What narratives do young people use when discussing the rejection or acceptance of 'boat people'?

First, I showed how symbolic boundaries against the acceptance of 'boat people' by Australia are constructed in the language of young people who believe boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned away from Australia. I then demonstrated the narratives of how some young Australians challenge these boundaries. Furthermore, by arguing that Australia should not turn away boats

carrying asylum seekers, the pro-asylum expressed their accepting views by drawing on principles that parallel themes discussed in the literature on cosmopolitanism.

Global *responsibility* is a dominant and consistent theme in cosmopolitan theories. As Beck (2006, p.73) explains, there is 'a growing awareness that we are living within a global network of responsibility from which none of us can escape'. From the cosmopolitan perspective, if we have the capacity to provide assistance we should step up and act to address those problems (Appiah 2006; Beck 2006; Held 2002; Parekh 2003; van Hooft 2009). The pro-asylum interviewees demonstrated such an appreciation. They saw the issue of human displacement as being a global problem and argued that, since Australia was one of the world's more privileged nations, it should accept a significant role in helping address that problem.

Responsibility is also a mainstay of cosmopolitan thought pertaining to the appropriate treatment of asylum seekers by host nations. As discussed in Chapter 3, the obligation to provide sanctuary to people escaping fear and persecution was a principle introduced by Kant's philosophical thought in the 18th century. He contended that it is a 'cosmopolitan right' of all to be offered sanctuary in another place should they require it. The responsibility of a host country is not to meet the asylum seeker with aggression or hostility, but recognise the universal right to hospitality and to realise its responsibility in safeguarding that right (Kant 1983). In more contemporary times, theorists such as Derrida (2001) and La Caze (2004) have also drawn connections between the principle of cosmopolitan responsibility and the treatment of the globally displaced. As these authors have argued, if nations choose to put their own interests ahead of respecting the fact that all people deserve basic considerations, and if they choose to treat asylum seekers with contempt, they are not upholding the key tenets of cosmopolitan philosophy. While few of the pro-asylum seekers specifically spoke of the current international laws setting out specific codes of conduct with regards to the treatment of displaced persons, these young people did express a belief in the principles these laws uphold. Young people in the accepting group argued that safety is a human prerogative and Australia has a responsibility to protect this right. They also argued that the act of Australia turning away boats carrying asylum seekers fell markedly short of meeting this obligation.

Cosmopolitans share a preparedness to encounter and positively interact with people, ideas, and locations outside of their own national boundaries (Calhoun 2008; Skrbiš & Woodward 2011). This *openness* can manifest in various ways. It may be an affinity towards consuming foreign commodities, or experiencing foreign cultures first-hand (Skrbiš & Woodward 2007). It may also be a willingness to tolerate a multicultural presence within one's day-to-day environment, or a demonstration of inclusiveness and acceptance (Lamont & Aksartova 2002). In this study, openness towards 'boat people' was expressed via arguments that these individuals would add to Australia's multicultural makeup, and that they were no different to the other immigrants who had come to and

contributed to Australia in the past. Furthermore, an open disposition was demonstrated via the lack of concern the accepting group had regarding any possible threat 'boat people' might pose. Instead of being fearful that 'boat people' could inflict harm on the Australian nation, the pro-asylum participants felt this threat to be negligible.

The data also showed how the pro-asylum group showed both empathy and *compassion* for 'boat people'. These participants spoke of trying to imagine the circumstances that might lead a person to make a decision to try the dangerous sea voyage to Australia. They also imagined how they would feel if they were aboard those boats with their loved ones asking for help, and yet being unsure if any assistance would be provided. Given what they saw to be the level of desperation that would be experienced in such circumstances, the conclusion reached was that a high degree of compassion should be shown and that assistance was justified.

Compassion is an emotional reaction to another's misfortune and can motivate helping behaviour. If a person sees another suffering due to circumstances deemed not to be that victim's fault, they may try to help alleviate that suffering (Nussbaum 2001; Sznaider 1998). Conversely, if the plight of others is seen to be their own fault they may not be extended such understanding. Also, if the person is a stranger, it may be difficult to identify with that individual or appreciate their circumstances. Perceptions of difference, as Nussbaum (2001, p. 316) explains, can at times 'prove recalcitrant to the imagination, and this recalcitrance impedes emotion'.

Unlike notions of responsibility and openness, compassion has not traditionally been a mainstay of cosmopolitan theory. Kant was adamant that sentiment should play no role in the cosmopolitan ethic and that morality should be purely based upon reason and logic, rather than vacillating emotion (Sznaider 1998; van Hooft 2009). Similarly, in her discussion of different philosophical arguments surrounding the social utility of compassion, Nussbaum (2001) explains how compassion has been seen as a fickle, unreliable, and subjective emotion, and is thus an 'insufficient, and even a dangerous, moral and social motive' (Nussbaum 2001, p. 361). However, as Svašek and Skrbiš (2007) have written, it is 'hard to imagine writing on globalisation-related topics, such as specific forms of migration, bereft of strong emotional implications'. Increased encounters between settled populations and the displaced have emotional consequences not just for those who are seeking safety, but also for those being asked to accommodate them. If members of a settled population believe their sovereignty is being undermined and they feel overwhelmed by a perceived loss of control over their borders, they may well respond with anger and aggression. If, in response to issues of global displacement, people respond with compassion, then this is a cosmopolitan response.

As Sznaider (1998, p. 117) explains, 'compassion involves an active moral demand to address others' suffering'. He then adds that if such concern is 'directed toward those outside the scope of

personal knowledge, it becomes public compassion, shaping moral obligations to strangers' and can lead to acts of humanitarianism and responsibility. This point is consistent with Nussbaum (2001, p. 371) who explains that given compassion 'includes the thought of common humanity', it is possibly 'an ally of respect, not its enemy'. In the context of attitudes of acceptance towards asylum seekers I would therefore argue that compassion is a 'cosmopolitan' emotion.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the narratives used by young Australians on the topic of asylum seekers coming to Australia. In the accounts of those who believe boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned away from Australian shores, reference was made to a number of symbolic boundaries that positioned asylum seekers as outsiders to an imaginary community of belonging. By contrast, the young Australians who express accepting views toward asylum seekers, employed narratives consistent with the concept of cosmopolitanism.

Cosmopolitanism presupposes a set of skills necessary for individuals to successfully cross boundaries between the familiar and the unfamiliar. What I have found is that young people who are accepting of asylum seekers demonstrate an adherence to certain cosmopolitan principles in their arguments for why Australia should be accepting. They expressed a belief that Australia had a responsibility to provide protection to asylum seekers and that it would be negligent if Australia did not do so. They also appeared open towards asylum seekers and argued for their ability to contribute to this country. Furthermore, there was considerable compassion for the conditions that asylum seekers often faced. These findings have therefore illustrated how the cosmopolitan framework can be applied to the understanding of the mechanisms which motivate a member of a settled population to take an accepting stance towards asylum seekers. In doing so they offer an example of inclusive reasoning among young Australians, which is, as Lamont and Aksartova (2002, p.18) argue, 'essential for understanding the process of bridging boundaries and for fighting more effectively against exclusion'. In the next chapter I shall investigate how these pro-asylum young Australians relate this view to their understandings of 'being Australian'.

6. Analysis of Findings: Narratives of Nationhood

I think Australia can be a lot more compassionate and tolerant.
It's in our national anthem. (Jennifer)

In Chapter 5, I identified and isolated narratives that are common to both the anti-asylum and pro-asylum positions. I then argued how the cosmopolitan principles of responsibility, openness, and compassion were expressed in the language of the pro-asylum participants. In this chapter, I continue to explore the accepting attitudes of young Australians towards 'boat people' by showing how their inclusive views are reconciled with beliefs surrounding what it means to be Australian. This will address the second research question:

> **RQ2. How do young Australians who express inclusive views towards 'boat people'**
> **relate this acceptance to notions of 'being Australian'?**

First, I consider theories and approaches that draw a connection between national and cosmopolitan imaginings. I then outline the literature that interprets some of the key meanings associated with popular notions of Australian national identity and then use data collected from both interview rounds to categorise the different ways research participants describe what 'being Australian' means to them and the degree to which they feel attached to that identity. Finally, this chapter considers how participants relate their understandings of what it means to be 'Australian' to their views on allowing 'boat people' into Australia. Through this process I have identified some distinctive patterns of attachment and have drawn connections to the participants' views towards 'boat people'. In the discussion section of this chapter, these findings are considered in the context of how national imaginings and attachments can be intertwined with 'cosmopolitan' attitudes of acceptance towards those seeking asylum.

Imagining Australia

A nation has been described by Anderson (2006, p.6) as an 'imagined political community' whose members, while not known personally to one another, imagine themselves to belong to a shared community with a common and distinctive character. This imagined community is derived from stories and symbols that reflect a shared experience specific to that group. As Moran (2011, p. 2155) aptly describes, the 'configurations of ethnic cores, myths and memories, religious beliefs, language, connections with territory, and political values' of that particular community informs their sense of belongingness. However, while a national identity might be unique and distinctive, its characteristics are not static. With time and circumstance, new stories and meanings are added to old. These can contribute to (or at times transform) a nation's understanding of what it represents (Calhoun 2008; Croucher 2003; Moran 2011).

The language of nationhood, says Calhoun (1993, p. 211), 'remains the pre-eminent rhetoric for attempts to demarcate political communities, claim rights of self- determination and legitimate rule by reference to "the people" of a country'. These meanings can be reinforced via the narratives adopted by macro-level societal structures. This includes government, educational institutions, or the media (e.g. Anderson 2006; Calhoun 1993; Smith 2010). A nation's identity can also be strengthened and legitimised through rituals and symbolism. Whether it is through a national holiday, a flag, a landmark, or a celebration of an historical event, the symbolic meaning behind these 'distillations of nation' (Fox & Miller-Idriss 2008, p. 545) can be used to reinforce the solidarity of a nation and its people (Billig 1995; Fox 2006; Fox & Miller-Idriss 2008; Fozdar et al. 2014). However, not all members of a society will interpret these meanings in the same fashion. How an individual understands institutional messages and symbolic displays of national cohesion, as well as the degree of importance they place on those messages, is conditional to that person's background, experiences, perspectives, and interests. It therefore cannot be assumed that one interpretation is the most dominant, or that all members of a society will embrace a singular understanding of what it means to belong to that nation (Fox & Miller-Idriss 2008).

In the face of shared global experiences, an opportunity has emerged whereby people can 'imagine' themselves as belonging to a community that stretches beyond their own national precincts and into the global sphere. As Colic-Peisker (2011, p. 28), points out, 'this process of nation building' can also be applied as 'a blueprint for the development of a cosmopolitan community and identity'. Similarly, Beck and colleagues believe that with the effects of globalisation, national identities can not only be 'reimagined', but also 'cosmopolitanized' to encompass all of humankind (e.g. Beck 2002, 2011; Beck & Levy 2013). Beck (2011, p. 1346) thus argues the conceptual understanding of 'imagined communities' could be broadened to encompass the concept of 'imagined cosmopolitan communities' and that people have the capacity to imagine themselves as being part of a global community. This does not necessarily mean that the concept of nation must be ignored. There is what Beck (2011, p.1352) describes as 'the special quality of "both one thing and the other"', whereby people can imagine themselves as belonging to both a national and global community. As I have touched on in Chapter 3, a wide range of authors argue that cosmopolitan perspectives can effectively be informed by national imaginings (Appiah 1997, 2006 Beck & Levy 2013; Brett & Moran 2011; Calhoun 2008; Kendall et al. 2009). An excellent example of how national identities can inform a cosmopolitan outlook comes from research undertaken by Lamont and Aksartova (2002). In their study of how blue-collar workers in the United States and France dealt with cultural difference in the workplace, the authors described how study participants open to cultural diversity in the workplace would apply 'broad principles of inclusion' in order to 'bridge boundaries with people who are different from them' (Lamont &

Aksartova 2002, p.3). These 'ordinary' individuals applied discursive strategies to emphasise aspects of similarity between themselves and co-workers from different ethnic backgrounds. Furthermore, Lamont and Aksartova (2002) describe how their study participants who supported an anti-racist and inclusive stance towards otherness, draw upon 'cultural repertoires' particular to the ideological values of their own country to justify their readiness to live and work alongside ethnic diversity. In the United States, for example, these authors describe how cosmopolitan openness was framed in terms of the right of all to achieve socio-economic success regardless of origin or social position. In France, the rhetoric of inclusion embraced the principles of socialism and egalitarianism (Lamont & Aksartova, 2002). In other words, acceptance of the 'other' was fixed within notions inherent to national identity.

There is a wide body of literature that tries to capture and describe various dimensions of the Australian consciousness. What is evident from this literature is that there is no single Australian identity. For example, Australian attachments might derive from understandings of Indigenous culture (e.g. Finlayson & Anderson 2002; Wilson & Ellender 2002), early postcolonial Anglo-Australian experiences (e.g. Moran 2011; Tranter & Donoghue 2007, 2014; Ward 1958), and/or more contemporary, multi-cultural understandings (e.g. Purdie & Wilss 2007; Tranter & Donoghue 2007).

Anglo-Australian identities were initially informed by settler-colonial experiences (Purdie & Wilss 2007; Tranter & Donoghue 2007). Such stories instilled in white Australians a distinctive sense of self – an identity that was anti-authoritarian and irreverent, yet also loyal and courageous. The challenging conditions faced by early British settlers, for example, engendered stories that Australians are inherently robust and able to deal with adversity (Purdie &Wilss 2007). The 'Australian way of life' as Tranter and Donoghue (2007, p.166) describe, 'became a celebration of the bushman-digger ethos, with an emphasis on physical (sporting) rather than intellectual achievement' as well as egalitarianism, mateship, and the 'fair go'. This 'traditional' (i.e. post-settlement, non-Indigenous) concept of an Australian national identity was cultivated through images of the Australian bushman, a 'solidaristic, egalitarian, anti-authoritarian, practical, laconic, and easy-going' figure (Moran 2011, p. 2156), or the 'Anzac digger' as the epitome of bravery, mateship, and masculinity (Bellanta 2012; Donoghue & Tranter 2015; Elder 2007; Moran 2011; Purdie & Wilss 2007; Ward 1958). These symbolic resources informed understandings of what it meant to be the 'typical Australian' described by Russell Ward (1958, p.1-2) in his book *The Australian Legend*:

> […] a practical man, rough and ready in his manners and quick to decry any appearance of affectation in others. He is a great improviser, ever willing 'to have a go' at anything, but willing too to be content with a task done in a way that is 'near enough'. Though capable of great exertion in an emergency, he normally feels no impulse to work hard without good cause. He

swears hard and consistently, gambles heavily and often, and drinks deeply on occasion…He is a hard case, skeptical about the value of religion and of intellectual and cultural pursuits generally…Yet he is hospitable and, above all, will stick to his mates through thick and thin, even if he believes they may be wrong. (Ward 1958, p.1-2)

The 'traditional' consciousness constructed during the years of white settlement continues to inform the Australian identity (Moran 2011; Purdie & Wilss 2007; Tranter & Donoghue 2007). As Moran (2011, p. 2157) argues, the 'ideas and values associated with these myths, such as the fair go, egalitarianism, mateship, and courage in the face of adversity continue to resonate with Australians'. Likewise, Tranter and Donoghue (2007, 2014) speak of the importance of the ANZAC legend to the contemporary Australian consciousness and Purdie and Wilss (2007, p.79) note how interpretations of the Australian identity have remained 'linked to the traditional mateship sentiment espoused since the early days of white settlement'.

Alongside these more historical understandings, the Australian identity has adopted characteristics related to an acceptance of cultural diversity (Moran 2011; Stratton & Ang 1994). As described in Chapter 2, with the implementation of multi-cultural policy in the 1970's, the Whitlam and Fraser governments took an 'interventionist role in redefining the Australian national identity' by adopting a 'unity in diversity' mantra and urging Australians to appreciate cultural differences in their population (Stratton & Ang 1994, p. 149). It was envisaged that an acceptance of difference would become the new foundation upon which a multicultural Australian 'imagined community' would be built (Hage 2000; Koleth 2010; Stratton & Ang 1994).

Understandings of an open, multicultural Australian identity have since become a characteristic of the contemporary Australian identity (Brett & Moran 2011; Moran 2011; Phillips & Smith 2000; Purdie & Wilss 2007). In their research into what the Australian identity means to young people, Purdie and Wilss (2007, p. 78), for instance, noted a divergence from more traditional notions of 'Australian-ness' to more 'expanded views' where the Australian identity is more closely associated with themes relating to diversity and cohesion. This often reflected an appreciation for the fact that Australia comprises many ethnic and cultural groups, each of which have helped shape a modern Australia.

Not all Australians, however, believe contemporary Australia should be so multicultural. There has been some public concern that some new migrants are allegedly unable to fit into the Australian way of life or respect Australian laws (e.g. Elder 2007; Forrest & Dunn 2011; Fozdar 2014; Moran 2011). With the rise of Islamic extremism in Australia and the threat of terrorist attacks, the mantra of multiculturalism has lost its gloss within some sectors of Australian society with some public withdrawal from multicultural ideals (Koleth 2011; Moran 2011; Pietsch & Marotta 2009; Poynting & Perry 2007). Essentially, when certain Australian values are challenged, there comes a time when acceptance of diversity 'reaches its limit' (Fozdar 2014, p. 93).

In the past, notions of what it means to be Australian have been used to justify the exclusion of those considered 'outsiders'. Nationalist narratives have also been used in Australia to justify exclusionary steps being taken against asylum seekers (Every & Augoustinos 2008a, 2008b; Lueck et al. 2015; O'Doherty and Augoustinos 2008). An analysis of print media reports into the 2002 *Tampa* incident undertaken by O'Doherty and Augoustinos (2008), for instance, reported how nationalist discourse was applied in order to support the Howard government's refusal to accept asylum seekers rescued by a Norwegian vessel, the Tampa. A 'national voice' was constructed, whereby the words of Prime Minister John Howard were presented as representative of the views of all Australians, and his actions, including the use of the military force, were described as being carried out 'in the national interest'. In a similar vein, research carried out by Lueck and colleagues (2015) into how mainstream media reported events involving the interception of asylum seeker boats, also identified rhetoric surrounding the 'national interest' and the need to protect Australia. In the latter instance, the discourse was used to justify turning back these vessels and returning them to Indonesia.

In an analysis of parliamentary speeches debating asylum policy, Every and Augoustinos (2008a, p. 562) observed what they refer to as the 'flexibility of nationalist discourse', whereby arguments relating to the importance of respecting Australian values were used not only in anti-asylum speeches, but also by pro-asylum advocates. Of particular interest in this study was how the concept of the Australian 'fair go' was used to defend both exclusionary and inclusionary perspectives. Anti-asylum politicians argued that asylum seekers were 'queue jumping' ahead of those entering via formal channels, whose legitimate refugee status had already been acknowledged. They argued that principles of fairness were not being respected by 'boat people'. Fairness, from this perspective, was a 'two-way street' (Every & Augoustinos 2008a, p. 574), so only those prepared to act fairly should be treated fairly. On the other hand, pro-asylum politicians argued that all people should be extended a 'fair go' irrespective of their origins. Thus 'boat people' should be given an opportunity to have their refugee status recognised without fear of punitive treatment (Every & Augoustinos 2008a).

The following analysis of the qualitative data collected in both interview rounds builds on studies such as these, to describe how the pro-asylum participants related their accepting views to notions of 'being Australian'. In doing so it should be acknowledged that interviewees have 'imagined' the Australian identity in very different ways and have demonstrated varying levels of attachment to national identity. I will therefore firstly categorise these variations and explain how these identity categories correspond to participants' views towards asylum seekers. I then present data that illustrates each of these categories.

Being Australian

The task of identifying and analysing the participants' understandings of 'being Australian' required three considerations. The first was to look at the degree to which the respondents were attached to, and identified with, the idea of an Australian identity. Did they express a strong attachment to Australia or was this attachment relatively weak? Second, I searched for similarities and differences in the descriptions given by the interviewees of what 'being Australian' actually means. Third, in line with the literature on cosmopolitanism, and cosmopolitan cultures and identities in particular, I queried whether those identities were 'open' or 'closed' to Australia being a culturally diverse nation.

In the main, I argue that the participants could be categorised as belonging to one of three groups [see Figure 6.1]. The first group was what I refer to as being 'strong/closed'. Namely, the participants who fell within this category expressed a strong attachment to 'being Australian' and strongly believed that Australia does not benefit from cultural diversity. While most of the 'strong/closed' group agreed there were pragmatic reasons as to why Australia should accept immigrants, the consensus was that anyone permitted to live in Australia should be both willing, and able, to make a contribution to the country. Importantly they also argued that new migrants to Australia should adopt Australian practices of living. The second group can be referred to as being 'strong/open'. They also spoke of having strong attachments to an Australian identity, but their interpretation of what 'being Australian' represented related to ideas of openness and acceptance. As such, they were very open to Australia being culturally diverse. A small number of the pro-asylum group described a 'weak/open' position. While still advocating the importance of openness and acceptance by Australia, any personal attachment to an Australian identity shown by these interviewees was considerably weaker.

The next task was to look for patterns between the participants' attitudes towards asylum seekers and three distinct categories. As per Figure 6.1, the 'anti-asylum' participants (n=7) fell into the 'strong/closed' category. The 'pro-asylum' participants (n=13) fell within the other two categories. The majority of these 'accepting' young people expressed a 'strong' yet 'open' Australian identity (n=10). A small minority of pro-asylum participants (n=3), however, had a weak attachment to the notion of 'being Australian'. While they were also open to living in a culturally diverse Australia, they were less inclined towards embracing an Australian identity.
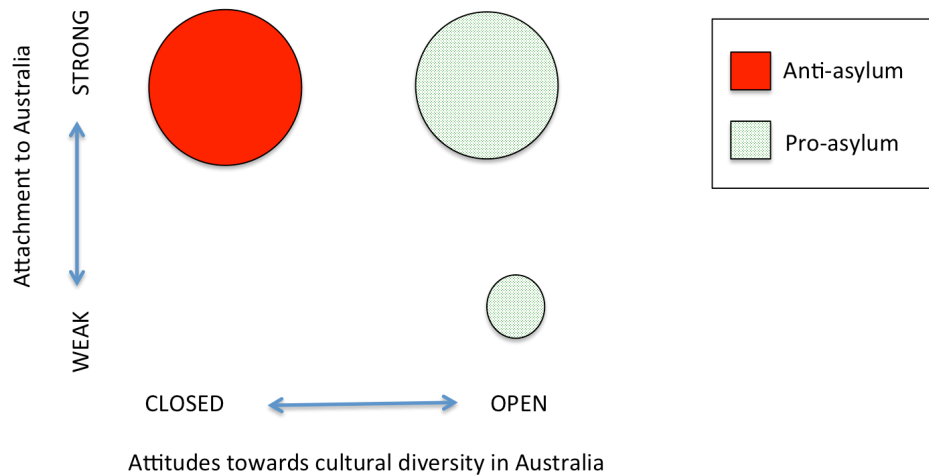
Figure 6.1: Attachment to Australia and attitudes towards cultural diversity
Illustration of Round 2 anti-asylum and pro-asylum interviewees' descriptions of their level of attachment to Australia (weak-strong), and their attitudes towards cultural diversity in Australia (closed-open).

Strong /Closed: The 'Australian Way'

Those in the 'strong/closed' group spoke of being proud of being Australian. They also spoke of the distinctive characteristics of being Australian and of wanting to preserve and protect those unique attributes. While many spoke of being prepared to accept some new migrants into Australia, in their view Australians should be highly selective as to who should be permitted to enter their country. Essentially, the view of interviewees in this category ran along assimilationist lines. They argued that anyone who came to settle in Australia should 'contribute' to the country and learn to do things the 'Australian way'.

Traditional understandings of Australian identity characteristics were also evident among this group. When asked to describe what 'being Australian' meant, the descriptions of these interviewees fitted squarely within the 'repertoire of Australian themes' previously described by Phillips and Smith (2000, p. 215), who discussed the tendency of some Australians to cite 'traditional or old versions of Australia'. James' enthusiasm for the country was strongly apparent, and he drew on a vast array of 'typically' Australian (and thus highly masculine) images to convey that sentiment. These ranged from pies and beer (Wedgewood 1997) to sport (Phillips & Smith 2000), and values such as 'mateship' and a 'fair go' (Tranter & Donoghue 2007):

> *Interviewer: Do you identify with yourself as being Australian?*
> *James: Very much so.*
> *Interviewer: So what is that? Put that into a box for me.*
> *James: Four'N Twenty, Jackie Howe, XXXX Gold - I don't know....Basically Anzac really, mateship...What does mateship mean? Just getting along with everyone, taking everything as a joke, being very light hearted about it all and at the end of the day just turning a new page and tomorrow's a new day. Don't dwell on things. Don't hold grudges and worry about things. There are bigger and better things to worry about in life - like the State of Origin. I think it's just about having a fair go and giving everyone a chance.*

When asked what they liked about being Australian, Rory and Lachlan spoke of how they appreciated the easy-going nature of Australian culture, using the popular term 'laid back' (Lentini et al. 2009; Moran 2011) to describe the Australian psyche:

> *More casual, like, more relaxed, and that's what I like about Australia… I guess I value being Australian highly. (Rory)*

> *We're laid back, we live in a good country. We don't have the war and stuff. We just live our own life – I just like being an Aussie. Yeah, love it. (Lachlan)*

Not only were Australians seen to be 'laid back' by this group, they were also characterised as raucous. Bellanta (2012) describes, the mythic 'true blue-Aussie larrikin' as being a heterosexual, football-playing, often drunken joker who refuses to take himself or others seriously. To call someone a larrikin, Bellanta (2012, p. xii) explains 'is also to excuse their bad behaviour, offering an affectionate slant on their disrespect for social niceties and raucous drunkenness with mates'. This was the type of character that both Ryan and Justin believed an Australian to be. They described how Australians could be seen as being outgoing, 'wild' and at times, 'bogan'. As Ryan said, Australians are '*wild, very outgoing sort of people* [and] *not really held back*'. As he explained:

> *Australians are sort of known as their own individual culture, like real loud, Aussie… A lot of people say like the bogan thing, but for me it's not really like that. It's just - it's kind of just like the way you live your life sort of – with your mates.*

Being '*blokey*' was something James felt best described being Australian. In the Australian vernacular, to be a 'bloke' means to be ordinary, unpretentious and forthright (male) and is, according to Elder (2007, p. 4), 'one of the most stereotyped, out of date and yet long lived and most popular narratives of Australian-ness'. James was a young person who, although he had been raised in metropolitan Brisbane, spoke of having a great affinity for 'outback' Australia. Of the people he had encountered, it was those living in rural Queensland he felt best represented the quintessential Australian. As he explained:

> *They are - it's hard to describe - they're very blokey. Even the girls are the same time, they're not blokey, but they're true blue. They're still honest; they speak their mind and have a joke about everything. They're not worried at all at what other people think of them. It's not all about being La-di-da and, "Ooh what are the neighbours going to think?" It's just doing my own thing and who cares what other people think about me.*

James went on to describe actions he thought were 'un-Australian'. As Phillips (1996, p.115) describes, 'Australia has historically developed a unique set of symbolic codes categorizing the 'Australian' as against the 'un-Australian''. While James said he did not object to male homosexuality, he felt Australian men who were not masculine did not fall within the category of 'being Australian', particularly if they did not subscribe to the typically masculine behavioural codes:

> *Nothing wrong with that because they're a normal person - that's just the way they choose to do it. I know people who are gay, but they aren't in your face about it all day long. They're just, "Oh my name's Gary, I drink beer and I play cricket", not, "My name's Jesse, I love doing hair and going to the pony club on the weekend" … I don't identify that as Australian.*

Callum believed the characteristics of a good Australian were '*somebody who's born here'*, and can '*speak fluent English and sing our national anthem'*. Although he did not like the idea of migrants coming to Australia, he thought that those who did come to live in the country at the very least should speak English and possess skills that would benefit Australia. As he put it, '*if they can speak English, write, read and they can help in some way, they can come in'*. He felt that to allow people into the country without those skills would just '*bring Australia down'*. For Ryan, a 'good' Australian was a person who contributed to Australian society. Moreover, they must be self-sufficient and not expect to be cared for by the state:

> *Yeah, probably someone who contributes - like if you don't do anything, like a lot of people don't work and whatnot and sort of chew up resources for whatever reason. Some are reasons they can't really control but a lot of people just don't work and live off the pension and whatnot. I don't think that probably helps. I think good citizens make a living for themselves.*

Alexis had similar views, stressing the importance of contributing to Australian society rather than exploiting it:

> *I'm really big on the whole contributing to society thing. If you're just going to sit on your bum and not do anything all day, then you're not a good citizen. So people that actually do something with their lives, and teachers who are raising the young and educating them and bringing them up - and doctors saving lives, researchers finding cures. Even garbage men that are cleaning up and things like that - I think everyone has an important role, and as a citizen it's our job to contribute to the running of the country. If you're just going to sit there and let other people contribute to the country and then still pay for you, then you're not a good citizen.*

The 'strong/closed' interviewees were also inclined to support exclusionary measures being taken against 'boat people' because of fears that these asylum seekers posed a threat to Australia and its identity. Consistent with Elder (2007, p. 28), who speaks of how in Australia 'stories of commonality are … frequently premised on exclusion' creating an 'us and them dualism', Australian identity, was used by the 'strong/closed' (anti-asylum) interviewees to reinforce symbolic boundaries and further demarcate the differences between Australians and asylum seekers. After describing what they believed to be distinctive Australian characteristics, they argued that 'boat people' were neither capable of, nor willing to, behave in a manner consistent with these understandings.

In keeping with the pattern described in Chapter 5, whereby the anti-asylum group felt 'boat people' were 'bludgers' wanting to exploit Australia, the belief was expressed that 'boat people' had little intention of fitting in or making a contribution to Australia. Jemma held the view that in order to get anywhere in life, you have to work for it. She argued, any asylum seeker who came to Australia should have to work to earn their own living:

> *Like, if they are going to come here…get a job, work for themselves and do what I do. …Tell*
> *them to get jobs, or get out. I just think I'm here to work for my money. So they should be too.*

James had a similar perspective. Having worked as a farm hand in regional Queensland, he was of the opinion that a hard work ethic was important. He was sceptical, however, regarding the preparedness of asylum seekers to work. He contrasted what he saw as an inherent laziness amongst asylum seekers, with the work ethic of his grandparents who had come to Australia as immigrants from Europe. They, he said, had been willing to do any sort of work in order to support themselves and contribute to Australian society. He described his grandfather as being a labourer who was happy to '*tile, paint, brick lay, anything*', and argued this work ethic attitude should be expected from anyone who wants to come to this country.

In Chapter 5, the anti-asylum group argued that by allowing asylum seekers into Australia, Australians were being cheated. They felt that it was unfair for funding to be directed towards asylum seekers with monies better spent on Australians in need. They also thought it unjust that competition for jobs and housing would increase because more people who were unable to support themselves were being allowed into the country. In the context of protecting the Australian national identity, issues of fairness were again raised and it was considered unfair for Australians to be asked to change their way of living in order to accommodate the lifestyles of new migrants. They argued that if people from other countries want to make Australia their home they should both contribute and learn to '*fit in*'. This was a view expressed by Alexis. If 'boat people' were not prepared to integrate into Australian society, she saw no reason why they should be made welcome. Moreover, she argued it is unfair that Australians should be expected to accommodate other cultural practices:

> *Ah, honestly - if they are going to come here and work and contribute to society and integrate*
> *themselves in Australia, yes that's fine, but a lot of them don't, and they don't make an effort. I'm*
> *not saying that all cultures are wrong, but if they come here and then start demanding that their*
> *culture is catered for in our country, that's not really fair on us, because you're coming here and*
> *we're taking care of you and then you still expect us to do all this stuff for you.*

Jemma worried that asylum seekers would ultimately '*change*' Australia. Perceptions of how differences in the culture and religion of asylum seekers might jeopardise the makeup of Australian society have been noted in a number of studies (e.g. Dunn et al. 2007; Louis et al. 2010; Schwietzer et al. 2005). Jemma claimed that Australian cultural practices ought to be carefully protected, instead of allowances being made to accommodate the practices of others:

> *Jemma: Like, you get these ones coming in and they're trying to change our country. That's not*
> *fair on us.*
> *Interviewer: So how are they trying to change the country?*
> *Jemma: Like, you know, with the whole turban and all that stuff. They should come in, I reckon-*
> *they should come in and follow our rules really.*

She continued by making a point that schools should insist female Muslim students wear a regular school uniform instead of what she referred to as '*the long things*':

> *I know it's their religion, but in our country we've got school uniforms and whatnot. So they should be made to wear the school uniforms, I think anyway.*

James argued that, due to social pressures to be accepting and tolerant of the cultural attire asylum seekers wear, Australians were being made vulnerable. He referred to the wearing of the veil by Muslim women and pointed to a possibility that it could be used for criminal purposes. He also resented the fact that, even if Australians felt threatened by someone covering their face, they would be accused of prejudice if they made an objection to this form of attire. He said that anyone who came to Australia should act in accordance with '*the Australian way*' and gave an example of his dentist who had come to Australia and just '*got on*' with living here.

> *The dentist - you look at him and he's a dead set Chinaman, but listen to him talk, and he sounds just like you and me. He's obviously just moved over and he's accepted us - he wants to be part of this way of life and that's brilliant. I think that's great.*

It was people who came to live in Australia who did not make an effort to fit in to the Australian way of life that he objected to:

> *This is Australia. You've come to Australia – do it the Australian way. They're just going to start to change our values and our culture. Our culture will start to change. There's nothing wrong with having Chinese take away and eating Indian food – all that sort of stuff but…Bring your food, we all love your food, but don't bring your governments and your morals to this country.*

Strong/Open: 'Australians are Accepting'

Similar to the 'strong/closed' participants, 'strong/open' interviewees also spoke of feeling a strong sense of connectedness to the Australian identity. Likewise, they believed that to be Australian meant to possess and demonstrate certain unique qualities and characteristics. The point of difference, however, was they argued that an intrinsic part of the Australian identity was its multi-cultural makeup and its openness to diversity. Moreover, unlike their 'strong/closed' counterparts, the 'strong/open' interviewees drew on imaginings related to the Australian identity to support a 'pro-asylum' stance. When asked why they valued being an Australian, they intertwined particular core Australian ideals with more 'extended' conceptions of Australian identity (Purdie & Wilss 2007). Whereas the 'strong/closed' individuals used the distinctiveness of the Australian character to create a symbolic barrier of exclusion, participants who subscribed to a 'strong/open' identity applied views of 'Australian-ness' that informed a more inclusionary disposition.

Unlike an observation made by Phillips and Smith (2000) who found that it was difficult to identify 'modern' themes in the narratives of their participants, what became quickly apparent when undertaking this analysis was that the terms 'open' and 'accepting' were very common in participants' descriptions of Australian identity. Anna pointed out that there were different understandings of the Australian identity and that there had been a shift from the more traditional views to a contemporary identity that embraced the principles of multiculturalism. She argued that

for 'younger generations' 'being Australian' meant being, *'laid back, multicultural to a degree, relaxed, open, and welcoming'*. Similarly, Aysha and Ella also suggested the Australian identity had morphed from its more stereotypical meanings because Australia now has a multicultural makeup:

> *We have this stereotypical view of Australians: thongs, boardies, you know, things like that. I don't think it necessarily is anything to do with that. Australia has changed in the last couple of years, or in the last couple of decades, really, becoming more multicultural. Our values are slowly changing. We're becoming more accepting and open… We need to start accepting other people's … We need to be very open to different opinions and the way things are done. (Aysha)*

> *I don't believe that there is a typical Australian because we have come from so many different places. So I don't think to be Australian is like the stereotypical shorts and labourer and that sort of thing. (Ella)*

For Troy, 'being Australian' was a difficult concept to describe, because he maintained it now *'encapsulates so much…you can't really put it down into a couple of sentences'*. He was, however, careful to point out that the Australian identity was not about superficial behaviours, but more about practicing the principles of acceptance, fairness, and equality:

> *Troy: It depends what you mean by Australian. Like I think it's really hard to define what being Australian is. A lot of people think it's about a beer on the barbie in the afternoon, but it's not really about that – is it?*
> *Interviewer: What would you want it to be?*
> *Troy: Just a cohesive society, that isn't racist or sexist. I don't know, everyone is equal basically.*

The 'strong/open' group also spoke of how privileged they were to live in a safe and prosperous country like Australia. Compared to people living in other countries they felt they were very fortunate. National wellbeing and security are themes identified elsewhere in research by Purdie and Wilss (2007) as well as Lentini and associates (2009). In this context, participants also spoke of how they believed Australia was a safe and secure place to live, as Jake explained:

> *I feel really honoured to be an Australian. I've been given lots of support by both the government and my family. I think that people who live in third world countries have it really tough.*

Emily and Troy articulated similar sentiments. Like Jake, they also acknowledged that by being Australian, they had been afforded a relatively secure and carefree lifestyle:

> *Yeah, I think we're very lucky, very fortunate where we are and safe. I feel safe, yeah, definitely. (Emily)*

> *We're pretty lucky though. We're in a faraway corner of the world and don't really have to worry about terrorism. (Troy)*

In the previous findings chapter and in the published article which reports an analysis of those data (Laughland-Booÿ et al. 2015, Appendix M), I reasoned that pro-asylum interviewees applied principles consistent with the concept of cosmopolitanism in order to justify their accepting views. When speaking of why Australia should be accepting of 'boat people', they argued that it was

important for Australians to demonstrate responsibility, openness, and compassion towards these asylum seekers. As I explained in Chapter 3, cosmopolitanism is often considered to be the theoretical antithesis of nationalism, and that in order to embrace cosmopolitan ideals, one must abandon an allegiance to nation. Yet imaginings need not be 'all or nothing' and a sense of connectedness to a national identity should not be overlooked for the purpose of embracing cosmopolitan principles (Appiah 1997; Brett & Moran 2011; Kymlicka & Walker 2012; Skrbiš & Woodward 2007). In fact, as Lamont and Aksartova (2002) have contended, cultural building blocks can be the foundation of cosmopolitan imagination amongst ordinary people. As these authors have demonstrated, everyday people can draw upon cultural repertoires consistent with the cultural ideology of their home countries and associated cultural milieus in order to reinforce inclusionary views towards the ethnically different.

In interrogating the interview data, a similar process appears to be at work. Not only were the anti-asylum interviewees applying repertoires related to common understandings and imaginings of what it means to be Australian in order to substantiate their views, the pro-asylum, 'strong/open' interviewees also used their understandings of 'Australianness' to support their cosmopolitan and accepting viewpoint. For example, Anna described, 'being Australian' as, '*Just a real mateship, a real genuine friendliness,* and an '*openness to everything*'. 'Mateship' was also a term Jake used to describe the Australian psyche. Like James, from the anti-asylum 'strong/closed' group, Jake spoke with pride of an 'Australian' camaraderie, but in this instance used this attribute in the context of helping others:

> *There is a certain camaraderie and mateship that I hold as characteristic with Australians…I believe that we set ourselves apart on strength of community and I think I pride myself as being part of the community and being interwoven with it… If I see someone hurting I will go and help them and say, "G'day mate, how are you going? Do you need help?"*

Speaking of the fact that she had '*a lot of interactions with lots of different cultures*' Aysha attributed this to the fact that Australians had a *'very laid back attitude to everything'*. She also drew on the concept of 'mateship' to support her argument that Australians had an inherently open and friendly disposition. Moreover, she argued that these characteristics were recognised and respected overseas:

> *I think Australians are more - they've got that 'mate' attitude. You take care of your friends, you take care of your family, yeah, which makes us very different… Every time I went overseas they used to say, "Oh God you're so friendly!" I think it's that attitude – mate attitude.*

Describing how 'being Australian' meant demonstrating characteristics such as '*tolerance*' and '*respect*' and a '*laid back attitude*', Jennifer also spoke of the standing Australians had in the international community. Having travelled overseas, she provided some examples of the reactions of people when upon discovering she was an Australian:

One of my favourite things in Edinburgh when we were catching the bus was when I got off I'd be like, 'Oh cheers mate!' and they're like, 'Oh thanks'. You'd get the biggest smiles. It's like, 'Oh! Australian!'

I always remember being in France and we were waiting to get served and they were taking forever and all these other people were going before us. I was just like, 'Excuse me mate, you know we've been waiting here for like 20 minutes? Can you serve us please'. They were like, 'Oh you're Australian?' And we were like, 'Yeah'. They were like, 'Oh we thought you were English! Come here!'

Despite arguing that the Australian identity should be open and accepting, those in the 'strong/open' category still believed there were some overarching values that should be respected and maintained. Such a conviction was in keeping with a 'civic' Australian identity which has been described by Pakulski and Tranter as being 'voluntaristic, open and inclusive' (2000, p. 218). Unlike Australians who describe their identity as deriving from a single shared background, 'a voluntary association of people sharing major social institutions and commitments' underpins the 'civic identity' (Pakulski & Tranter 2000, p. 209). This type of Australian identity is therefore more amenable to the prospect of accepting new members, but on the proviso they are prepared to integrate into Australia by honouring a commitment to the nation and its values. Such an attachment to this 'civic' form of identity was expressed by Jake who, while acknowledging that there were a number of facets to being an Australian, thought any belongingness should be underlined by a shared commitment to caring for others:

Now, this is a tough one because it's very incredibly dimensional. But I think that a person who upholds the law, but to me, the law is less important than the morals by which somebody lives and to be a good citizen you have to live with a certain level of compassion for other people mixed with empathy and sympathy.

Anna also felt that everyone in Australia should '*abide by the rules and the laws*' in this country. Like the 'strong/closed' participants, Anna objected to the possibility of coming to Australia and trying to impose their beliefs on Australians already living in this country. The point of difference, however, was that Anna did not believe migrants should change their views, that is, assimilate into the Australian way of life. Instead she stressed the importance of people integrating into society and respecting the beliefs of others, as long as they were consistent with Australian law.

Well I think it's important to accept being a citizen of Australia that you need to abide by the rules and the laws and everything that are here. In terms of the multicultural aspect again and really just like those extreme sort of religions when they come in and then try and impose different law here, like that's fine but don't impose it on other people. Like you're - you know, you're in Australia, if you're an Australian citizen we have our own laws.

As Anna pointed out, it was because of Australian laws that Australians enjoyed so many personal freedoms and it should therefore be respected:

Just a general respect, you know? For each other and for the law and, yeah, you've got your personal freedoms because of these laws and it sort of works together, like you can't have just freedom in everything and do what you want.

Similar to the more insular group (strong/closed), the strong/open interviewees also felt that it was important for people living in Australia to make a contribution to the country. However, while the strong/closed group tended to define 'making a contribution' as working for one's own keep, the strong/open group members, such as Aysha, placed greater emphasis on the importance of helping others:

An Australian citizen also they give something back to the community. I think that's a good way of looking at it because so many - I think even young people, or it's even middle aged people, whatever you want to say, they have a very selfish mentality. They don't do anything unless it benefits them directly, but there's a lot of things going on in Australia. If you're actually truly an Australian citizen, what are you actively doing to make Australia a better nation? (Aysha)

The 'strong/open' interviewees also used their constructions of the Australian identity to make the argument that an intolerance of difference was at odds with what 'being Australian' truly means. As Jennifer explained:

If a person is un-Australian, yeah I suppose just intolerant and non-accepting… We're very multicultural so I think being accepting of the cultures is - being intolerant is un-Australian I'd like to say that it's un-Australian.

She elaborated by using an example of hearing someone saying that practicing Islam faith should be unlawful:

I thought that was the most un-Australian thing I've ever heard in my life. I was like can you respect their religion? Like are you saying that if you were in Church and someone walked in could they arrest you in the middle of service? Like, you can't do that, it's their prayer.

Being 'rejecting' of asylum seekers was also viewed as inconsistent with Australian values and as Troy explained, the measures designed to send boats away from Australia had made him feel *'ashamed to be an Australian'*. As these proudly Australian, yet open and accepting, young people argued, it was hypocritical to profess Australian principles such as mateship and fairness yet still favour policies to keep asylum seekers out in order to protect those understandings. The exasperation Caitie felt at this hypocrisy was strongly evident:

In terms of (being) Australian - all those ideologies and Australian kind of traits that the media and everyone tries to emphasise so much, like 'fair go' and equality and stuff – then to just have that kind of juxtaposition where you say, 'Oh no sorry – not part of our little culture' I don't know. They preach multiculturalism as well, but then as it's (PAUSE) I don't know….

Emma felt that this was so at odds with the Australian identity that Australians who were rejecting of asylum seekers should take their *'national identity a little more seriously'* by revisiting what their core values really were. After all, as Jennifer pointed out, Australians should remember the principles of acceptance that were expressed in the Australian national anthem:

Interviewer: So are there any political issues that have challenged your sense of who Australians are or who we should be as a nation?
Jennifer: Definitely the whole asylum thing. I think Australia can be a lot more compassionate and tolerant. It's in our national anthem. Come on guys.

Weak/Open: 'Australia's Just the Country We Live In'

Others among the pro-asylum group, however, felt a degree of discomfort with the Australian identity and were sceptical about what 'being Australian' really meant. They explained this was because they believed that understandings of what it meant to 'be Australian' had often been used to exclude and marginalise. It has been previously documented that some Australians believe that to have a strong attachment to the Australian identity is at odds with the openness required to live in a cohesive and culturally diverse country (e.g. Hage 2000; Moran 2011). In this instance, the three interviewees who fell within a 'weak/open' category tried to distance themselves from this attachment stating that it was not in line with their views regarding the importance of diversity and toleration. Instead, they were more inclined to describe themselves as 'living in Australia' rather than 'being Australian'. Gabrielle was one pro-asylum interviewee who demonstrated this 'weak/open' style. Just as Pakulski and Tranter (2000, p. 208) write of there being Australians with a 'weak sense of macro-attachment' who 'consider themselves to be mere inhabitants of a given land', she was also inclined to detach herself from this identity. As Gabrielle explained:

> *When I think of myself, I'm not first and foremost in Australia - I feel like I'm probably a global citizen - that's so cliché. But even from a young age, I feel like I just wasn't brought up being really Australian – 'You're an Australian' - because both of my parents are migrants anyway. Australia's just the country we live in.*

Gabrielle then went on to explain how ideas surrounding being Australian were often used by people who are intolerant of diversity and difference who tend to hold prejudicial views. This was not the type of identity she wanted to align herself with:

> *I think that it's dangerous to say who an Australian is because it's like, then you say who an Australian is not. So I think that's not good. I think that's often a way to import arguments about who we should and who we shouldn't exclude and who is a parasite on the Australian way of life and stuff like that.*

While not averse to being an Australian, Ben was concerned that a strong national identity was often used to justify prejudicial attitudes and, as such, expressed a strong aversion to language and attitudes that suggested that one country is better than another:

> *I kind of hate patriotism. It's just something that irks me, because it just stinks of prejudice in terms of if you're saying, well, your country's better, patriotism to me feels like your default position is that your country is good or is better.*

Unlike the 'strong/open' pro-asylum interviewees who believed attitudes of openness and acceptance were consistent with their version of the Australian identity, the 'weak/open' group found it difficult to draw such clear connections. While they believed Australia should be open and

accepting, they did not see these qualities as equating to, or needing to equate to, an Australian identity. This point was consistent with an observation also made by Lentini et al. (2009) who undertook a study of attitudes of Australians living in the state of Victoria towards multiculturalism. Participants had expressed a belief that qualities such as 'the fair go, mateship, treating others fairly, freedom, respect, hard work, and a robust sense of humor' (Lentini et al. 2009, p. 5) were values that all people, regardless of country of origin, should respect and adhere to. As Nicholas explained, he also did not feel closely attached to the Australian identity and, although he supported sentiments which informed some Australian values, he also felt that those principles should be universal:

> *I don't really align with an idea of a national identity very well either which is why as much as I kind of refer to the cliché of a fair go rather than the concept of equality which I feel would transcend the idea of a national identity. It's a bit hard to tell. Like often Australianism can be put forward as an excuse for things or almost as a substitute for argument. There's that, 'Oh that's un-Australian' or so on and so forth.*

The type of 'identity' Nicholas would want to associate himself with would be more closely related to the concepts of '*equality*' and '*notions of human rights*'.

Like the other pro-asylum interviewees, the few who could be described as having a weak attachment to the Australian identity, also spoke with disappointment about how certain espoused Australian values were misaligned with the actions of many in this country. Even though attributes such as the 'fair go' and 'mateship' were often touted as being national attributes, both Nicholas and Gabrielle commented that they had seen little evidence of this.

> *The thing that's frustrating me is I suppose as I said with the concept of a fair go, while I don't necessarily think people should conform to an Australian identity that says there's a quality like that, I don't think it's the best picture of Australia that that's not happening. (Nicholas)*
>
> *'Fair go' stuff? I feel like I don't see much empirical evidence of it around me. I think that's a very much a thing, a historical thing, like the ANZACs and stuff like that, like mateship. You occasionally find analogies of it on a bigger scale, but I don't know, on the international stage, Australia's just like any other country, as far as I know. (Gabrielle)*

Speaking of Australia's ability to contribute more to issues of global displacement and asylum seekers, and the fact that it had chosen not to accept greater responsibility for accepting asylum seekers, Gabrielle felt that Australians were acting in a manner that was both irresponsible and '*selfish*':

> *Australia has … so much power, it's a powerful country. I think it can't just - it's just inappropriate. I think as a country in the whole world to just be so (PAUSE) In fact it's …selfish. I think that more needs to be done.*

The belief was that Australians need to change their outlook and adopt more outward-looking perspectives, which were more considerate of the needs of others, instead of being focused on their own issues and interests. As Nicholas put it;

I feel like a greater emphasis on understanding and empathy. Like one of the things about my somewhat disconnected position, is kind of having a perspective on things … I just feel like a lot of perspective is lost in our position as a first world country with all these things happening and going well for us with recession and so on and so forth. In the context of all this stuff I suppose there's a bit of a loss of perspective.

Discussion

This chapter has explored the relationship between the participants' understandings of the Australian national identity and their attitudes towards 'boat people'. While I have used data from both anti-asylum and pro-asylum interviewees, the specific goal was to address the following research question:

RQ2. How do young Australians who express inclusive views towards 'boat people' relate this acceptance to notions of 'being Australian'?

Using data related to the participants' level of attachment to 'being Australian' and their accounts of what they imagined 'being Australian' means, I first constructed a typology of the participants' strength of attachment and identity categorisation. This process showed that the interviewees either felt a strong attachment to Australia or conversely showed a weak attachment to the Australian nation. Moreover, they either had a 'closed' or 'open' outlook towards how those qualities could be maintained. Those with a 'closed' outlook advocated the protection of their version of the Australian identity by ensuring that any migrants to Australia adopted Australian practices and lived in a manner that was consistent with the Australian way of life. Those with an open outlook saw the value of living in a diverse society and were welcoming of migrants coming to Australia. This process yielded three main ideal types of attachment emerging from the data: 'strong/closed', 'strong/open', and 'weak/open'.

With regards to understanding the connection between these attachment categories and the interviewees' attitudes towards 'boat people', the analysis suggested that the anti-asylum interviewees typically demonstrated a 'strong/closed' attachment type. While a small number of the pro-asylum group had a 'weak/open' attachment type, the majority of accepting young people fell into the 'strong/open category – namely they expressed a strong attachment to their Australian identity and believed that such an identity was enhanced by cultural diversity within the population. They argued that a common cultural identity did not make Australia a single cohesive unit, rather recognised a mutual respect of difference and adherence to an overarching set of rules and principles.

To a certain extent, similarities can be drawn between the Australian identity categories identified here and the description of Australian identity types offered by Pakulski and Tranter (2000). These authors identified three types of Australian macro-social identity, which they referred to as 'ethno-national', 'civic', and 'denizen'. They described how the 'ethno-national' and 'civic' identity types

both possess a strong sense of attachment to Australia. The point of distinction between the two, however, is that those demonstrating an 'ethno-national' identity, embrace more traditional (Anglo-Australian) meanings of 'being Australian'. On the other hand, Australians with a 'civic' identity derive their sense of connectedness with Australia from the 'sharing of major social institutions and commitments' (Pakulski & Tranter 2000, p. 209):

> The object-referents of macro-social identities have been described in a variety of ways: as a 'nation', 'people', 'society' or the 'state' ('Australia', 'Australian people', 'Australian society', 'Australian state' or 'Australian nation'). We distinguish two types of referent macro-collectivities: a 'nation' and a 'society'. The former represents a culturally circumscribed collectivity of people sharing certain traditions and lifestyles, a 'community of fate'; the latter represents a collectivity of shared rules, norms and commitments, a large-scale voluntary association, a 'community of choice'. (Pakulski and Tranter 2000, p. 208)

Pakulski and Tranter's third identy type were the 'denizens'. The authors argued that people with this outlook tended to see themselves as 'mere inhabitants of a given land' instead of having a strong attachment to it (Pakulski & Tranter 2000, p. 208).

Like the 'ethno-national' Australians noted by Pakulski and Tranter (2000), the young people in the 'strong /closed' category expressed a strong attachment 'being Australian', which was informed by 'traditional' postcolonial meanings. They spoke of how Australians shared certain traditional understandings which need to be carefully protected. They also expressed a belief that migrants to this country should assimilate into the Australian 'way of life'. The 'strong/open' interviewees expressed views consistent with 'civic identity', which, according to these authors, is an 'open, secular and individualistic form of identity' that 'emphasises the centrality of voluntary ties, interdependence and shared commitments to the core institutions of a society' (Pakulski & Tranter 2000, p. 218). For these young people 'being Australian' was not about having a shared past but more about having a shared commitment to building an open and accepting Australia.

Also, just like the 'denizen' group of Australians described by Pakulski and Tranter (2000, p. 208), who have 'no strong attachments' to the Australian identity, a small number of my participants deliberately distanced themselves from the Australian identity. These young people were loath to associate themselves with the idea of 'being Australian' because they believed such an identity to be synonymous with narrow-mindedness and prejudice.

I would also like to highlight a point of difference between these findings and the Pakulski and Tranter (2000) analysis. This lies in who might be considered to be 'cosmopolitan'. Whereas Pakulski and Tranter (2000, p. 208) described their 'denizen' respondents as being the 'cosmopolitan 'citizens of the world'' I would argue that not only did the participants within the 'weak/open' category demonstrate a cosmopolitan disposition, but those in the 'strong/open' category were also cosmopolitan in outlook. Moreover, this latter group showed a propensity towards embracing a cosmopolitan perspective while at the same time being very much attached to

their own version of the Australian identity. Rather than distancing themselves from 'traditional' and often exclusionary 'Australian values', they instead (re)imagined the Australian identity as open, compassionate, and accepting; thus their interpretation of the Australian identity supported their cosmopolitan views. This finding adds empirical support to previous arguments that national identity and cosmopolitan values are not wholly disparate (e.g. Appiah 1997, 2006; Beck 2006; Beck & Levy 2013; Brett & Moran 2011; Calhoun 2008; Lamont & Aksartova 2002).

Interestingly, this analysis also shows how both the 'strong/closed' anti-asylum participants and the 'strong/open' pro-asylum participants drew on similar core qualities in their descriptions of what being Australian means. These included characteristics such as 'mateship', being 'laid back', and respect for the principle of a 'fair go'. The difference was that the 'strong/open' young people added some additional qualities to their definition of the Australian identity, relating to openness and acceptance. Phillips and Smith (2000, p. 204) have argued that in Australia, 'hotly contested issues… are often framed and thought about in terms of the overarching symbolic logics of the 'Australian''. Meanings related to Australian identity, they believe, often feature at the forefront of social discussion and debate. In my study it became evident that a similar process appears to be at work; the asylum issue was framed in terms of certain symbolic meanings associated with the Australian identity and the Australian way of life. Moreover, with the exception of the few pro-asylum participants who had chosen to distance themselves from the Australian identity, young people from both sides of the asylum debate applied repertoires related to common understandings and imaginings of what it means to be Australian in order to substantiate their views.

One 'symbolic logic' expressed by both groups was that of fairness. The concept of a 'fair go' is an important element of the Australian imagining. As refugee advocate Julian Burnside AO QC writes:

> The idea of the fair go is one of the most enduring and endearing of Australian characteristics. From the earliest times, it seems to have been part of our view of the world that we are all broadly equal in worth and we should all be given an equal chance. While some of us suffer from natural disadvantage of character or circumstance, everyone should still get a fair go. This is what we believe. (Burnside 2007, p. 16)

The difference here, however, lies in who it is thought should receive a 'fair go'. Consistent with the findings of Every and Augoustinos (2008a), who noted the flexibility by which the term has been applied by Australian politicians in the asylum seeker debate, there appeared to be some degree of plasticity in how the term was used by participants in this study. While most espoused the importance of fairness, there were differing interpretations of who was being treated fairly and who was not.

The anti-asylum interviewees argued that by allowing asylum seekers into Australia, Australians were being cheated. They felt that it was not fair that funding be directed towards asylum seekers

and that those monies were better spent on Australians in need. They also thought it unjust that competition for jobs and housing would increase because more people who were unable to support themselves were being allowed into the country. Also they thought it unfair that Australians who 'worked for their money' should be made to watch their funds being spent on people they believed were merely lazy and undeserving. In his criticism of Australia's treatment of refugees and asylum seekers Burnside (2007, p. 20) observes how Australians' perceptions of fairness are becoming increasingly tainted by "a fair go for me and don't worry about the rest" mentality. He expresses concern that a new generation of Australians will adopt such an interpretation – expecting to be treated fairly while being unprepared to extend the same consideration to those requesting humanitarian assistance. The data presented here suggest that Burnside's concerns, to some degree, hold among young Australians. This was, however, by no means the case for all participants.

The pro-asylum interviewees also pointed to the need for Australians to act fairly. Fairness for these participants involved recognising one's own relative wealth and then taking the steps to share that good fortune with others. They also claimed that, as part of the global community, Australia needed to accept a fair share of the world's displaced. Their sense was that this was not happening and countries less economically privileged were taking on people despite their own hardships. Pro-asylum participants argued that the Australian economy, currently one of the more economically robust nations in the world, is much better positioned than many other nations to absorb people who required asylum. For these young people, this aspect of the Australian identity requires a more open, cosmopolitan interpretation – one where 'fairness', is extended to mean fairness for all.

Conclusion

Do young Australians who possess pro-asylum views also possess a strong attachment to the idea of being Australian? The findings from this chapter suggest that most do. Their definition of what it means to 'be Australian', however, is very different from those who hold more exclusionary views. My analysis showed that while those with an anti-asylum viewpoint defined 'being Australian' using more 'traditional' Anglo-Australian understandings, many pro-asylum participants tended to define the Australian identity in a more contemporary way as multicultural, inclusive and open. In relation to arguing for the acceptance of 'boat people' and other asylum seekers into Australia, this created an association between 'being Australian' and 'being accepting'. The conclusion I have also drawn from these findings is that it is possible for Australians to maintain a strong attachment to their nation yet, at the same time, endorse cosmopolitan principles.

The following chapter will focus on data relating to participants' voting intentions in the 2013 Australian federal election. In the next chapter I consider whether or not pro-asylum participants used their vote as a way of transmuting their accepting attitude into an accepting action.

7. Data Analysis and Findings: Voting for Acceptance

An Australian federal election was held on September 7th 2013. The weeks preceding the election saw a change of leadership in the ruling Labor party, the announcement of a new asylum seeker policy by the re-appointed Labor Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, and the submission of alternative asylum policies by the Liberal/National Coalition party and the Australian Greens. It was against this backdrop that the *Our Lives* cohort participated in their first federal election. In this chapter I analyse the Round 2 interview data (see Chapter 4) collected from the pro-asylum members of the Our Lives cohort who agreed to be interviewed in the weeks before the 2013 Australian federal election. Since the asylum seeker issue was featuring so prominently in the public arena at this time, this was an opportunity for me to explore the extent to which the asylum seeker issue, and the proposed asylum seeker policies put forward by the different political parties, would factor into the voting considerations of this group of young Australian first-time voters. This, in turn, has allowed me to isolate and analyse the voting behaviours of my 'pro-asylum' participants and thus address the final research question:

> **RQ3. To what extent did holding accepting views towards 'boat people' influence the voting behaviour of young Queenslanders at the 2013 Australian federal election?**

I begin this chapter by summarising the events leading up to the 2013 Australian federal election that relate to asylum seeker policy and providing an overview of the asylum seeker policies of the three key political parties: The Australian Labor Party (ALP/Labor), The Liberal/National Coalition (LNP/the Coalition), and the Australian Greens (The Greens). I then broadly outline theories which explain factors that can influence a person's voting choice. This will be followed by an updated summary of Australian voters' views on the asylum seeker issue during the 2013 federal election collected in the 2013 AES and a 'snapshot' of related Wave 4 Our Lives quantitative data. Both studies collected data during this time, which has provided a valuable opportunity to compare the views of first time Australian voters with a sample of voters from the broader Australian population. Interview data relating to the pro-asylum participants' voting behaviours are then presented and analysed. The analysis suggests that while these young people held strong beliefs that asylum seekers should be accepted by Australia, this did not necessarily mean the issue would ultimately guide their choice at the ballot box.

Federal Election 2013: Asylum Policies of the Major Parties

The Australian Labor Party: The Regional Resettlement Arrangement

As I have outlined in Chapter 2, when the Australian Labor Party (ALP) came into power in 2007 it had intended to adopt a more lenient stance towards asylum seekers than the former LNP coalition

government. Under the leadership of Kevin Rudd, the Labor party fulfilled an election promise to end the Howard government's 'Pacific Solution'– a policy of processing asylum seekers offshore in Nauru. Temporary protection visas were also abolished. Those asylum seekers determined to have a legitimate basis for requesting refugee status were offered permanent residency in Australia. A policy of mandatory detention for asylum seekers without documentation remained in place, requiring they be detained either in onshore detention facilities or in the processing facility situated on Christmas Island. Asylum seekers were, however, given assistance in making their claims and were provided with options for recourse should their claims be unsuccessful. In 2010, a change of leadership within the still incumbent ALP saw Julia Gillard take over the role of Prime Minister. In the same year, in response to The Report of the Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers (Australian Government 2012), steps were taken by the Gillard Government to re-establish offshore processing of refugees and, by 2012, offshore detention centres commenced operation in Nauru and at PNG's Manus Island (Karlsen & Phillips 2014).

On June 26 2013, a Labor party leadership spill ousted Julia Gillard from the Labor party leadership and returned Kevin Rudd to the role of Prime Minister. Shortly after, Kevin Rudd introduced even harsher changes to Labor asylum policy. In what he described as 'a major initiative to combat the scourge of people smuggling' he announced the immediate implementation of a new 'hard line' strategy for the processing of irregular maritime arrivals known as *The Regional Resettlement Arrangement* (Parliament of Australia 2013). More commonly referred to as the 'PNG Solution', *The Regional Resettlement Arrangement* meant that all 'unauthorised maritime arrivals' (i.e. people who entered Australian territorial jurisdiction to request asylum) would be sent to Papua New Guinea for processing. Any asylum seekers found to have a genuine claim to refugee status would then be offered the opportunity to resettle in that country. Those considered not to be genuine refugees would be returned to their own country or resettled elsewhere. No individuals processed through this system, however, would be offered resettlement in Australia. Under *The Regional Resettlement Arrangement*, a policy of 'No Advantage', which had been introduced by the Labor government the previous year, would remain in force. This meant that any asylum seekers who requested protection from Australia between the months of August 2012 and July 2013, would be required to remain in an offshore processing facility for the same period of time it would take an asylum seeker in an overseas refugee camp to have their application processed (Parliament of Australia 2013). The Labor party also proposed to retain its bridging visa program which was implemented in 2011. Under this program asylum seekers who arrived by boat between 2011 and July 2013, and permitted entry into Australia, were subjected to strict conditions of entry. These included not being permitted to work, having no right to apply for family reunion visas for relatives, and having limited access to government support (Norman 2013). Finally, Australia's annual quotas

for refugee intake were increased. The number was set at 20,000, with 12,000 places reserved for those whose applications had been processed in overseas refugee camps (Karlsen & Phillips 2014; Norman 2013).

In August 2013, Kevin Rudd entered into a similar processing and resettlement arrangement with the president of Nauru. Given the smaller size of Nauru's population only a small number of asylum seekers processed and recognised as being 'genuine' refugees would be offered permanent resettlement in Nauru – the remainder would be sent to PNG. Again, the policy of never allowing asylum seekers who had attempted to reach asylum by boat to resettle in Australia was affirmed. This policy, Rudd declared, reflected the Labor government's 'core unshakable position' on the asylum seeker issue and would be continued should the Labor party be returned to office after the 2013 election (SBS Australia 2013).

The Liberal/National Coalition: Operation Sovereign Borders

Led by Tony Abbott, the opposition Liberal/National coalition (LNP) argued that the incumbent Labor government was failing in its efforts to address the asylum seeker problem. Vowing to 'stop the boats' if elected into government, the LNP contended that the only way to address the asylum seeker issue was to implement significant physical and legislative barriers designed to discourage asylum seekers from making such a voyage in the first place (ABC 2014). The plan put forward by the LNP would be to 'salvage' (Kenny 2013) aspects of *The Regional Resettlement Arrangement*, and integrate them with broader policies outlined in the Liberal Party's *Operation Sovereign Borders* (Liberal Party of Australia 2013).

Operation Sovereign Borders would involve the implementation of a security operation led by the Australian Defence Force. Citing problems with the disjointed way the asylum seeker challenge had previously been approached, *Operation Sovereign Borders* would bring the resources of various government departments under the direction of one person. An important aspect of *Operation Sovereign Borders* was a mandate for the Australian Navy to intercept and, 'where it was safe to do so', turn boats carrying asylum seekers away from Australia (Liberal Party of Australia 2013). The LNP did not plan to increase the annual quota of refugees being accepted by Australia, instead capping the number at 13,750. The majority of those places would be given to verified refugees who had been processed via overseas refugee camps. In addition, the LNP promised the reinstatement of the temporary protection visa to refugees. This meant those who were recognised as having legitimate claims for protection could live legally in Australia for three years. After that time, however, the threat they faced from their country of origin would be reassessed. Those considered no longer at risk and able to return to their country of origin, could have their residency visa revoked (Norman 2013). Presenting *Operation Sovereign Borders* to the Australian public, the LNP referred to what they framed as being the success of the previous Coalition government in

reducing the number of asylum seeker boats coming to Australia. It was this established reputation that the Coalition used as evidence to support their argument that they were the most competent political party to deal with the issue of asylum seekers attempting to reach Australia (Liberal Party of Australia 2013).

In essence, in the lead up to election, the two key parties advocated asylum seeker policies designed to discourage asylum seekers from boarding boats and making the voyage to Australia. They were, as Laughland (2013a) describes, 'similarly aggressive and ideologically conservative'. As such, both stances were condemned as being a violation of human rights, immoral and, as former LNP leader, the late Malcolm Fraser put it, being involved in 'a general race to the bottom of the barrel to find the deterrent to stop people coming to Australia'. The PNG solution was, as Malcolm Fraser said, an act of 'Australia bypassing its responsibilities under the refugee convention' (Laughland 2013b). The policy also received considerable criticism from refugee advocacy organisations. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was adamant that it did not support such a measure (UNHCR 2013). Expressing concerns regarding the capacity of nations such as PNG to appropriately accommodate asylum seekers, the UNHCR reminded that 'the focus must remain on finding ways that complement, rather than undermine, national asylum systems built on the fundamental principles of the 1951 Refugee Convention' (UNHCR 2013). Moreover, given the context of an impending election, the timing of the PNG solution also received criticism. While the Labor party claimed that the time had come to take a more aggressive stance towards people smugglers, opponents of this policy argued that it was designed as an election stunt intended not to attract the attention of asylum seekers and people smugglers, but instead to attract the attention of Australia's voting public (e.g. Refugee Action Coalition Sydney 2013).

The LNP's Operation Sovereign Borders also received criticism from refugee advocates. A point of difference between the two main parties was the LNP's proposed use of the Australian Navy to (where possible) forcibly turn boats carrying asylum seekers away from Australian waters (Laughland 2013a). This tactic was considered by many to be dangerous to both asylum seekers and the Navy personnel given the responsibility of enforcing that policy (e.g. Wroe & Hall 2013).

The Australian Greens: 'Another Way For Refugees'

Where the asylum focus of the two major parties was on border control and protection, the focus of The Australian Greens was on the provision of humanitarian assistance to refugees and asylum seekers. They proposed to accept an emergency intake of 10,000 refugees to help move the backlog of people currently situated in other countries around Australia. They would also direct funds to UNHCR facilities in Indonesia and Malaysia to speed up the application and resettlement process for asylum seekers waiting in those countries to have their requests for refugee status considered. Additionally, they promised that Australia's refugee intake would be increased to 30,000 per

annum. The Greens also promised to shut down offshore processing. While this process was being undertaken, funds would be directed towards improving the physical and psychological care of asylum seekers detained in those facilities, and to establish an independent health advisory panel to monitor their treatment. Measures would also be taken to ensure no children were being detained in detention centres either in offshore facilities or on the Australian mainland. Finally, those asylum seekers currently in Australia would be granted the right to work (Norman 2013).

How Do Voters Decide?

A number of factors might influence a person when deciding what party to vote for. While there are many theories relating to voting behaviour here I will limit my focus to those related to: partisan attachment, leader preference, and policy importance.

Studies of voter behaviour suggest partisan attachment can influence voting choice. Partisans make a decision based on the party they identify with and tend to follow the party philosophy on most issues. Partisanship can develop via socialisation with the views of parents and other social networks (e.g. work, religion) shaping an individual's views (Achen 2002; Dalton & Weldon 2007; Spies-Butcher 2012). Moreover, people who vote on the basis of party affiliation require little information to decide how to vote (Dalton & Weldon 2007; Singh & Thornton 2013; Spies-Butcher 2012). Partisan voting can also be a default option for younger voters or those less motivated to vote (Dalton & Weldon 2007; Singh & Thornton 2013). Partisanship can also act as a filter for forming opinions on a political policy and a party's capacity to capably manage that policy (Bélanger & Meguid 2008). The suggestion is that people who identify strongly with a party will support a particular policy on the basis of their own party proposing it. On the other hand, if another party proposed the same policy it would more likely be opposed (Garzia 2011).

While partisan identification can influence an individual's voting choice, so too can the leader of a particular party (Bean & Mughan 1989; Mughan 2009). Along with the high degree of media attention that a party leader usually attracts during an election campaign, comes the opportunity for public scrutiny of the party leader's personal capabilities and characteristics (Lenz & Lawson 2011; McAllister 2007). This can include, but is not restricted to, evaluations of the leader's skills, integrity, empathy, and, at times, appearance (Garzia 2011). Voter impression of a political party's leader can, therefore, translate to an increase (or a decline) in votes on election day (Garzia 2011; McAllister 2007; Mughan 2009).

Some people vote on policy and not because they feel loyalty towards a party or because they prefer a particular party leader. They consider the position parties hold on particular issues and vote for the party most closely aligned to their own views (Ansolabehere et al. 2008; Bélanger & Meguid 2008; Lachat 2011). During an election campaign, parties highlight some issues within the public forum and downplay others. This act of 'priming' (i.e. highlighting the importance and immediacy

of particular social issues) is intended to draw voter attention toward areas where the party has demonstrated competency i.e. has an established record of dealing with the issue (Green & Hobolt 2008; van der Brug 2004). However, if one party 'owns' an issue, its opposition may try to 'steal' that ownership. It does this by adding a dimension to the policy and then adopting it as its own (Bélanger & Meguid 2008; Holian 2004). A successful 'hijacking', however, requires certain conditions: there must be an indication that the party is trying to address its own weakness in that policy area; the 'new' policy must remain distinctive; and the new policy dimension must be picked up by the media (Holian 2004).

2013 Australian Voter Opinion on Asylum Policy

As was the case in 2010 (see Chapter 4), both the AES and the Our Lives project were undertaken at a similar time in 2013 with both studies collecting data on their respective participants' political affiliations and views on the asylum seeker issue. This has allowed me to provide greater contextualisation for the analysis of my qualitative data, not only in respect to the views of the Our Lives cohort, but also the views of a broader Australian sample.

Australian Election Study

Responses from the 2013 Australian Election Study showed 38 per cent of participants surveyed stated they supported either the Liberals or Nationals (LNP), and 35 per cent the Labor party. Six per cent of AES respondents indicated they supported The Greens and another 4 per cent supported another minor party. Seventeen per cent of this sample claimed no political affiliation (Bean et al. 2013) [Figure 7.1].

Figure 7.1: AES 2013 – Party identification
AES survey responses to the item: 'Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as Liberal, Labor, National, or what?' [Figures rounded] (McAllister & Cameron 2014).

In response to the item '*All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back*' AES findings showed 16 per cent of AES participants strongly disagreed and 17 per cent disagreed with the item. By contrast 29 per cent strongly agreed and another 20 per cent agreed with this suggestion. The number of AES respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement was 18 per cent

(McAllister & Cameron 2014) [Figure 7.2]. In terms of identifying the political party AES respondents preferred for dealing with refugee and asylum seeker issues, 41 per cent preferred LNP and 19 per cent the ALP. Twenty seven per cent of respondents reported they believed there was little difference between the two parties.
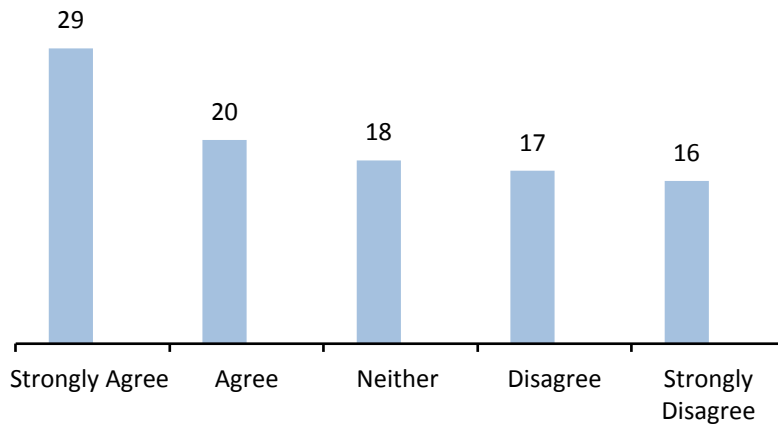
Figure 7.2: AES 2013 – 'All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back'
[Figures rounded] (McAllister and Cameron 2014)

When the AES participants were asked what they considered to be most important election issue to them and their family during the election campaign, only 10 per cent of AES respondents rated the issue of refugees and asylum seekers as being most salient. This was compared to: management of the economy 27.5 per cent; health and Medicare 19 per cent; education 15 per cent; and taxation 11 per cent (McAllister & Cameron 2014). A cross tabulation between party identification and issues considered most important during the election campaign suggests that 16 per cent of National Party voters and 12 per cent of Liberal supporters saw this issue as being more important than other issues during the election campaign. This was followed by Greens supporters (12 per cent) and nine per cent of Labor party identifiers (Bean et al. 2013) [Table 7.1]. These results indicate that while political partisanship clearly differentiates attitudes toward asylum seekers, as an election issue it appears to have had only a minor influence upon the vote at the 2013 federal election. It is also interesting to note that those who did consider the issue most salient at that time were individuals who supported the political party vowing to implement more punitive measures against 'boat people'.

Table 7.1: AES 2013 – Most important issue during election campaign and party identification cross tabulation
(Bean et al. 2013).

Issue	Total	Party Identification Cross Tabulation					
		Liberal	Labor	National	Greens	Other	No Party
Taxation	10.6	12	8.5	7.7	2.6	12.3	15.2
Immigration	2.2	2.5	1.2	1.5	0.4	4.6	4.1
Education	14.8	7.9	22.3	4.6	13.1	12.3	16.9
Environment	5.8	1	5.9	1.5	32.8	10	5.6
Industrial Relations	2.9	2.2	4.5	0.8	0.4	3.1	2.2
Healthcare Medicare	19	16.2	24	20	14.4	20	15.6
Refugees Asylum Seekers	10.1	12	8.8	16.2	11.8	6.9	7.7
Global Warming	3.5	0.8	4	0.8	14.8	5.4	3.7
Carbon Tax	3.6	4.7	2.1	6.2	4.8	3.8	3.2
Economy	27.5	40.8	18.6	40.8	4.8	21.5	25.8

Our Lives Wave 4, 2013 Survey Findings

When the Our Lives participants were asked in the Wave 4 2013 survey if they identified with a particular political party, 29 per cent of respondents said they supported either the Liberals or Nationals and 26 per cent supported the Labor party. Nine per cent identified with The Greens and 2 per cent of the cohort supported another party. Thirty four per cent indicated that they did not view themselves as having a party affiliation [Figure 7.3].
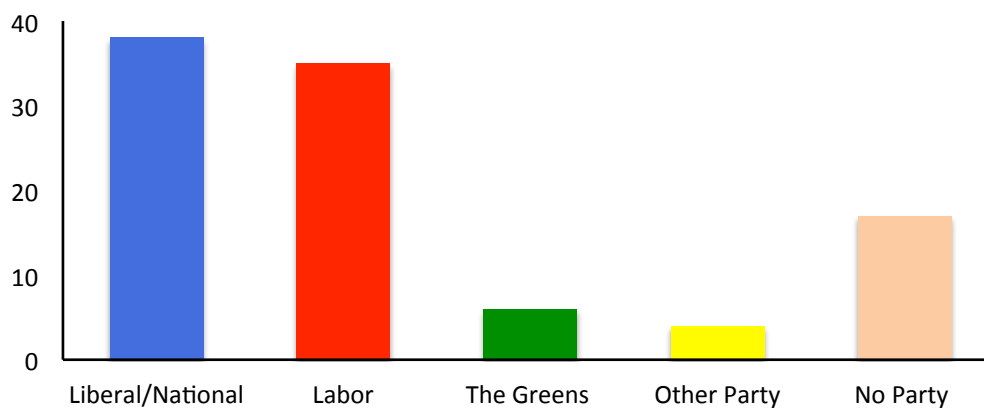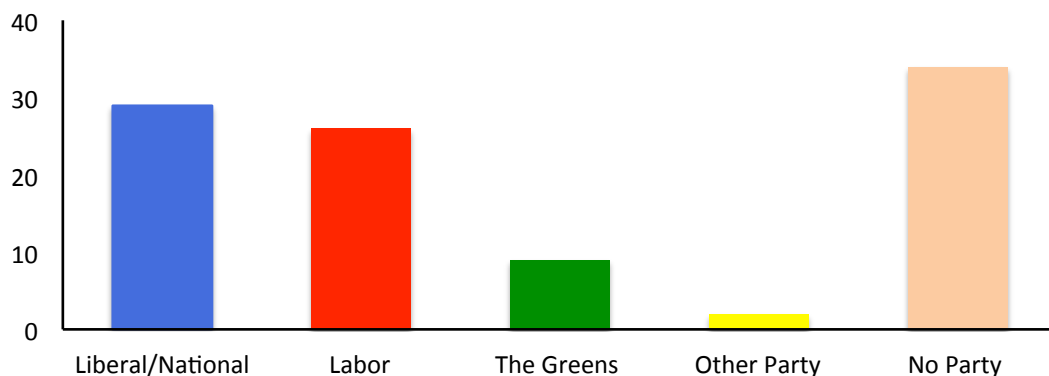

Figure 7.3: Our Lives 2013 – Party identification
Percentage responses to the item: Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as Liberal, Labor, National or what? [Figures rounded]

Analyses of 2010 Our Lives survey data (n=2413) on the attitudes of the cohort towards 'boat people', showed an even distribution of views (see Chapter 4, Laughland-Booÿ, Skrbiš & Tranter 2014). Three years later, the 2013 Wave 4 *Our Lives* survey (n=2180) showed a similar trend. Sixteen per cent strongly disagreed with the statement '*All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back*' and another 21 per cent disagreed. In terms of the numbers of participants holding anti-asylum views, the data indicated that 13 per cent of respondents strongly agreed with the suggestion boats should be turned back and another 20 per cent agreed. At 30 per cent, the proportion of Our Lives respondents who neither agreed or disagreed with the statement was considerably larger than the AES adult sample [Figure 7.2]. Comparing these figures to the AES adult sample, a similar pattern emerged to that observed in 2010. Like the 2010 data described in Chapter 4 [Figure 4.2] the sample of young people showed a normal distribution of opinion whereas the adult sample remained skewed towards the rejection of 'boat people' [Figure 7.2].
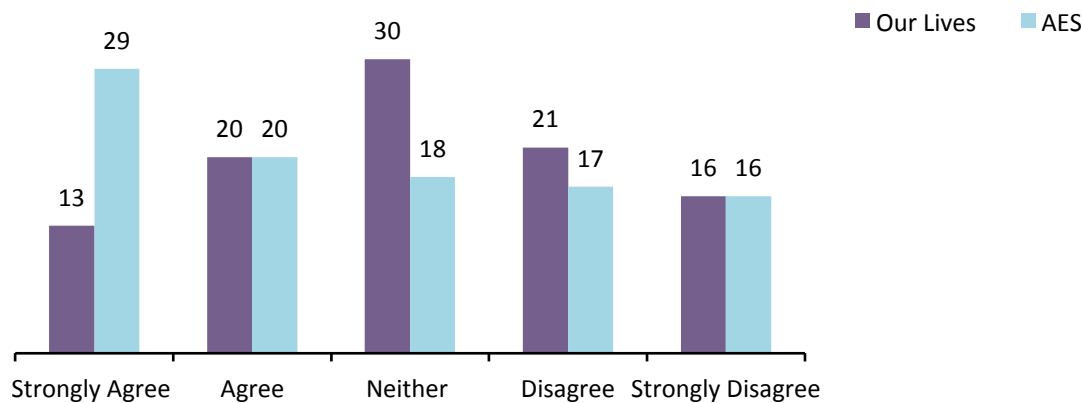
Figure 7.4: Our Lives 2013 and AES 2013 – 'All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back'
Figures rounded. Sources: Our Lives Wave 4, 2013 survey data, AES (McAllister and Cameron 2014)

Regarding party affiliation, 70 per cent of the *Our Lives* participants who supported The Greens (n=191) were most likely to strongly disagree or disagree with the suggestion that boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back This figure compares with 43 per cent of Labor supporters (n=574) and 26 per cent of LNP supporters (n=634). On the other hand, those who were most likely to be rejecting of 'boat people' were LNP supporters. Forty five per cent indicated that they either 'agree' or 'strongly agree' with this statement compared to 29 per cent of Labor supporters, and 11 per cent of those who identified with the Australian Greens Party. A more normal distribution of opinion was evident among the participants who reported no political party affiliation.
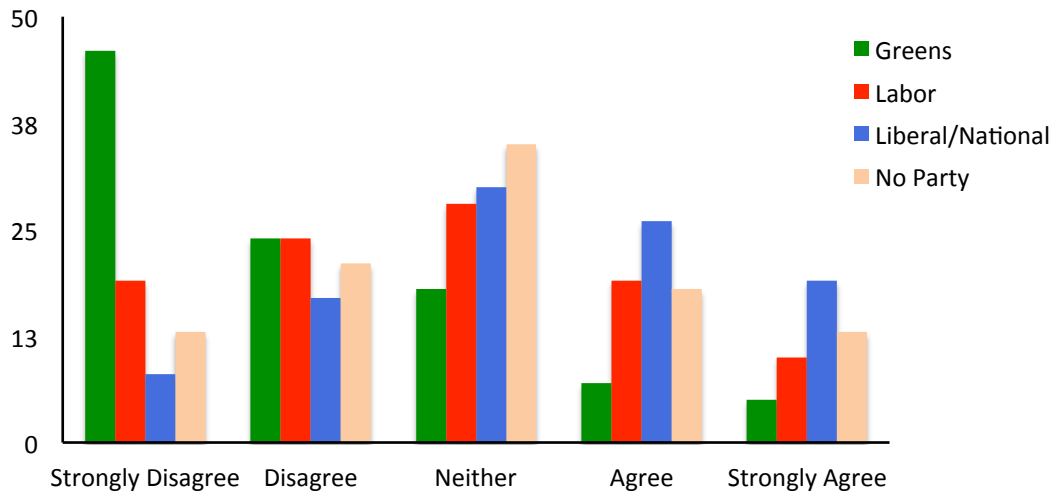
Figure 7.5: Our Lives 2013 – 'All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back' by party affiliation
Figures rounded.

Our Lives Qualitative Politics Interviews 2013

While the Wave 4 survey data were being collected, semi-structured interviews were also undertaken with 33 members of the Our Lives cohort. As I have explained in Chapter 4, the purpose of these interviews was to explore at greater depth the issues surrounding the election and the factors that would influence the voting choice of the interviewees. The following analysis focuses specifically on data relating to the voting intentions of the interviewees categorised as being pro-asylum (i.e. who believed Australia should accept asylum seekers). My goal is to gain a clearer understanding of the factors that would influence pro-asylum interview participants when voting in their first federal election. Of particular interest is whether or not the asylum seeker issue would significantly influence the votes of these pro-asylum young people.

As per the descriptions of the pro-asylum participants outlined in Chapter 4, 13 participants in these Round 2 2013 interviews were categorised as being pro-asylum. As I have explained, the changes in government policy and the introduction of the *Regional Resettlement Plan* just weeks prior to the election meant that the task of determining who was 'pro-asylum' was not as straightforward as reading the survey results. Disagreement with the statement '*All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back*' was no longer a clear indicator that the respondent believed asylum seekers should be permitted entry into Australia. Instead, they might believe that 'boat people' should be processed and resettled offshore. Pro-asylum participants were therefore identified via analysis of the interview data and then by cross-checking those categorisations with the participant's responses in the Wave 4 survey. Of the 13 young people who fell within this category, 8 indicated that they intended to vote for the ALP and three said they would vote for The Greens. From the remaining two pro-asylum participants, one said they would support the LNP and the remaining participant was unsure [Table 7.2].

The interview data will be presented in two sections. The first section more broadly examines the 'pro-asylum' interviewees' accounts of their interest and participation in politics and the factors they believe will influence their vote. These descriptions are important because they reflect the political 'frame of mind' the young people were in at the time of the interviews, as well as the vast array of influencing factors at play as they were determining their voting choice. The second section then focuses more directly on how the asylum seeker issue would sway this consideration.

Table 7.2: Round 2 pro-asylum interviewees' 2013 survey responses – 'All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back' and voting intention

Pseudonym	Gender	Boat People	Voting Intention
Anna	F	D	ALP
Ella	F	D	ALP
Emily	F	D	Unsure
Gabrielle	F	SD	ALP
Jake	M	D	ALP
Aysha	F	SD	ALP
Jennifer	F	SD	LNP
Luke	M	D	ALP
Matthew	M	SD	ALP
Meg	F	SD	Greens
Michael	M	D	ALP
Nicholas	M	SD	Greens
Troy	M	SD	Greens

(SD=strongly disagree, D=disagree) and the participants' indicated voting intention in 2013 Australian federal election (House of Representatives).

Voting 2013

Studies have suggested that, despite voting being mandatory from the age of 18, young Australians may be less likely to present at the polling booths than older Australians, and are more likely to see themselves as being disconnected from the traditional process of politics (Bean 2007; Brooker 2013; Saha et al. 2007). This did not appear to be the case in this instance. Seeming neither disenfranchised from the political process nor particularly active, the majority of the pro-asylum participants interviewed in the run up to the 2013 Australian federal election appeared to value the Australian political system. They indicated an intention to participate in the election process and, at the very least, demonstrated a basic understanding of the issues surrounding the upcoming election. When asked if she was interested in the election, Emily, for example, said that she was not overly captivated, yet was trying to stay informed about the campaign. Others spoke of being interested in the upcoming election, yet, as with participants in a study undertaken by Saha et al. (2007), some here admitted that they did not necessarily understand politics. As Michael said *'I'm interested but I*

don't know much' and Ella explained she was interested but, '*I don't really understand a lot of it'*.

Others expressed greater interest in the mechanisms of the system. They spoke of enjoying the debates and engaging in conversations on political issues. Luke, a devout Christian, felt it was important to understand the core values of the parties and the party leaders, and to then evaluate the extent to which their beliefs were aligned with his own:

> *I'm interested in it actually because I want to know what their views are on my views. Kind of, what I believe and what they believe as well. So I really want to see where they stand on a lot of those issues as well.*

Some described a greater interest in politics and the political process. Anna, for example, had opted to take some political science courses at university in order to help expand her knowledge of politics:

> *As electives last semester I did international relations and also an Australian politics subject as well. Just introduction to Australian political institutions and that was just for interest, just to see how things have worked and I'm still really sceptical of politics altogether, but I am pretty interested in it just generally.*

In terms of more direct political participation, few described active involvement in 'formal' types of political participation. Instead their participation was more likely to involve more 'informal' (Harris et al. 2010) online activities such as 'liking' Facebook pages or signing online petitions. Others were more engaged. Aysha, for instance, was interested in global issues and human rights, and had regular online contact with organisations that aimed to mobilise youth interest in these areas:

> *I have an interest in a lot of things. I'm very passionate about issues. So global issues, whether it's stuff that's affecting us, or if it's stuff affecting other people around the world. I often attend forums and get involved in, or with, organisations like 'OurSay'. It's like a forum online where young people get to post up how they feel about certain political issues. It's not like a priority, I don't do it every day, maybe once a week because it pops up in my Facebook newsfeed and I 'like' it.*

Matthew was very involved politically but focused his energies more towards issues that would affect people his own age and in areas that he felt he could make a contribution. As a law student he spoke of '*giving back to society'*, was well versed in politics, actively involved in student politics at his university, and had attended a youth forum in Canberra. When asked if he would join politics, however, Matthew spoke of being sceptical about whether or not his efforts at a broader level would be a good use of his time and energy. If he were to enter politics, Matthew felt his time could be wasted:

> *Obviously you need people that do the big picture and whatnot, but I feel that often, at least from my experience, there are so many people who go for the big picture and it's just such a waste of time and nothing happens, or it's all talk.*

Like an observation made by Harris et al. (2010, p. 23) that young people are often attracted to

engaging in less formal 'everyday participatory practices' that are motivated by the desire to make meaningful social change, Matthew believed he would be more useful working at the '*grass roots level*'. That way he thought he could make a greater contribution to the issues he felt passionate about, and could also personally affect change. What was therefore apparent among this group of pro-asylum interviewees was that levels of political interest and participation were spread from minimal to engaged. Most however showed a fundamental understanding of the process and an appreciation that a number of factors needed to be weighed up when deciding whose name and party they should select on the ballot paper.

Party, Personality or Policy

The next phase of the interviews was to focus on the extent to which partisan loyalty, the personality of the leaders, or a belief in the importance of particular political issues would influence participants' voting choices. As the literature indicates, many factors come into play. Studies in voter behaviour suggest partisan attachment can influence voting choice. If a person identifies strongly with a party, this loyalty is very likely to be expressed at the ballot box (Achen 2002; Dalton &Weldon 2007; Spies-Butcher 2012). Very few participants spoke of having strong partisan loyalty. Those who did tended to refer to partisanship as it related to their parents' voting patterns. Aysha, for example said she felt guided by her parents preferences particularly as her family had immigrated from Sri Lanka and had been accepted by Australia under policies implemented by a previous Labor government. As she explained '*they have basically allowed my parents to come here and create a life for me*'. This was another reason to feel loyalty towards the Labor party:

> *My parents - I think it's something to do with family. Like if your parents vote for this one you kind of are born with it. So, when my parents first migrated to Australia they were allowed to come underneath the migration laws that was I think it was Bob Hawke and he was Labor. So ever since then when they allowed my parents to come here it's been sort of an inkling Labor, they've given me a life.*

Luke also spoke of his family's partisan loyalty and the influence it may play. Although he expressed a preference for Kevin Rudd as leader, he acknowledged that his view was probably being influenced by family conversations:

> *At this stage I'm leaning a little bit towards Rudd. My family has always voted Labor anyway. Not that that really sways my view, but they always 'Vote Labor' so they're always telling me a little bit more about what they're doing in my ear, rather than what I hear about the Liberal side of things. That's kind of why I'm leaning a little bit more towards Labor.*

However, little evidence demonstrated that interviewees had a partisan loyalty separate from the influence of their parents. Generally it appeared the participants were more transient in their views – willing to change party affiliation on the basis of either their liking for the party leader, or because they thought particular issues to be important and would choose the party most closely aligned with their views on that issue.

The perceived character of the main party leaders also seemed to play a part in the participants' voting choices. When asked if the personality of the prime ministerial candidate would influence her decision, Ella, an ALP voter, believed that while people were technically voting for a party, many decide their vote based on their preferred leader:

> *It's always going to be about the leader so I think it should really be about the whole party and what they're about, but I don't think it will be because not everyone is really interested in politics and it doesn't affect everyone so they're always just going to see it as a leader sort of thing. I think if you asked some people in the street and you said, 'Is the politics about the party or the person?', they'll say, 'Oh yeah, when we vote it's about who we're voting for rather than the party'.*

Gabrielle, another ALP voter, equated this mindset with a tendency to act as though Australia's electoral system was the same as the American style of politics where people voted for a president. Gabrielle was unsure of the degree to which her preference for a particular prime ministerial candidate would be important. She had views on the personalities of the leaders of the two main parties, but she acknowledged that they may not be entirely accurate, so she did not know how important those character appraisals would ultimately be. When reflecting on her own behaviour, she claimed that she would be more likely to focus on policy in the upcoming federal election.

Regardless of the opinions the participants had formed about the leaders of the two main parties, most interviewees had well formed opinions on both party leaders: Kevin Rudd and Tony Abbott. Just as Garzia (2011) describes the ways by which voters will evaluate a party leader, similarly the participants evaluated the personality and skills of Kevin Rudd and Tony Abbott. As Gabrielle explained:

> *Well, I know that we - that politics in Australia is personality politics, we have basically presidential style elections. When I vote … I feel like I'm voting for Kevin or Tony.*

Interestingly, while the leaders of the two main parties were described by the pro-asylum interviewees with terms ranging from '*lovely*' to '*a bit of a wanker*' or '*a nutcase*', very few of this pro-asylum group, however, had firm views about Christine Milne – the leader of The Australian Greens. In fact, despite The Greens having a more inclusive asylum seeker policy the vast majority of the pro-asylum interviewees failed to recognise her name, let alone associate her with the party leadership. Even Meg, who indicated that she intended to vote for The Greens, did not know who the party leader was:

> *Interviewer: So you wouldn't know who the leader of The Greens is?*
> *Meg: Who is it?*
> *Interviewer: It's Christine Milne.*
> *Meg: Okay, I didn't know that. [Laughter] Oops!*

In the main, however, the participants believed it did not matter in Australia who the leader of a political party was, particularly since the role had proved to be so tenuous in Australian politics. As

Troy explained, despite how party leaders were played up in the media, ultimately they could be quickly removed, as was the case in the leadership spill that had occurred a few weeks previously.

Many interviewees said that it was party policies surrounding the issues the interviewees felt to be most important that would ultimately determine who they would vote for. Some explained how their focus would be on party policies and how they would be personally impacted by them. Others spoke of social issues which would affect the broader Australian community. Marriage equality was a topic of great concern amongst this group. Most disagreed with the level of inequality and prejudice being demonstrated towards gay Australians. Jake, for example, objected to the fact that they were not being treated equally due to their sexual preferences:

> *That's a big one, because then you are not treating people equally. You are not treating them as they're a mate. You're treating them as though you are better than they are, that they don't have the rights that you have. That's just wrong.*

Others stressed the importance of environmental issues. Aysha, for instance, was very passionate about the environment and the impacts of climate change.

> *I see that climate change as a - is a massive issue. If that's not the number one issue in everyone's head it should be, because I guess we're the ones destroying the earth, so why aren't we fixing it to begin with?*

Matthew had views on a number of issues, ranging from the abolition of the carbon tax to education reform:

> *Keeping the carbon tax. I think the carbon tax and moving to an exchange scheme is good. I think in terms of how they're managing the deficit and the budget is fairly responsible…I'm not sure how I feel about that and the changes to university funding, because obviously I feel a bit, obviously, as a university student I have an opinion on it and that as well, as someone who works at the university in a program that could be cut because of the changes in funding like that influences my views somewhat.*

Luke was worried about job cuts. Working in the service industry as a personal trainer, he was aware that there would be a follow-on effect if unemployment rates were to increase. People who were out of work could not typically afford the luxury of personal training.

> *I guess cutting jobs. Not that my industry is really going to go … but a lot of people when their jobs get cut they can't pay me anymore …You know I've lost a lot of clients just because they said, 'Oh look— I've got hours cut back at work. I can't even afford to feed my kids anymore! I can't do personal training anymore'.*

Another issue was the rollout of the National Broadband Network. This was important to Michael because of his interest in computers:

> *I care a great deal about the NBN. As I've been fairly wrapped up in IT and stuff - I use computers every day. I use the Internet extensively. Labor's policies are so much better than the Liberals, from a technological aspect.*

The issue of asylum seekers was also considered as important. Both Jake and Ella, for example, spoke passionately about their thoughts on the asylum seeker issue, and having debated the

topic with family members:

> *Well, I had a big debate with my girlfriend and my dad and my step-mum about asylum seekers, which is a huge other one. It's a difficult one because there are so many interplaying factors. So asylum seekers – because it is about human rights and they are people. But the problem that is facing a lot of people is the difference between the impact on our own society by bringing them in, both economically and socially and the fact that we'd be sending them away to possibly their death. We have agreed as part of the UN to take in asylum seekers. So we are obliged to, if they come on land, because we've changed it now, so not within our waters. (Jake)*

> *I feel that asylum seekers, that's a big one because I actually believe that they're not really going to be detrimental to the country coming here because my belief is that they're escaping some real injustices – even though that's a lot different to what my parents believe. (Ella)*

In these discussions it was obvious that a multitude of factors needed to be considered when deciding which party to vote for. Just as van der Brug (2004) observes, during the run up to an election, voters must weigh up the issues and prioritise those they believe should be addressed, as was the case here. As Matthew pointed out, the parties, their policies, and the people leading them, could all influence the final selection. He explained that with so many factors at play, the task could be quite complex. He also conceded that he would need to balance personal beliefs, such as his views on asylum seeker policy, with a degree of pragmatism:

> *Tony Abbot's probably too conservative for my interests. Kevin Rudd's a bit more liberal in terms of gay marriages and that. I don't have a vested interest in it, but I support it. I think it's not so much that he's - it's not like Tony Abbott is Catholic, therefore I'm against him, like some of his conservative views and I don't like asylum seeker policy. That said, Labor's going very conservative as well. It's one of the reasons why - I don't think a Greens government would do a good job. If somehow they controlled the House of Reps, that would probably be terrible, but voting for them in the Senate, I think they can have a good influence in the Senate.*

As Nicholas explained, no one party was ideal. Even though he indicated he was a Greens supporter because of its policies, he acknowledged that the party was not the best placed to govern the country:

> *Well none of the leaders really appeal to me. Tony Abbott in particular I'm quite against. Some of the things he says and his track record as a very public figure and potential candidate for leading the country doesn't really sit with me. But that said, none of the other figures really kind of are so thrilling either and that said, none of the other parties are particularly fantastic. Like, The Greens, while a lot of their views I agree with like gay marriage, asylum seekers, et cetera, et cetera, their view for the environment, they're not - I don't think they're as ideally equipped as the governments or the two major parties to run a country I suppose.*

Voting for Acceptance?

After exploring the factors that might influence the participants in their voting choice at the 2013 federal election, the analysis now turns to the participant's views of the parties' asylum policies and the role the asylum seeker issue would ultimately play in the participants' voting choice. While the LNP offered a policy that was consistent with their exclusionary stance against asylum seekers, and The Greens provided one that was highly accepting and inclusionary, the late game changer had been the Labor party's *Regional Resettlement Plan*, a political strategy consistent with Holian's

(2004) account of 'issue stealing' in order to regain ownership over a particular political topic. By and large, the pro-asylum group were disapproving of what they believed was merely an election ploy and an attempt on the part of Rudd to gain popularity and were unhappy with what they saw as Labor's preparedness to make such a radical change in policy in order to win the election.

In terms of the Labor policy itself, some of these pro-asylum interviewees were vehemently against the policy and the laws which had been put in place to stop 'boat people' from ever being resettled in Australia. Nicholas felt this was '*the worst decision*' Kevin Rudd and the Labor party could have made. He described how he felt '*disillusioned*' by the fact that Kevin Rudd had made a fundamental change in policy:

> *Well that was possibly - I don't know, I feel like that's one of the worst decisions he's made or that that party has made over the last three years… I feel like that it's such a dramatic change so at odds with kind of the obvious position of the party being a more left leaning party…. I don't know, it really kind of disillusioned… me to the idea that he was - when he first appeared …he seemed like someone who could stand up for things that he believed were righteous and deliver change and kind of have policies that people might be a little bit excited about. But he just seems like a lot of compromise and I can't really see who it's for. I don't know.*

When asked his thoughts on why this policy was brought to the table, Nicholas also thought the motive was primarily an election strategy. Whether this had been a wise move on the part of the ALP, Nicholas was unsure given that it would alienate Australians with pro-asylum beliefs:

> *I suppose to some extent to appease negative sentiment towards asylum seekers and possibly a politically motivated thing to gain ground politically and support for that idea. Which I think has kind of been a bit counter - it was counter-intuitive or not the best idea because a lot of people have kind of turned against him for that and it's alienated people who would react to a strong policy to kind of accept them. I'm not really sure.*

Not all of the pro-asylum interviewees were completely disapproving of the *Regional Resettlement Plan*. From their perspective the fact that Labor would not allow 'boat people' to enter Australia, but would still provide them an opportunity to have their applications for asylum considered, at least offered a kind of compromise. For instance, as far as Luke was concerned this policy would at least give those who were found to be legitimate asylum seekers some hope for a future:

> *I think it's a little bit better than just turning them around. At least they're going somewhere. They're going to a place… They'll take them, they'll look after them and they'll keep them. Better than kind of putting them in another - yeah just putting them in a little shack or at least giving them a nice living and an actual kind of future. So yeah it's a little bit better solution.*

Would the asylum seeker issue then ultimately influence how the participants would vote in the upcoming federal election? For a small minority it would. Nicholas felt so strongly on the issue that he would be voting for the Greens. For him the PNG solution was the deal breaker that would stop him from voting for Labor.

Interviewer: Would that be a deal breaker for you? I mean would you have perhaps considered voting Labor beforehand?
Nicholas: Probably actually, yeah. I mean now with that in mind it's almost off the table, but before I might have just kind of protested to make sure - particularly against the Coalition getting in I suppose. So it is a bit of a tough choice because like the easiest thing would be to vote Labor …Yeah, just to kind of ensure they have some degree of power or like as a vote against the Coalition whereas a vote against the Greens while it's more voting for what I believe in isn't quite as strong a message I suppose or it doesn't quite carry the power.…
Interviewer: So it might be sort of like a wasted vote do you think?
Nicholas: Almost. Well, while it's an honest vote is it going to have the desired effect? Whereas, if you voted for the Labor Party would that make it more likely for them to keep the Coalition out, I suppose, even though it's not entirely the party I would ideally want.

Others who indicated disagreement with the suggestion Australia should turn asylum seekers away, expressed difficulties with having to weigh up what was most important to them with what party would be able to deliver policies that would achieve those needs. Few reported that the asylum seeker issue would directly influence their vote since both parties were endorsing equally punitive and exclusionary policies and because they did not see the Greens as a viable alternative. In other words, while they were pro-asylum, there was little point in voting on that issue in this election. Instead of using their vote to express their views on this issue to the government, they decided they would need to be more pragmatic in their actions.

For a voter to be influenced by a single issue, however, they must believe that issue is more salient than other issues (Bélanger & Meguid 2008). Furthermore, they need to be confident that the party presenting the policy has the ability to deal with that issue should it be elected into office (Bélanger & Meguid 2008). Although Matthew was also strongly pro-asylum he would not be using his vote to articulate this view by voting for The Greens because he saw this as a futile exercise. Moreover, there were other issues that he felt demanded more attention:

No, I'm not going say vote for the Greens in … the House of Reps and hope that the Greens somehow form parliament because of it. It's crap, but as bad as it is to me, it's like a periphery issue of interest.

While Gabrielle was accepting of asylum seekers and held strong beliefs that Australia should welcome asylum seekers, this did not necessarily mean that she would be voting on the issue. She believed other issues were more important and that a party would find it difficult to win an election in Australia if it adopted the type of open door policy she believed in. From her perspective, there were two main contenders in the political race and given that neither endorsed the pro-asylum perspective, the issue had effectively been taken off the table.

I don't think either side are really very - no one has a different idea about how to solve the asylum seeker thing so they're all operating from the premise that the whole point is to stop the boats, and there's really not a third solution, so it's, the dialect has just been stopped in Australian politics. So yeah, I guess that's not really an issue that I'm going to vote on, because it's the same both ways.

When it came down to it, some factors would impact her personally and others would not. While having strong beliefs about some social issues, Gabrielle acknowledged that if a conservative government was in power she personally would not be adversely affected. In fact she might be better off:

> *Maybe even, well I don't know, I still could, would vote Liberal. I feel like the Liberals, as much as I say it would affect my life, politically I'm like, 'Oh well asylum seekers, human rights, indigenous people, university cuts, realistically my life wouldn't change at all I don't think'. Aside from.. little things like my university fees would go up. In my, the next five years, I don't think a Liberal government would really affect my life. So maybe they'd grow the economy, and I'd get a job after the end of my degree.*

Discussion

The asylum seeker issue was a key topic in the 2013 Australian federal election campaign. The key parties all fervently argued the merits of their respective asylum seeker policies in order to garner votes. The purpose of this chapter was to investigate the extent to which the attitudes of 'accepting' members of the *Our Lives* cohort would be reflected at the polling booth. The data presented were derived from interviews undertaken with pro-asylum members of the *Our Lives* cohort who were interviewed as part of a broader data collection process intended to document the voting intentions of cohort members in what was their first Australian federal election. Here I have isolated the accounts of those young people who indicated that they were accepting of asylum seekers, i.e. that they believed Australia should allow 'boat people' into Australia and process their claim for asylum onshore. While these young people could be categorised as being accepting of 'boat people', my interest was to determine if they would use the political process as a way of expressing those views. To that end this chapter has addressed the third and final research question:

> **RQ3. To what extent did holding accepting views towards 'boat people' influence the voting behaviour of young Queenslanders at the 2013 Australian federal election?**

As I have explained, the literature suggests that regardless of the strength of an individual's views on a particular topic, it may not ultimately influence their selection at the polling booth. Partisan identification, an evaluation of the person who is leading the party, or the salience of other issues may instead take precedence. Analysis of these data suggests that many who have inclusive views towards asylum seekers would not necessarily express that opinion via their voting selection. Other considerations, particularly other policies, were considered more important. Pro-asylum sentiments, it appears, do not necessarily translate into pro-asylum actions at the ballot box. While they were aware that it was a factor and they could act on their views, they chose not to. Other factors took priority and the pro-asylum participants realised it was necessary to make a choice as to where their commitment would lie.

In his essay *Notes on the Concept of Commitment*, Becker (1960, p. 33) speaks of commitment as being 'consistent behavior' which persists over time and context. Commitment to a belief is demonstrated when a person's interests and actions are aligned. As Becker explains:

> The committed person has acted in such a way as to involve other interests of his, originally extraneous to the action he is in, directly in that action. By his own actions…he has staked something of value to him, something originally unrelated to his present line of action, on being consistent with his present behavior. The consequences of inconsistency will be so expensive that inconsistency… is no longer a feasible alternative. (Becker 1960, p.35)

A problem raised in the cosmopolitanism literature is that some people might think and speak in a manner consistent with a cosmopolitan framework of understanding but they will not necessarily commit to those beliefs in a tangible manner (Vertovec & Cohen 2002). Also the cosmopolitan outlook can be rather fickle. While it offers social actors a perspective with which they might interact with difference and negotiate an increasingly globalised world, this does not mean that people will be cosmopolitan in their outlook 'at all times, and on all issues' (Skrbiš & Woodward 2007, p. 735). Such was the case in this instance. Although the pro-asylum participants had articulated an accepting outlook, at this particular time and on this particular issue, the pro-asylum participants did not appear to be prepared to stake their vote in commitment to those views.

There may be several explanations as to why the views and actions of most of the pro-asylum participants spoken to were misaligned. In line with data gathered for the Australian Election Study in 2013 (Bean et al. 2013), which measured what adult Australians considered to be the most important issue during the 2013 federal election campaign issues such as the economy were seen to be more salient. While some saw the asylum seeker issue as being important, other issues also had to be considered. The reality was, as Matthew was quoted above as saying, asylum seekers were '*a periphery issue of interest*' and not one that would necessarily determine who they would vote for.

Another point to remember is that in this particular context the incumbent Labor government had introduced a significantly stricter and exclusionary asylum seeker policy just prior to declaring an election. It is reasonable to assume that one motive for this was to 'steal' the issue (Bélanger & Meguid 2008; Holian 2004) from the LNP and thus effectively level the political playing field on this issue. Given that the Labor Party and the LNP are the two main contenders for winning government in Australia, and the Greens would not likely gain enough support to win power, the asylum seeker issue was effectively taken off the table. To vote for a party on the basis that it had a pro-asylum stance, was effectively a wasted vote.

The expression of accepting attitudes towards asylum seekers may also be pointing to an expression of social presentation rather than actual commitment to the issue (Laughland-Booÿ, et al. 2014). This explanation is consistent with arguments that expressions of a cosmopolitan outlook may have a performative aspect and be used by an individual to distinguish themselves within their

own community (Kendall et al. 2009; Noble 2013; Savage et al. 2005; Skey 2012; Woodward & Skrbiš 2012). Expression of acceptance might be what Hage (2000, p.201) describes as a type of 'cosmopolitan capital' developed out of their social environ. Essentially the expression of the accepting viewpoint is socially desirable. This does not mean, however, that these expressed views will be followed through with accepting action.

It may be also that the participants have yet to decide whether or not they are prepared to commit to their views on the asylum issue. The expression of accepting views might well be a step in deciding whether this is a cause important to them and if they will ultimately commit to it. At this stage, however, it seems that not allowing their pro-asylum views to influence their voting behaviour was considered a feasible action.

Although there are possible explanations for this finding, what this analysis has highlighted is the fact that just because people may voice opposition to policies which exclude 'boat people' from Australia, this does not mean they will act on those views. From a sociological perspective this has implications for researchers investigating the attitudes of Australian towards asylum seekers. While it is useful to quantitatively measure the attitudes of Australians towards 'boat people' (e.g. AES 2014; Markus 2014; Laughland-Booÿ et al. 2014), and to document pro-asylum arguments as to why Australia should be accepting of 'boat people' (e.g. Every & Augoustinos 2008a; Fozdar & Pedersen 2013; Laughland-Booÿ et al. 2015), researchers should remain mindful that these attitudes of acceptance are not necessarily measuring a commitment to those attitudes via consistent behaviour.

Conclusion

It is one thing to say that you are accepting of 'boat people' coming to Australia, but it is another to act in a manner consistent with such views. Although some Australians may express a more inclusionary stance towards 'boat people' it could be said that this has little bearing if they are not prepared to express those views at the ballot box. Whilst this argument may be a little simplistic, I used the 2013 Australian federal election as a way to examine the 'pro-asylum' participants' commitment to their accepting stance by exploring their willingness to allow their inclusive views to influence their voting behaviour. The findings revealed a reluctance to do so by the majority of these 'accepting' young adults in the case of the 2013 Federal election. This was due to a number of factors such as party loyalty, a particular preference for a political leader and issue saliency. This serves as an important reminder that attitudes of acceptance do not necessarily translate into actions of acceptance – an important point to remember when theorising an acceptance of the displaced by settled populations. This has been the final findings chapter for this thesis. The following chapter will engage in a broader discussion of the findings presented in the findings chapters of this thesis. The implications for the overall findings of this PhD project will also be discussed.

8. Discussion & Conclusion: Cosmopolitan Acceptance

I think we're a very cosmopolitan country, but then I don't know if we even are, but people want us to be. (Gabrielle)

The problem of asylum seekers coming to Australia by boat is a longstanding socially and politically divisive issue. Some Australians support the implementation of strict measures to ensure that asylum seekers are either dissuaded, or prevented, from reaching Australia. Others believe that the actions taken by successive recent Australian governments to prevent asylum seekers from reaching Australia are abhorrent. They argue that Australia should be able to provide safety and support to people who have left their country of origin under threat of harm. The problem highlighted at the beginning of this thesis was that, both in terms of theoretical and empirical resources, considerable effort has been made to understand what motivates people to support the exclusionary position, yet less effort has been made to understand why some people are motivated to be accepting. The purpose of my study was to therefore help rectify this imbalance by undertaking an investigation which pays particular attention to the mechanisms that motivate a more accepting stance by some Australians towards asylum seekers.

In this final chapter, I first summarise the key findings of this study. I then propose a novel theoretical framework for both understanding and operationalising an acceptance of asylum seekers by members of a settled population. This framework links the inclusionary views towards asylum seekers with theories of cosmopolitanism and also provides an analytical model which allows an acceptance of asylum seekers by members of a settled population to be tested empirically. While trying to avoid overly normative conclusions, I do reflect upon how a more 'cosmopolitan' outlook towards asylum seekers might be fostered in Australia. After discussing the limitations of my research and offering suggestions for the future direction of investigations into this topic, I conclude by commenting on the broader implications of this research.

Key Findings

This study has addressed an important problem currently facing Australia. The issue of 'boat people' attempting to reach Australia is the focus of ongoing domestic political debate, with public opinion strongly divided. Many Australians believe that their country should take all steps necessary to ensure that such asylum seekers do not reach this country. Others, however, express a considerably more accepting point of view. While the mechanisms that encourage rejecting attitudes of Australians towards asylum seekers have been well theorised and tested, less work has been undertaken to empirically investigate the nature of acceptance. I have tried to address this shortfall by studying the processes surrounding acceptance of 'boat people' by young Australians. Investigating the views of participants from the longitudinal 'Our Lives' project provided an

opportunity to examine this issue and address the research bias of existing research which tends to overwhelmingly focus on phenomena of rejection and also tends to draw conclusions from adult settled populations.

The concept of cosmopolitanism was used to frame this research. As I have explained, cosmopolitanism describes the competencies necessary for encountering cultural difference and diversity. These skills are vital for negotiating what has become an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world. This concept thus lends itself to explaining an inclusive viewpoint. Throughout this process I have used cosmopolitanism and associated literature to guide my theoretical understanding of how acceptance of asylum seekers may be theorised. It has not, however, been my intent to test whether or not the pro-asylum participants were 'cosmopolitan'. While being aware that theory relating to cosmopolitanism could potentially help construct this understanding, there is no established precedent for how acceptance of asylum seekers might be operationalised by using this theoretical framework. I therefore adopted a methodological approach aligned with an abductive research strategy. This approach uses social actors' language, meanings, and accounts in the context of everyday activities' as the primary basis for building theoretical insights into social phenomena (Blaikie 2007, p. 89). I then employed cosmopolitanism as a lens to frame and construct a theoretical understanding of those phenomena.

The guiding question driving this thesis project has been:

How do young Australians express accepting attitudes towards 'boat people'?

The collection, analysis, and presentation of data was then aligned to three specific research questions:

RQ1. What narratives do young people use when discussing the rejection or acceptance of 'boat people'?

RQ2. How do young Australians who express inclusive views towards 'boat people' relate this acceptance to notions of 'being Australian'?

RQ3. To what extent did holding accepting views towards 'boat people' influence the voting behaviour of young Queenslanders at the 2013 Australian federal election?

Narratives of Exclusion and Acceptance

The first objective of this study was to describe the narratives of interview participants who had indicated that they held strong views on the topic of 'boat people' attempting to reach Australia.

By contrasting the anti-asylum and pro-asylum perspectives I was able to identify themes unique to the pro-asylum narrative. This task addresses RQ1 and the findings were presented in Chapter 5.

As demonstrated in Chapter 5, the findings relating to the views of the anti-asylum interviewees are consistent with past research. Whether the young people who were rejecting of 'boat people' accused them of acting illegally, argued their values would change Australian society, or described them as having a 'vicious streak', the underlying premise common to their position was that Australia had no responsibility towards these people and that compassion and assistance was not warranted.

Like the anti-asylum participants, those who advocated acceptance of 'boat people' used discursive constructions to defend their stance. Through the use of data, three core themes formed the basis for accepting arguments: the principles of responsibility, openness, and compassion. First, while the anti-asylum participants argued that 'boat people' were not Australia's problem, the pro-asylum young people adopted a very different viewpoint. Whether it was simply 'the right thing to do', or because Australia had obligations to the global community, they contended Australia had a responsibility to be accepting of 'boat people'. Second, while the anti-asylum interviewees claimed 'boat people' posed a considerable threat to Australia, the pro-asylum group did not share such concerns. Third, the pro-asylum interviewees spoke of the need for compassion to be shown towards 'boat people', in contrast to the argument made by the rejecting interviewees that neither care nor concern is warranted.

In considering the broader theoretical relevance of these findings, I argued that the principles of responsibility, openness, and compassion could be readily mapped onto sociological understandings relating to the concept of cosmopolitanism (e.g. Appiah 2006; Beck 2006; Nussbaum 2001, 2002; Skrbiš & Woodward 2011). The principles of global responsibility and openness are, after all, strongholds of cosmopolitan theory, particularly those relating to more 'conscious' and 'reflexive' forms of cosmopolitan engagement (e.g. Kendall et al. 2009; Skrbiš & Woodward 2013). It is, for example, considered a cosmopolitan responsibility to respect fundamental human rights principles, to provide assistance to global others where possible (Parekh 2003), and to offer hospitality and sanctuary to those who request it (Brown 2010b; Kant 1983). Further, openness towards encountering and engaging with people from different regions of the globe is an important contemporary cosmopolitan skill (Skrbiš & Woodward 2011). In this instance, the openness demonstrated by pro-asylum participants surpassed a simple wish to 'sample' cultural difference. They showed a style of cosmopolitan openness that Skrbiš and Woodward (2011, p.61) describe as 'a deeper and more culturally skilled engagement with otherness' that demonstrates a 'preference for the explicit de-hierarchization of culture on political or ethical grounds'. The openness expressed was motivated by a belief that all people are of equal worth and that asylum seekers

coming to Australia had the capacity to make a significant cultural and material contribution to the country.

I also argued that the *compassion* demonstrated towards 'boat people' by pro-asylum participants can be considered a cosmopolitan response. Although there has been theoretical discussion pertaining to whether or not emotion should play a part in informing a cosmopolitan outlook (e.g. Nussbaum 2001; Sznaider 1998; van Hooft 2009), compassion is a response that can compel people to act positively in the interests of strangers (Sznaider 1998; van Hooft 2009). For this reason, I have argued that compassion can legitimately be considered a cosmopolitan emotion.

Narratives of Nationhood

The next step was to determine how young Australians who possess accepting views relate their attitudes to notions of 'being Australian'. This task addressed RQ2 with the findings presented in Chapter 6. I first determined if, and how, my interviewees identified with the concept of 'being Australian'. Perhaps not surprisingly, many had a strong sense of attachment to Australia, describing how they enjoyed living in this country and how they appreciated the benefits Australia has to offer. They also identified with a set of core values that they claimed defined the Australian national identity and spirit.

Although many interviewees expressed an attachment to Australia, differences were apparent in terms of the extent to which they felt Australia could (and should) accommodate different cultural beliefs and practices. Some with a strong attachment to Australian identity exhibited an outlook I have described as 'closed'. By this I describe the view that unless the Australian identity was safeguarded from outside cultural influences, there was a risk that it would be threatened or lost. They argued that steps were therefore necessary to ensure potential migrants should be required to 'fit in' and adapt to the Australian way of living. Perhaps unsurprisingly, with regards to attitudes towards 'boat people', these interviewees who showed a strong/closed attachment to Australia supported the exclusion of these asylum seekers from Australia.

Others with a strong attachment to Australia showed a more 'open' outlook. They argued that Australian culture needed no such protection and that cultural diversity was an important component of Australian society. They also believed that the contemporary Australian identity was (and should be) accepting of cultural diversity. As such, young people who identified as having a 'strong/ open' Australian identity tended to entwine notions of openness, tolerance, and acceptance alongside core Australian values such as fairness and mateship – effectively expanding what 'being Australian' really means. This did not mean they did not believe elements of the Australian lifestyle needed protection. These young people were, however, more inclined to focus on the need for Australian civic laws and institutions to be respected. Although they claimed that those living in Australia should have their cultural origins and practices respected, they also argued that everyone

living in Australia should respect the rights and practices of others, and should work to ensure that Australia is a harmonious and cohesive society. These 'strong/open' individuals were also inclined to be accepting of 'boat people'. They contended that 'boat people' could potentially contribute to Australia and should be given the opportunity to do so. Further, they tended to be of the opinion that preparedness to accept asylum seekers was consistent with Australian values such as mateship and a 'fair go'.

A small number of the interviewees demonstrated a 'weak/open' attachment to the Australian identity. Unlike the others, these young people were inclined to downplay their personal connectedness to the Australian identity. A strong attachment to Australia was seen as problematic as it promoted an exclusive perspective and could be used to validate acts of intolerance, inequality, and prejudice. While they also believed Australia should accept 'boat people', the weak/open interviewees did not refer to the Australian nation to support their position. Instead they suggested values associated with acceptance of 'boat people' should transcend any notion of what it means to be Australian.

My findings support previous suggestions that Australians do not identify with a single national identity (Moran 2011; Purdie & Wilss 2007; Tranter & Donoghue 2007). Moreover, I identified a link between attachment to Australia and the interviewed young peoples' views on the acceptance of 'boat people'. With the exception of a small minority, pro-asylum interviewees were strongly attached to the Australian identity, while at the same time holding the view that Australia should be accepting. They tended to believe that some core values one might typically associate with 'being Australian', such as fairness and mateship, inform actions of acceptance. In fact, as far as they are concerned, to believe that Australia should not accept 'boat people' into Australia is a perspective that is simply 'un-Australian'. Held (2010, p. 307) makes the argument that 'only national identities open to diverse solidarities, and shaped by respect for general rules and principles, can accommodate themselves successfully to the challenges of the global age'. The 'strong/open' group demonstrated an alignment with such a notion of national identity – one that is indeed open to forming solidarities with diversity.

From a cosmopolitan perspective, attachment to a national identity and adherence to the principles of cosmopolitanism are not mutually exclusive. Some theorists suggest that a person may retain a strong attachment to their nation while endorsing and practicing cosmopolitan ideals. (Appiah 1997, 2006; Beck & Levy 2013; Brett & Moran 2011; Calhoun 2008; Kendall et al. 2009). Moreover, certain core elements of that national identity can inform and uphold those cosmopolitan ideals (Lamont & Aksartova 2002). Just as the 'weak/open' pro-asylum seekers showed a 'willingness to step outside stable, privileged and established power categories' (Skrbiš & Woodward 2011, p. 61), the 'strong/open' pro-asylum interviewees showed similar tendencies.

They, however, achieved this not by distancing themselves from any notion of Australian identity, but by transforming these identity categories to align with a more cosmopolitan, and thus more accepting, national understanding.

Voting for Acceptance

My final question (RQ3) was explored in Chapter 7. With this question I sought to establish the extent that pro-asylum young people would use the ballot box to act on their views towards the asylum seekers at the 2013 Australian federal election. After all, as Appiah (2006, p.174) writes, 'if we accept the cosmopolitan challenge, we will tell our representatives that we want them to remember those strangers'. To answer this research question I analysed data collected from qualitative interviews conducted with members of the Our Lives cohort in the weeks prior to the 2013 Federal election.

As discussed in Chapter 7, while on the face of it, voting against political parties that supported exclusionary measures against 'boat people' is a tangible way of expressing one's views on the issue, asylum seekers were only one of many issues which young people considered when deciding how to vote. Pro-asylum interviewees expressed concern for the plight of asylum seekers, but few intended to use their vote to either primarily or exclusively express these views. Although cosmopolitan principles had been articulated by the pro-asylum respondents, the extent to which they would be translated into practice was less obvious. As they explained, other factors also had to be considered when deciding how to vote. In other words, an *attitude* of acceptance was not necessarily followed through with an *action* of acceptance. This raised the question as to whether young pro-asylum participants were truly committed to their cosmopolitan perspective.

A Model of Cosmopolitan Acceptance

As Skey (2012, p.484) puts it, the labelling of cosmopolitan outlooks and practices in empirical research can be very broad. The framework can be applied to activities ranging from 'buying a 'foreign' meal to supporting political demonstrations where participants may risk injury or even death'. Given that there is such wide usage of the cosmopolitanism framework, calls have been made for greater effort to be put into defining and describing what being cosmopolitan looks like in certain situations (Noble 2013; Skey 2013). As Noble (2013, p.169) argues, there needs to be a ''performative' definition of cosmopolitanism and an observational methodology which attempts to capture the nuances of such situated performances'. Consistent with this argument, while there are many cosmopolitan practices, not all necessarily relate to a preparedness to be accepting of asylum seekers. Being accepting of people asking for asylum (i.e. offering them hospitality, providing them with material support, and sharing one's resources with them) requires a particular *type* of cosmopolitan outlook. If applying the concept of cosmopolitanism to the acceptance of members by an established population it is, therefore, important to be specific about which cosmopolitan

principles and practices are relevant, and what 'cosmopolitan acceptance' actually looks like in practice. In this way the cosmopolitan phenomenon might be observed and analysed in future empirical studies.

By drawing on the accounts of pro-asylum participants and the broader rubric of cosmopolitanism, I have suggested a substantive model of acceptance that may be observed empirically. Put simply, this proposed model of cosmopolitan acceptance, as it emerged through the data, comprises four analytical dimensions:

1. An acknowledgement that the *responsibility* of the individual (or their nation) extends beyond national boundaries and into the global sphere.

2. *Openness* whereby a person demonstrates attitudes of inclusiveness towards asylum seekers.

3. *Compassion* for the problems experienced by asylum seekers.

4. A *commitment* to act in support of asylum seekers.

Those who demonstrate cosmopolitan acceptance would understand the consequences of increased global interdependencies and recognise a responsibility to the broader global community. They would also recognise a responsibility not to act in a manner that is adverse to other members of the global community. On matters of global displacement, they would recognise it as a collective problem that requires a collective solution. Responsibility would be taken for helping create solutions to issues of asylum that are both humane and fair. They would also believe they should accept responsibility for assisting asylum seekers because to do so is commensurate with their material ability to provide this assistance.

In the cosmopolitan sense, openness involves intercultural mastery and symbolic competencies associated with cultural bridging and understanding. Those demonstrating a cosmopolitan acceptance of asylum seekers would be open to the prospect of having asylum seekers enter and join their communities and society. Instead of expressing fear or concern that asylum seekers pose a threat, they would see them as potential contributors to their new society.

Those demonstrating cosmopolitan acceptance reflect upon the lives of people different from themselves and appreciate the hardships that others endure. Rather than being inclined to blame the asylum seeker, they place themselves in the position of those seeking asylum and are motivated to help alleviate any suffering.

Importantly, acceptance must also be palpable. A person who espouses accepting views should also demonstrate commitment to those attitudes through tangible action. After all, as Nussbaum (2001, p. 399) cautions:

> we should be on our guard lest the invitation to weep over the distress of others should motivate self-indulgent and self-congratulatory behavior, rather than real helpfulness. People can all-too-easily feel that they have done something morally good because they have had an experience of compassion – without having to take any steps to change the world that might involve them in real difficulty and sacrifice.

It is through action that a person shows they are not only 'talking the talk', but also 'walking the walk'. There may be a number of motivations for expressing accepting views, and in some instances they may be expressed in order to bring advantage to the individual articulating those sentiments. It is all very well speaking of responsibility, openness, and compassion, but a person's commitment to those principles must be demonstrated through action: this might be through making the choice to vote for a certain political candidate or party on the basis that they promise to adopt a more accepting stance towards asylum seekers; it might also be through action such as participation in social advocacy groups, or through regular engagement with asylum seekers. Through such actions, members of a settled population show they are committed to their views and committed to ensuring asylum seekers are provided with care and consideration.

The 'Cosmopolitan' Australian

In Australia, 'boat people' and other asylum seekers are often constructed in such a manner as to justify the imposition of strict exclusionary measures. Here, I have identified a narrative among some young Australians that challenges these measures and promotes a more accepting view. These are everyday young people who displayed an ability to think beyond the boundaries set by their own society and who engage in an open and reflexive manner with the global community. They are also young people who recognise that Australia has a role to play in offering humanitarian assistance to those who have been displaced from their country of origin due to the threat of harm.

Whether or not a cosmopolitan outlook offers the solution to how Australia might approach the asylum seeker issue, my research suggests that such a perspective does provide an alternative viewpoint to how the issue might be perceived and addressed. Instead of advocating the 'stop the boats' principle, the accepting young people who participated in this research have advocated cosmopolitan principles of responsibility, openness, and compassion. If a 'cosmopolitan' acceptance of asylum seekers was to be more broadly adapted in Australia, how might this be achieved? Although I acknowledge that I may be walking what Roudometof (2012, p. 116) describes as the 'fine line between describing social life in the twenty-first century and simultaneously proposing new forms of thinking', I wish to offer some speculative propositions on this matter relating to cosmopolitan education and courage to advocate and act.

Cosmopolitan Education

Some pro-asylum participants spoke of how education might not only increase knowledge of other peoples' lived realities, but also build concern for the circumstances asylum seekers are experiencing. Their argument was that if more Australians had a fuller appreciation of the circumstances surrounding a person's decision to seek asylum they may be more generous in their attitudes. Consistent with these arguments the importance of educating Australians about asylum

seekers and challenging misinformed beliefs has also been highlighted in the literature (e.g. Pedersen et al. 2005; Pedersen et al. 2012). In socio-political environments where hostility towards asylum seekers is palpable, exposure to cosmopolitan principles through formal education may facilitate a more compassionate understanding of asylum seeker issues. Perhaps then, like the pro-asylum participants identified in this study, more Australians would adopt a stance that is informed by the principles of cosmopolitan acceptance.

The benefits of cosmopolitan education have been previously argued. Martha Nussbaum (2002), for example, made this argument in her seminal essay *Cosmopolitanism and Patriotism.* She put forward the following arguments in support of incorporating 'world citizenship' into education curricula:

- *Through cosmopolitan education, we learn more about ourselves.*
- *We make headway solving problems that require international cooperation.*
- *We recognize moral obligations to the rest of the world that are real, and that otherwise would go unrecognized.*
- *We make a consistent and coherent argument based on distinctions we are really prepared to defend. (Nussbaum 2002, pp.11-14)*

According to Nussbaum (2002), cosmopolitan education increases knowledge of other people, other experiences and other lived realities. It enables people to compare and contrast their own experiences and circumstances with the lives and circumstances of others. A global awareness is also the first step to accepting global responsibility. If people are not aware of certain global problems, and if they do not appreciate that these issues are not always contained within the borders of another nation, then they will be unlikely to accept a share of those problems. Nussbaum (2002) also believes cosmopolitan education can inculcate a moral obligation towards others, regardless of location. It expands the notion of having loyalty to members of one's own country to having an allegiance to the global community. Moreover, she argues that young people should not be taught to think the ideals which are often considered to be elements of one's national identity (e.g. equality and multiculturalism) are limited by national boundaries. If we fail to teach our children that the same principles should be extended to people outside our national boundaries, we are teaching our children that 'we really don't mean what we say' (Nussbaum 2002, p. 15).

Rizvi (2009 p. 253) also discusses the value of embedding cosmopolitan understandings into education curricula and that 'learning itself needs to become cosmopolitan' and that students should be taught to understand local issues 'within the broader context of the global shifts that are reshaping the ways in which localities, and even social identities, are now becoming re-constituted' (Rizvi 2009, p. 254). Acknowledging that education practices tend to focus on local systems of

understanding, he advocates a system of teaching whereby associations between the local and the global are emphasised and where students are taught that social connections and responsibilities are not contained within a national boundary. Rizvi (2009, p. 265) believes this pedagogical perspective would 'help students to develop a different social imaginary about their lives and life options in the materiality of their collective and interlinked circumstances'. Of course, this assumes that we actually wish students to consider alternative ways of thinking and to be more critical of current ways of teaching and learning that prioritise local social imaginaries over global realities (Rizvi 2009, p.266).

In Australia, all schools are required to adhere to the requirements of the *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* (Australian Government 2005) and incorporate the following principles into their curriculum: Care and Compassion; Doing Your Best; Fair Go; Freedom; Honesty and Trustworthiness; Integrity; Respect; Responsibility; and, Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion. While such a framework may provide a standard for delivering certain messages to Australian students, including tolerance of difference, it may not encourage them to be accepting of asylum seekers. Jones (2007), for instance, argues that despite the framework being used to champion a number of core values, conservative sentiments are being prioritised over those of social justice. Also, the importance of maintaining a single Australian identity may have taken precedence over ideals that focus on the benefits of cultural diversity (Jones 2007). The current political environment also influences what values will be reinforced (Pascoe 2007). A nation believing itself to be under threat, for example, may be less open to acceptance of strangers. As Pascoe (2007, p. 354) argues, it is difficult to teach principles of acceptance and inclusion when social discourses act to make a clear differentiation between 'us and them'.

A cosmopolitan education would therefore help young Australians to better appreciate the lived realities of people in other countries and to more accurately contrast their own lives with the lives of others. By gaining an awareness of the experiences of others less fortunate, young people would become more aware of Australia's relative privilege and power. Such an educational outlook would also help highlight the degree to which the lives of humans are now so interconnected and intertwined. It would also increase an appreciation that some issues, such as human displacement, are global issues and require a collective and concerted effort to address. Moreover, such a philosophy would reinforce the importance of human rights and the importance of international systems of governance to protect those who do not have the ability to protect themselves.

'Real' Australians Say Welcome'

Many Australians have expressed a fear that their country is at risk of losing its own unique identity if it were to allow asylum seekers into Australia to resettle (e.g. Every & Augoustinos 2008; Lueck et al. 2015; O'Doherty and Augoustinos 2008). These concerns are documented in the literature and

were also articulated in this study by the 'anti-asylum' participants. Also apparent in this study is that constructions of Australian identity can be used to promote a more accepting outlook towards asylum seekers and refugees.

In the context of protecting multicultural values in Australia, Moran (2011, p.2153) makes a call 'for supporters of multiculturalism to engage in ongoing debates about their respective national identities, rather than to vacate the field of national identity to others'. On the 'boat people' issue, it is therefore important for pro-asylum Australians to engage in dialogue and debate about what 'being Australian' is, in order to counter less accepting constructions and definitions of 'Australian-ness'. With reference to the data presented in this study, one strategy would be to follow the pro-asylum participants and use existing and well established meanings of being Australian (i.e. concepts of a 'fair go' and 'mateship') to reinforce the notion that acceptance of asylum seekers is an aspect of Australian identity. To a certain degree this is already occurring in Australia. In Chapter 2, I presented an illustration from the Asylum Seekers Resource Centre depicting a poster reading 'Real Australians Say Welcome' [Figure 2.3]. This poster is the creation of artist Peter Drew, who, in early 2015, embarked on a crowd-funded campaign to distribute 1,000 such posters around Australia (Om 2015). Drew explained that his motivation for this campaign was to provoke public reaction and discussion on what being 'Australian' (and conversely 'un-Australian') means in the context of the asylum seeker debate, and places what it means to be Australian 'completely up for discussion'. Referring to the line in the Australian national anthem: 'With courage let us all combine to Advance Australia Fair', Drew believes that a 'real' Australian is a person who shows such courage and is accepting of asylum seekers (Om 2015). It appears this campaign has gained traction. If this is the case, it is one practical example of how pro-asylum Australians have chosen not to vacate the field of national identity to those who advocate a more exclusionary approach.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Although I hope this study has made significant steps towards better understanding the nature of accepting public attitudes towards 'boat people' in Australia, and has made both theoretical and empirical links between the concept of cosmopolitanism and the nature of acceptance, there are some limitations in this study which should be acknowledged and avenues for future research that should be highlighted.

It is possible that social desirability played a part in the 'pro-asylum' participants' responses. Krumpal (2013, p. 2028) states that social desirability 'prevailing' when responding to the questions of researchers. While the literature presented in Chapter 2 demonstrates that acceptance of 'boat people' is not necessarily a prevailing view in a broader Australian society, participants may have assumed that if they were being asked to discuss the asylum seeker issue with an academic, that academic would be likely to personally hold inclusionary views. They might therefore make

themselves appear more accepting than they really were. To avoid this, the categorisation of the participants as being either 'anti-asylum' or 'pro-asylum' was primarily undertaken on the basis of their responses in the Waves 3 and 4 Our Lives survey – data collected independent of the interviews. In addition, in the interests of obtaining reliable data, where there appeared to be any inconsistency between the interviewees' survey responses and their interview accounts, the interview data were not included in my analysis (see Chapter 4). I would also add that if social desirability was an issue of concern, then there would have been a great deal of inconsistency between the 'anti-asylum' participants' survey responses and their interview data. This was not the case, and given comments made by some of the participants (some of which I elected not to present in this thesis document), I am relatively confident that social desirability was *not* a major consideration here.

More attention could also be placed on understanding and measuring commitment to the pro-asylum stance. In this instance, I looked at whether an accepting viewpoint would influence the voting behaviour of the pro-asylum participants. The findings suggested that it did not and as a consequence I questioned the participants' commitment to the pro-asylum 'cause'. While many pro-asylum participants may have felt they had little choice but to overlook the asylum issue in this particular instance, this does not mean that they were inactive in this area. Perhaps they are showing commitment to their views through other means and this was not picked up in the interviews. This could therefore be further investigated. Also, the interviewees may have been too young at the time of the interviews to actively advocate for the acceptance of asylum seekers in Australia. It is possible that cosmopolitan acceptance is a work in progress that begins with the development of cosmopolitan attitudes then later becomes 'fully fledged' via active commitment to such beliefs as people mature. We may therefore find that as young people age they have more resources available to them to put attitude into practice and demonstrate their commitment to this issue. On the other hand, however, we might find that attitudes of acceptance are never or seldom put into practice.

It would also be interesting to consider how educational experiences are currently shaping attitudes towards asylum seekers in young Australians. Education level has long been associated with acceptance of minority groups by dominant groups (Bobo & Licari 1989; Hello et al. 2006; Hjerm 2001). Consistent with this pattern, previous studies report positive relationships between higher educational achievement and a willingness to accept asylum seekers (Betts 2001; Pedersen et al. 2005; McKay et al. 2012). Reasons for this observed effect, however, are unclear. As Kingston, Hubbard, Lapp, Schroeder and Wilson (2003, p. 53) have argued, while education is often a major consideration in social research, it is 'generally either untheorized or only implicitly theorized'. Utilising the Wave 3 of Our Lives data means that research participants in this research represented a single age cohort with the level of, and duration of, education held constant. However, in the main

study which utilises a full sample of participants, a relationship was found between the type of school a young person attended and their attitudes towards 'boat people'. Those attending non-government (i.e. independent and Catholic) schools were less likely to support turning away boats carrying asylum seekers than young people attending government funded schools. Given the theory surrounding the benefits of cosmopolitan education in encouraging accepting attitudes, it would be interesting to investigate the extent to which cosmopolitan principles are currently being taught in Australian schools.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, although this research has proposed a model by which attitudes of acceptance can be operationalised, this model still requires further empirical 'testing'. Future research needs to be undertaken to test the validity of this model of 'cosmopolitan acceptance' and to make refinements where necessary.

Final Comments

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate how young Australians express accepting attitudes towards 'boat people', but of course there are broader international implications of this research. Australia is not the only Western nation dealing with the issue of asylum seekers attempting to cross its border. European countries, for example, are currently dealing with an exponential increase of 'boat people' and other asylum seekers. As the BBC has reported (Peter 2015), between January-May 2015 this year, 153,000 asylum seekers arrived in the EU from the Middle East and Africa. Furthermore, at least another 1,865 men, women and children have drowned this year in the Mediterranean, while scores more have been rescued. During the European summer months, those numbers have continued to rise and the EU countries at the frontline of this humanitarian crisis are now struggling to provide the resources needed to support these individuals.

Considering the scale of events currently occurring overseas, the Australian experience with asylum seekers seems to pale in comparison. From a sociological perspective, very similar reaction patterns are emerging as we observe Western nations struggling to deal with this humanitarian crisis. Some EU governments are either proposing or building physical and legal barriers to curtail the flow of migrants from entering their jurisdiction. As I put the final touches on this thesis, Hungary is finalising the construction of a 175-kilometre fence along its border with Serbia in an attempt to curb the flow of migrants using that nation as a gateway to the rest of the EU. Hungary has also put in place thousands of police as border guards and is planning to introduce laws that will imprison people who attempt to enter without permission (BBC News 2015). Social tension is also rising in many European countries and settled populations are beginning to react against asylum seekers and refugees who have moved into their communities. In Germany, for instance, there has been an increase in public hostility towards refugees and asylum seekers, with anti-asylum protests being staged in a number of German towns and cities (Hill 2015). Furthermore, as journalist Ben

Doherty (2015) observes, the anti-asylum rhetorical devices familiar in Australian politics are also being applied in Europe. A fear of asylum seekers is being promoted, the legitimacy of refugee claims are being questioned, and an 'increasingly militaristic rhetoric' is being adopted. In sum, it seems that Australia is not the only Western nation responding to asylum seekers by constructing physical, social, and symbolic boundaries to reduce its exposure and obligation towards the globally displaced. What we have learnt here might, therefore, be transferable to other Western populations.

For sociologists to fully understand how settled populations respond to pressures surrounding asylum seekers attempting to enter their borders, they require a full complement of theoretical and analytical tools to observe and empirically measure attitudes and reactions towards asylum seekers. As I highlighted in the beginning of this thesis, considerable theoretical energy is being spent on understanding how and why physical, social, and symbolic boundaries are constructed to exclude asylum seekers – yet less effort is expended on understanding how such boundaries might be deconstructed. If researchers wished to make practical suggestions for fostering an accepting culture, I would argue it is imperative they have the tools to recognise, understand and, when necessary, problematise acceptance in this context. To achieve this, greater attention must be paid to understanding those individuals who demonstrate an accepting outlook.

By listening to the accounts of my 'accepting' participants, I have been able to construct a tentative framework for empirically measuring an acceptance of asylum seekers. I would argue that people who demonstrate 'cosmopolitan acceptance' have the potential to challenge the construction and maintenance of physical, social, and symbolic boundaries against 'boat people' and other asylum seekers, both in Australia and globally. While I have now identified what acceptance in this context 'looks like', the research task is not complete. The challenge now is to test this model; identifying people who meet these 'criteria' and then exploring the factors that have helped them arrive at their position. That way we will continue to learn from those who have demonstrated a capacity to look beyond the confines of their own national borders and practice the cosmopolitan principles of responsibility, openness, compassion, and, most importantly, commitment towards those who have been displaced and are in search of a new home.

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Appendices

A. Our Lives Wave 3 2010 'Acceptance' of asylum seekers

Sex	
Male	31.2
Female	38.2
p	< .0001
Parents have a degree	
No	27.8
One parent	39.2
Both parents	52.2
p	<.0001
School	
Government	26.6
Independent	43.0
Catholic	42.3
p	<.0001
University after school	
Yes	40.8
No	20.2
p	<.0001
Religious	
Yes	39.8
No	32.1
p	<.0001
Language spoken at home	
English only	35.2
English plus other	41.5
Other	36.4
p	.25
Importance of being Australian	
Not very important	69.1
Not important	47.7
Somewhat important	46.9
Important	38.0
Very Important	23.9
p	<.0001
Part of global community	

Not very important	38.5
Not important	21.4
Somewhat important	28.1
Important	41.7
Very important	46.5
p	<.0001
Political party	
Labor	39.4
Liberal	26.7
National	11.4
Green	62.4
None	31.7
p	<.0001
Sample %	35.3

Source: Our Lives Data 2010 [means] (Laughland-Booÿ, Skrbiš & Tranter 2014).

B. Our Lives Wave 3 2010 'Boat People' item odds ratios

All boats carrying asylum seekers should (not) be turned back (odds ratios).

Model	1	2	3
Father has a degree	1.5***	1.1	1.1
Mother has a degree	1.4***	1.3*	1.2*
Women	1.4***	1.3***	1.2*
University next	2.1***	1.7***	1.7***
Independent school	1.5***	1.4**	1.5***
Catholic school	1.8***	1.7***	1.7***
No religion	1.5***	1.4***	1.2*
English + another at home	1.4*	0.8	0.8
Speak another language	1.2	0.6	0.5
Global community	-	1.5***	1.4**
Being Australian	-	0.5***	0.5***
Xenophobia (scale)	-	0.64***	0.65***
Interpersonal trust	-	1.2*	1.2
Trust people from another country	-	1.8***	1.8***
Labor ID	-	-	1.9***
Green ID	-	-	3.2***
No Party ID	-	-	1.4**
Nagelkerke R^2	.13	.47	.49
N	(2,141)	(2,135)	(2,135)

* $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$; *** $p<.001$

Source: Our Lives Data 2010 (Laughland-Booÿ, Skrbiš & Tranter 2014).

C. Ethics Consent 2012

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 20px;">

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND
Institutional Approval Form For Experiments On Humans
Including Behavioural Research

Chief Investigator: Prof Zlatko Skrbis, Prof Mark Western

Project Title: Social Futures And Life Pathways Of Young People In Queensland: Waves 2 And 3 Of Longitudinal Study (DP0878781) - 03/02/2012 - AMENDMENT

Supervisor: None

Co-Investigator(s) Ms Jacqueline Laughland-Booÿ

Department(s): School of Social Science

Project Number: 2008000347

Granting Agency/Degree: Australian Research Council Discovery Project

Duration: 31st December 2012

Comments:

Name of responsible Committee:-
Behavioural & Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee
This project complies with the provisions contained in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* and complies with the regulations governing experimentation on humans.

Name of Ethics Committee representative:-
Associate Professor John McLean
Chairperson
Behavioural & Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee

Date 14/2/2012   Signature ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇

</div>

D. Interview Schedule 2012

SOCIAL FUTURES AND LIFE PATHWAYS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN
QUEENSLAND: WAVE 3 OF LONGITUDINAL STUDY ['Our Lives']:

Understanding Young Australian's Attitudes Towards Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Boat
People

Question Guide for Semi -Structured Interviews

- How much do you know about the refugee/asylum seeker issue?
- Where do you get your information on the topic?
- Do you know the difference between asylum seekers and refugees?
- Where do refugees and asylum seekers typically come from?
- How do refugees arrive in Australia?
- Do you know how many refugees might come to Australia each year?
- How do asylum seekers arrive in Australia?
- Do you know how many asylum seekers might arrive in Australia each year?
- When we talk of illegal entry by asylum seekers what do we mean?
- What happens to asylum seekers when they arrive in Australia?
- Why do asylum seekers attempt to reach Australia by boat?
- What do you think should happen to people who arrive here by boat seeking asylum?
- What do you think would happen to them if they were sent back to their own countries?
- What are the other options for processing asylum seekers?
- What do you think should happen to boat people while their claims are being processed?
- How do you think the government is handling the issue of boat people?
- Why do refugees/asylum seekers want to live in Australia?
- How do you think Australians feel about refugees?
- How do you think most people in Australia feel about the asylum seeker issue?
- How is Australia impacted by asylum seekers?
- How do you feel about refugees and asylum seekers coming to Australia?
- Are there any potential problems associated with refugees living in Australia?
- Are there any benefits associated with refugees coming to Australia?

E. Contact Letter to Participants 2012

[UQ LOGO AND LETTERHEAD HERE]

SOCIAL FUTURES AND LIFE PATHWAYS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN QUEENSLAND: WAVE 3 OF LONGITUDINAL STUDY ['Our Lives']

Dear [Respondent's name],

In 2006, 2008 and most recently in 2010/11, you took part in the 'Our Lives' research study, which explores how young people in Queensland think about their future. On behalf of our research team at The University of Queensland, we want to thank you for supporting the project.
In addition to the most recent survey, we are interviewing selected research participants on their opinions regarding refugees and asylum seekers coming to Australia. The interviews, which last about one hour, will help us to better understand young peoples' attitudes on this issue.
The interviews are being conducted by Ms Jacqueline Laughland-Booÿ, a PhD student in the School of Social Science at The University of Queensland and an associate member on the Our Lives Research Team.

In the next two weeks, Jacqueline will telephone you at your home address to discuss with your participation in an interview. You are being contacted directly because our records indicate that you are now over 18. If this is correct, and you agree to participate, the date, time and location of the interview will be of ***your choosing.*** The interview is confidential and must therefore be conducted privately with the interviewee. However, you may arrange to have another person nearby or within visual range during the interview.

Participation in these interviews is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate in an interview, please advise us when we make telephone contact; or alternatively, send an email to Jacqueline at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ If you do consent to an interview, we will arrange for a detailed information letter and informed consent form to be mailed to you in advance. At the time of the interview we also provide a $40 JB Hi-Fi gift card or a $40 Birch Carroll Coyle voucher in consideration for your time.

If you have any questions about this research please contact Professor Zlatko Skrbis (Chief Investigator) on ▮▮▮▮▮▮ or email him at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Yours sincerely,

Professor Zlatko Skrbis,
Professor (Sociology),
The University of Queensland

F. Information Sheet for Respondents 2012

[UQ LOGO AND LETTERHEAD HERE]

INFORMATION SHEET FOR RESPONDENTS

SOCIAL FUTURES AND LIFE PATHWAYS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN QUEENSLAND: WAVE 3 OF LONGITUDINAL STUDY ['Our Lives']

Dear <respondent's name>,

In 2006, 2008, and most recently in 2010/11, you took part in the 'Our Lives' research study, which explores how young people in Queensland think about their future. On behalf of our research team here at The University of Queensland, we want to thank you for helping to make the project a great success.

You are one of the small number of respondents selected to participate in a follow-up interview to explore the attitudes of young people towards refugees and asylum seekers wishing to come to Australia.

The purpose of the follow-up interview will be to research further some of the important opinions identified in the survey component of the Our Lives project. Conducting interviews will allow us to understand these complex issues better, and at a more detailed level.

We would like to ask you to participate in this follow- up interview. Please remember that participation is voluntary. If you agree to participate, an Our Lives team member will contact you by phone to arrange a convenient place and time for the interview to be conducted. An informed consent form has been attached, please make sure you fill this out, and hand it to your interviewer on the day of the interview. The interviewer may also contact you before the interview to confirm the time and place of the interview and to let you know the likely topics of the interview. In appreciation of your time, we will provide you with a $40 JB Hi-Fi gift card or a $40 Birch Carroll Coyle voucher at the time of the interview.

Our research team is committed to ensuring the protection of your physical, social and psychological welfare. You can withdraw from participation in this research at any time without penalty. The interviews are being conducted by a trained interviewer. The interview will not include any topics that are likely to bring distress or discomfort to you and the interviewer will take the utmost precautions to not cause any distress or discomfort to you. In the highly unlikely case that this occurs, the interview will be ceased, and counselling services will be provided by the Our Lives project.

All responses given by interview participants will be treated in the strictest confidence and will not be linked to ANY government agencies.

This study has been cleared by one of the human ethics committees of The University of Queensland in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's guidelines. You are of course free to discuss your participation in this study with project staff (contact details below). If you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study, you may contact the Ethics Officer on ███████
If you have any questions about this research please contact the Chief Investigator, Professor Zlatko Skrbis on ████████ or email him at ███████████
Alternatively you can get in touch with the research team through the following email: ███████████

Yours sincerely,

Professor Zlatko Skrbis, School of Social Science,
The University of Queensland

G. Consent Form 2012

INFORMED CONSENT FORM
FOR RESPONDENTS

SOCIAL FUTURES AND LIFE PATHWAYS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN QUEENSLAND: WAVE 3 OF LONGITUDINAL STUDY ['Our Lives']

I, _____ give my informed consent to participate in an Our Lives interview. I have read and understood the attached 'Information Sheet for Respondents'. I have contacted the Our Lives team and/or the University of Queensland Ethics Officer, in the case that I had further questions or concerns.

Signature_____

Name (please print) _____

Date_____

Please hand this form to the interviewer on the day of your interview, *before* the interview takes place.

THANK YOU

H. Ethics Consent 2013

MONASH University

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Research Office

Human Ethics Certificate of Approval

Date:	28 May 2013
Project Number:	CF13/1552 – 2013000805
Project Title:	Social Futures and Life Pathways of Young People in Queensland: Waves 4 and 5 of a Longitudinal Study
Chief Investigator:	Prof Zlatko Skrbis
Approved:	From: 28 May 2013 To: 28 May 2018

Terms of approval

1. The Chief investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained, if relevant, and a copy forwarded to MUHREC before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation. **Failure to provide permission letters to MUHREC before data collection commences is in breach of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research**.
2. Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
3. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by MUHREC.
4. You should notify MUHREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must contain your project number.
6. **Amendments to the approved project (including changes in personnel):** Requires the submission of a Request for Amendment form to MUHREC and must not begin without written approval from MUHREC. Substantial variations may require a new application.
7. **Future correspondence:** Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence.
8. **Annual reports:** Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. This is determined by the date of your letter of approval.
9. **Final report:** A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. MUHREC should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
10. **Monitoring:** Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by MUHREC at any time.
11. **Retention and storage of data:** The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.

Professor Ben Canny
Chair, MUHREC

cc: Assoc Prof Bruce Tranter, Prof Clive Bean, Mr Jonathan Smith, Mrs Jacqueline Laughland-Booy

Postal – Monash University, Vic 3800, Australia
Building 3E, Room 111, Clayton Campus, Wellington Road, Clayton
Telephone   Facsimile
Email   www.monash.edu/research/ethics/human/index/html
ABN 12 377 614 012 CRICOS Provider #00008C

I. Interview Schedule 2013

Interview Schedule-Politics 2013

Opening Questions
- How interested in politics are you?
  To what extent do you follow political issues in the news or online?

<Do they have a sense of how they will vote?>

<Do they feel closer to any particular party, and if so, why is that, what is it about the party that they are attracted to?>

< Do they feel close to any party/intend to vote for any party? Reasons? >

< Gauge level of interest/level of knowledge>

<Who will they be voting for?>

Influences upon Voting
- What will influence/has influenced how you will vote at the next federal election?

< This may go in a number of directions e.g. the leaders, parties, or political issues that are the most important influences>

< After covering the key influencing factors discuss other factors>

Political Issues

- What sort of political issues do you feel strongly about?
  < Discuss>
  < Will these issues influence their vote? >

Asylum seekers and Border Protection
- What do you think about people who come into Australia by boat?
- (Then probe, depending upon their response, whether they refer to 'asylum seekers', 'boat people', etc. If they don't engage with it, you could ask the question directly:

- Should asylum seekers who arrive by boat be turned away from Australia?

<Discuss>

You might move the following 'issues' questions to appear after you have asked about the leaders, as they may prove even more divisive than issues around leadership.

Gay Marriage
- Should Australia legalise gay marriage?
  <Discuss reasons >

Other Issues
- Mining Tax
- Carbon Tax
- Other Issues

Structural Influences
- Who or what tends to influence your decision on voting?
  < They may say no-one so may have to do a bit of digging>
- Parents and Parental Voting

- Friends
- Media
- Others

Leaders
- How do you feel about the current leaders in federal politics?
  (Note, do they name them without prompting, don't volunteer leaders' names before they have answered)?

What do you like and dislike about (named) leader/s?
<Probes if necessary: Are they trustworthy, strong leaders, intelligent, inspiring? The opposite? >
How do you feel about women in leadership roles?
(Depending upon what they say, you could follow-up…)
How about in women as leaders in politics?
< The Gillard/Rudd issue will probably crop up here> (If not, could specifically ask about Gillard and Rudd)
Why do you think Julia Gillard was replaced as PM?
Who is the better leader Rudd or Abbott?
(probe if reasons not provided)

Republic
Should Australia have an Australian citizen as our head of state?
(Should we replace the Queen with our own president?)
(Probe for reasons if not volunteered)

Identity and Citizenship
So what does it mean to you to be an Australian?
Citizenship-Who is a good citizen?
What sorts of qualities, etc.?
Rights of citizenship; Responsibilities of citizenship)
Is there an Australian Identity?
Do certain qualities set Australians aside as different to others?
Challenges to Identity-
- Have any political issues challenged your own sense of identity as an Australian?
Are certain things 'un-Australian'?

J. Contact Letter to Participants 2013

OUR LIVES

Social Futures and Life Pathways
of Young People in Queensland:
A Longitudinal Project

OUR LIVES PROJECT - WAVE 4
TAKE PART IN AN INTERVIEW AND RECEIVE A $30 JB HI FI GIFT CARD

Dear **<first name>,**

You are one of a small number of Our Lives respondents randomly selected to participate in a qualitative interview exploring young people's attitudes about major social, political and environmental issues facing Australia**.** The purpose of the interview will be to research further important questions about these topics included in the recent Wave 4 survey component of the Our Lives Project. Conducting interviews will allow us to understand these complex issues better, and at a more detailed level.

The interviews will be undertaken face-to-face and can be expected to last about one hour. Interviews are being conducted by Jackie Laughland-Booy, who is a doctoral student in the School of Political and Social Inquiry at Monash University and experienced member of the Our Lives Research Team (see details attached).
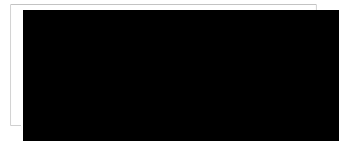
In the next two weeks, Jackie will contact you by phone to discuss your possible participation in an interview. If you agree to participate, Jackie will negotiate a suitable date, time and location for the interview with you. The interview itself is confidential and therefore needs to be conducted with you one-on-one.

Participation in these interviews is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate in an interview, please advise us when we make telephone contact; or alternatively, please call Jackie on ███████ ███   or send her an email at ███████████████████████████ If you do consent to an interview, we will arrange for a detailed information letter and informed consent form to be mailed to you in advance.

In appreciation of your time, we will provide you with a $30 JB Hi Fi gift card at the time of the interview.

If you have any questions about the research, please contact the Our Lives Project on ████████ or email at ██████████████ For any privacy and confidentiality concerns, please contact the Executive Officer, Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) on ███████ ██████

Yours sincerely

Professor Zlatko Skrbis
Monash University

DETAILS OF INTERVIEWER

Jacqueline Laughland-Booy is a PhD candidate in the School of Political and Social Inquiry at Monash University. She has completed a Bachelor of Arts in Behavioural Studies and Sociology and a Bachelor of Social Science (Honours I). Her PhD thesis explores the attitudes of young Queenslanders towards asylum seekers. Jacqueline has also been involved in the Our Lives Project as a research assistant and qualitative interviewer.

K. Information to Respondents 2013

OUR LIVES

**Social Futures and Life Pathways
of Young People in Queensland:
A Longitudinal Project**

OUR LIVES PROJECT - WAVE 4 - QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW

Dear **<first name>**

Thank you for your interest in undertaking an interview for the Our Lives Research Project.

We confirm that the interview is scheduled to take place on **<insert time and date here>.** The interview will be held at **<insert location here>,** and will be conducted by <interviewer name >. The purpose of the interview will be to further research important social and political issues identified in the survey component of the Our Lives project.

Please read the Explanatory Statement accompanying this letter for further information about the interview. If you agree to participate, please complete the attached consent form and hand this to Jackie before the interview begins. If you have any questions about the consent form, feel free to contact Jackie on ███████████ or email her at ███████████████████████ prior to the interview. Alternatively, you may contact the project team using the details listed at the end of this letter.

The interview is confidential and must therefore be conducted one-on-one with the interviewee. All responses given by interview participants will be treated in the strictest confidence and will not be linked to ANY government agencies. Pseudonyms will be used to preserve anonymity if any responses are included in publications.

In appreciation of your time, we will provide you with a $30 JB Hi Fi Gift Card at the time of the interview.

If you have any questions about the research, please contact the Our Lives Project on ██████████ or email at ███████████████ For any privacy and confidentiality concerns, please contact the Executive Officer, Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) on 0███████ ████

Yours sincerely

███████████████

**Professor Zlatko Skrbiš
Monash University**

L. Explanatory Statement 2013

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT
Our Lives Wave 4 Interview Participants

Project: Social Futures and Life Pathways of Young People in Queensland: Waves 4 and 5 of a Longitudinal Study

Prof. Zlatko Skrbis   Mrs Jacqueline Laughland-Booy
Monash University   Monash University

███████████████ ████   █████ ████████████████████

You are invited to take part in this study. Please read this Explanatory Statement before deciding whether to participate in this research. If you would like further information regarding any aspect of this project, please contact the researchers via the phone number or email address listed above.

What does the research involve?

This research is being conducted for the Social Futures and Life Pathways ("Our Lives") Project, which is an ongoing study of young people who began high school in Queensland in 2006. The study aims to better understand how global change and uncertainty is impacting on young people's emerging attitudes, behaviours, and life pathways over time. In these interviews we are examining in greater detail young people's attitudes towards major social, political, and environmental issues facing Australia.

This project was previously located at The University of Queensland, and as of 2013 has relocated to Monash University. It is being carried out by researchers at Monash University, in conjunction with the University of Tasmania and the Queensland University of Technology. This interview will be conducted by an Our Lives team member who is trained and experienced in qualitative interviewing. It will be a face-to-face interview lasting approximately 45-60 minutes and your responses will be treated as confidential. To assist with transcription, audio of the interview will be recorded.

Why were you chosen for this research?

You have been chosen for this research because you took part in the first phase (Wave 1) of the Our Lives study in 2006. At that time, you and your parent/guardian agreed to be contacted regarding your involvement in future research using contact information you provided to us. You may also have undertaken the survey during Wave 2 in 2008, or Wave 3 in 2010.

Source of funding

This research is funded by the Australian Research Council through its Discovery Project scheme (DP130101490).

Consenting to participate in the project and withdrawing from the research

If you would like to participate in this interview, complete the attached consent form and hand it to the interviewer at the time of the interview. However, if you decide you do not wish to be

interviewed please notify the interviewer before the time of the interview, either by phone ███████ ███ or email ████████████████████████████████
This research adheres to the strict standards of the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC). Our research team is committed to ensuring your physical, social and psychological welfare. Participants can withdraw from involvement in this research at any time without penalty. The interview will not include any topics that are likely to bring distress or discomfort to you and the interviewer will take upmost precautions during the interview process. In the highly unlikely case that this occurs, the interview will be ceased, and access to debriefing and counselling services will be provided by the Our Lives Project team.

Possible benefits and risks to participants

By participating in this study, you will be making a valuable contribution to research which has been recognised by the Australian Research Council as having significant national benefits. The aims of this study align with several key national research priorities by examining how young people's developing attitudes, behaviours and plans are shaping their employment, education, and social outcomes. Your participation in this project remains completely voluntary. The interview does not contain any particularly sensitive questions and there are no foreseeable risks involved in taking part in this research.

Confidentiality

Please be assured that all information collected in this research will treated as confidential. Once collected, interview transcripts and audio recordings will be assigned a unique pseudonym to preserve your identity in all subsequent stages of the research process. This includes any publications arising from this research. No responses you give will be linked to ANY government or commercial agencies.

Storage of data

All data collected during this research is stored securely in accordance with Monash University regulations. The interview audio and transcripts will be stored securely on Monash University servers with access permitted only with the approval of the Principal Chief Investigator.

Results

Results from this research will be routinely made available on the Our Lives website at **http://artsonline.monash.edu.au/ourlives.** Participants may request to view interview transcripts at a later stage.

Incentive for participation

As an incentive for participation in this research, all those who undertake an interview will be provided a gift card to the value of $30 at the time of the interview.

Complaints

Should you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the Executive Officer, Monash University Human Research Ethics (MUHREC):

Executive   Officer
Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Room   111,   Building   3e
Research   Office
Monash University VIC 3800
███████████████ █████ ███████████████ Fax: +61 3 9905 3831

Thank you,

███████████████

Professor Zlatko Skrbiš

M. Consent Form 2013

CONSENT FORM

Our Lives Wave 4 Interview Participants

Social Futures and Life Pathways of Young People in Queensland: Waves 4 and 5 of a Longitudinal Study
Chief Investigator: Professor Zlatko Skrbiš

I have been asked to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I understand that participation in this research is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time without penalty. I have read and understood the Explanatory Statement and I hereby consent to participate in this project.

I consent to the following:	Yes	No
Taking part in a face-to-face interview	☐	☐
Audio recording during the interview	☐	☐
	☐	☐
	☐	☐
	☐	☐
	☐	☐

Name of Participant

Participant Signature

N. Published Paper

Toleration or trust? Investigating the acceptance of 'boat people' among young Australians

Jacqueline Laughland-Booÿ, Zlatko Skrbiš and Bruce Tranter

Abstract

There has been intense debate in Australia regarding how asylum seekers who arrive by boat should be treated. Some call for compassion towards those prepared to risk their lives to seek protection, whereas others believe 'boat people' should not be allowed into the country. This article uses data from a large representative sample of young people in Queensland, Australia, to understand the acceptance of asylum seekers by young people in Australia. The findings suggest that young Australians are more accepting than the Australian adult population. Several social and political background factors were also found to be associated with the belief that 'boat people' should be permitted into Australia. Fewer factors, however, are associated with the trust young Australians have in people from another country. This suggests that while some young Australians may believe boats carrying asylum seekers should not be turned away, fewer might be prepared to enter into trusting relationships with 'boat people' should they resettle in Australia.

Keywords: acceptance; toleration; trust; asylum seekers; young people

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Introduction

In Australia, the issue of asylum seekers arriving in the country by boat is a politically contentious topic. Since the first boat containing asylum seekers arrived in 1976, Australians have questioned their responsibilities towards those who arrive uninvited onto Australian shores (Betts 2001). As a signatory to the *1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* and its associated *1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees* (UNHCR 2010), Australia is expected to offer assistance towards those who cross its borders and subsequently request asylum (Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2012). However, asylum seekers, particularly those who travel towards Australia by boat, are often constructed in Australian public discourse as people who are not welcome. Consequently, many Australians believe these individuals should be prevented from reaching their country (Pedersen et al. 2006; Louis et al. 2007; McKay et al. 2011; McKay et al. 2012; Markus 2013). Public concerns surrounding the 'boat people' issue have resulted in the Australian government imposing strict measures against those who try to enter the country as unexpected arrivals (McAllister & Pietsch 2011).[1] As successive governments introduce increasingly harsher policies to prevent asylum seekers from reaching Australia by boat, debate continues over how Australia should fulfill its obligations towards humanitarian entrants. Many Australians believe exclusionary policies are necessary for the protection of Australia's sovereignty, whereas others argue that policies intended to prevent boats carrying asylum seekers from entering Australian territory disregard the country's human rights responsibilities (e.g., Australian Human Rights Commission 2013).

In this paper, we draw on data collected from a large representative sample of young people in Queensland, in order to investigate the attitudes of young Australians towards boat people. Although much research has been undertaken into the attitudes of adult Australians towards asylum seekers (e.g., Pedersen et al. 2005; Louis et al. 2007; McKay et al. 2012), less is known of the views of younger Australians. We believe it is important to document whether the attitudes of young Australians are similar to, or different from, adult Australians. We also shift our theoretical focus towards understanding mechanisms of acceptance of 'boat people'. While several studies using adult samples suggest some Australians are more accepting of asylum seekers than others (e.g., Hartley & Pedersen 2007; McAllister & Pietsch 2011; McKay et al. 2012; Markus 2013), we do not fully understand what motivates accepting views. Here we use the concepts of toleration and trust to improve our undertanding of how young Australians accept asylum seekers who have attempted to enter Australia by boat.

Before proceeding we wish to clarify the use of key terms in this article. First, considerable ambiguity often surrounds the categorisation of people who are seeking asylum in Australia (O'Doherty & Lecouteur 2007). When discussing asylum seekers who attempt to reach Australia by boat, we use the terms 'boat people' or 'unexpected arrivals'. When referring more broadly to people seeking

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humanitarian refuge, we apply the term 'asylum seekers'. Second, although the category of 'young people' can be quite broad, in this article we are referring to individuals who are aged in their mid to late teens.

When describing how people receive others, toleration is defined as a *practice of active acceptance*, undertaken despite feelings of disapproval towards others (Cohen 2004; Edyvane & Matravers 2011; Horton 2011). The motivation for toleration is based on the belief that, regardless of personal unease, there is greater value in accepting than rejecting (Cohen 2004). However, while toleration is a first step, it may not be sufficient for ensuring integration within a diverse society (Putnam 2007). Integration requires trust: an act of acceptance whereby both parties are equally invested and there is an expectation that all will benefit from the relationship (Hardin 2002; Uslaner 2011). We argue there are different modes of acceptance that must be acknowledged when examining acceptance of asylum seekers by a settled population. To this end, we propose a framework of acceptance that incorporates the concepts of toleration and trust. This will help to distinguish between those young people who are willing merely to accede to the circumstance of unexpected arrivals to Australia, and those who are prepared to engage with them from a position of trust.

Theorising acceptance

In 1954, Allport observed that phenomena of rejection (e.g., prejudice) were often the primary focus of social scientists. Contemporary researchers still tend to place greater emphasis on explaining why minority groups are excluded, rather than why they are included (Pittinsky & Montoya 2009). We address this by drawing on two constructs of acceptance of a minority group by a dominant group: toleration and trust. Both concepts describe an act of acceptance; however, as described below, they have quite discreet meanings.

Toleration

Toleration is often promoted as an act of acceptance that prevents conflict between groups that do not share the same views (Vollhardt et al. 2009). As such, the concept has appeal in the management of relationships between settled populations and migrant groups. The literature, however, reflects a degree of ambiguity regarding the meaning of the term toleration. First, there is ongoing discussion about how the concept should be applied. For some, toleration carries positive connotations of openness and recognition, whereas for others it expresses grudging endurance (Galeotti 2002; Cohen 2004). Consequently, there is debate over how toleration should be understood theoretically and how it may be recognised, measured and applied. Galeotti (2002) for example, believes the meaning of the term has consequences for the value of the act itself. She argues that toleration must evolve more positive connotations if people are to consider it a desirable quality. Galeotti (2002) also claims that for toleration to retain relevance it should imply an acceptance of others, and be void of disapproval and dislike. Others support the retention of what Edyvane and Matravers (2011, 282) refer to as a 'no-frills' application of the concept, arguing

that to complicate the meaning further would see it fall into obscurity. From this perspective, toleration is viewed as a minimal act of acceptance: where people elect to put up with others despite having reasons not to (Cohen 2004; Horton 2011; Balint 2013). This approach acknowledges situations in which there is dislike and disapproval, but where people still choose to accept. Determining whether such an act is desirable occurs via analysis of costs and benefits rather than manipulation of the meaning of the concept. To this end, we subscribe to the latter definition of the term toleration and its associated theoretical frameworks. Furthermore, ambiguity also surrounds the use of the words 'toleration' and 'tolerance'. For the purpose of clarity, Cohen (2004) suggests the term 'toleration' be used to describe an action or behaviour, reserving the term 'tolerance' to describe an attitude based upon the value of accepting others – one that some claim to be a moral virtue. Whilst acknowledging that the terms are often used interchangeably in the literature, we will employ the term 'toleration' throughout the paper.

'Toleration' is defined as an act of acceptance of others that is undertaken despite disapproval of the presence or actions of those individuals. People accept others different from themselves because they believe the consequences of non-acceptance are less desirable than the consequences of acceptance. This occurs even though they believe they have the prerogative to reject. Cohen (2004, 69), for example, defines toleration as: 'an agent's intentional and principled refraining from interfering with an opposed other (or their behaviour, etc.) in situations of diversity, where the agent believes she has the power to interfere'. Similarly, for Horton (2011, 290) toleration is 'a deliberate exercise of self-restraint, a willed refusal to interfere coercively with what is regarded as the objectionable behaviour of others'. More recently, Balint (2013, 1) has described the concept as involving three elements: '(a) objecting to something; (b) the power (including both opportunity and willingness) to negatively interfere with the thing or its holder and (c) intentionally not negatively interfering with this thing or its holder'. Such definitions are salient when seeking to identify and describe acts of acceptance exercised by a settled population towards a minority. Toleration describes situations where the dominant group accepts, despite disapproving of the actions of the minority group and believing they can stop them.

Whilst toleration may prevent conflict between groups (Edyvane & Matravers 2011; Horton 2011), it is not the optimal solution to achieving social integration. Firstly, toleration is a relationship built on power relationships and is an act undertaken by those who believe they have the choice to accept or reject (Cohen 2004; Balint 2013). It is also contingent on the presence of disapproval (Horton 2011). So, although toleration is a foundation on which relationships can be built, by its very nature it is capricious and generally leads to weak relationships. When talking of the acceptance of asylum seekers by a dominant population, we believe such a mode of acceptance makes conditions for asylum seekers decidedly precarious. As Putnam (2007) observes, toleration of others is the beginning, but it is not sufficient for building an integrated society. The latter requires a practice of acceptance by the settled population, where those who are more dominant do not impose conditions upon the minority.

Trust

Broadly speaking, trust is an act of mutual acceptance whereby both parties are active participants in the relationship (Sztompka 1999). It is, as Hardin (2002, 1) describes, 'encapsulated interest' by which both parties are mutually invested and both stand to benefit from the relationship if it is successful. However, while members of a settled population may be willing to tolerate people from other groups, they may not be willing to trust them. As Uslaner (2011, 225) observes, trust 'is based upon the notion of a shared fate and accepting people of different backgrounds as part of our moral community'. Trust serves a crucial function within a society. It enables communication and cooperation, and is important for building strong communities (Fukuyama 1995; Sztompka 1999; Uslaner 2002; Nooteboom 2011). Scholars who subscribe to a social capital framework have argued that trust is fundamental in the development and maintenance of strong social networks. Coleman (1988), for example, believes social capital is built through relationship networks in which individuals depend on others and, in turn, will act in the interests of others. Similarly, Putnam (2000, 19) argues that social capital is created by, 'social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them' and is sustained through acts of mutual interest or civic engagement within these networks.

Not only is it advantageous to be engaged in networks with those who are similar, but also with those who are different. Granovetter (1983) writes of the benefits of 'weak ties': relationships with people from groups outside one's primary network. Such connections offer access to resources and people who one might not ordinarily associate with. The concept of 'bridging' (weak tie relationships) versus 'bonding' (strong tie relationships) has been further developed by Putnam (2000). He believes that 'bridging' social capital (i.e., maintaining trusting relationships with those outside one's normal social circles), expands outlooks and facilitates the progression of ideas and perspectives, contributing to social integration (Putnam 2007).

Just as we argue that acceptance manifests in various ways, so too does trust (Uslaner 2002; Newton & Zmerli 2011). The type of trust we extend towards those we know and with whom we have had positive dealings is not necessarily the same as the type of trust we may extend toward those we have not met (Uslaner 2002). While *particularised* trust is developed through intimate knowledge of others we know, *generalised* trust is extended towards others who are not known personally to us. Generalised trust implies others are dependable on the basis of a conviction that most people are generally *trustworthy* and do not deserve suspicion (Fukuyama 1995; Putnam 2000; Uslaner 2002, 2011). However, while generalised trust may be extended to those who are not familiar to us, this does not mean that such trust will be extended to all. As Nannestead (2008, 417) points out, 'nobody trusts everybody' and this will depend upon people's perceptions of who truly belongs to their 'moral community' and who does not. We suggest that in order for Australians more readily to accept 'boat people' and other asylum seekers into their society, there must be potential to

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build trusting relationships. Whilst toleration is a good first step, it is important to know if Australians who are accepting of asylum seekers might also be inclined to trust these individuals.

The attitudes of Australians towards asylum seekers and 'boat people'

Previous studies of Australians' attitudes towards asylum seekers, in particular 'boat people', show clear divisions of public opinion on this issue. For more than a decade the *Australian Election Study* (AES) has included questions on asylum seekers coming to Australia by boat. Immediately following the events of the *Tampa* 'crisis' (O' Doherty & Augoustinos 2008) and 11 September 2001, more than 62 per cent of respondents agreed with the statement, 'All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back'. By 2010, the percentage had decreased, but still remained over 50 per cent (McAllister & Pietsch 2011).

The attitudes of Australians towards 'boat people' have also been investigated by the *Scanlon Foundation Surveys*, which measure core indicators of social cohesion within Australia (Markus 2013). In the most recent survey, Marcus (2013) reports that 33 per cent of Australians believe boats carrying asylum seekers should be immediately turned around, and another 13 per cent support the suggestion that boat people should be detained and deported. While 49 per cent of respondents in the Scanlon study said boat people should be accepted into Australia, only 18 per cent agree that the arrangement should be permanent. Compared with previous surveys, Markus (2013) notes an increase in negative attitudes among Australians, with those most likely to reject unexpected arrivals being Coalition (Liberal/National) supporters, those aged 55 to 64, the less educated, people living in regional areas, and those who are experiencing economic hardship (Markus 2013, 41).

Several reasons are offered as to why some Australians feel hostile towards asylum seekers. In many Western nations, politicians and the media often frame asylum seekers as presenting a threat to settled populations. As Castles and Miller (2003, 102–3) put it, when referring to refugees and asylum seekers, 'sensationalist journalists and right wing politicians map out dire consequences, such as rocketing crime rates, fundamentalist terrorism, collapsing welfare systems and mass unemployment'. Such constructions induce anxieties among citizens who fear they will be disadvantaged by adopting an accepting and benevolent stance. Similarly, in Australia, politicians and the media have often been accused of inciting public fear of asylum seekers (e.g., Klocker & Dunn 2003). Through public constructions that frame asylum seekers as being untrustworthy and at times dangerous, many Australians fear that asylum seekers pose a legitimate threat to their country. For example, there are concerns that asylum seekers may be terrorists (McDonald 2011; McKay et al. 2011) or, that they will threaten the Australian way of life because of irreconcilable cultural differences (Every & Augoustinos 2008). Many question the legality of the actions of asylum seekers who come to Australia by boat and the legitimacy of their claims for refugee status (McDonald 2011). They are frequently framed as 'illegal immigrants' who have attempted to enter Australia without

permission, and accused of 'jumping the queue' ahead of others who have applied for refugee status overseas and have waited to be granted an Australian visa (Schweitzer et al. 2005; Hartley & Pedersen 2007). Unexpected arrivals are also often accused of placing an unreasonable burden upon Australia by taking resources from Australians who are seen as being more deserving (Pedersen et al. 2005; Pickering 2008).

Researchers have applied numerous theoretical frameworks to explain the negative attitudes of some Australians towards asylum seekers. Pedersen et al. (2006), for example, have demonstrated how 'false beliefs' (e.g., factually incorrect beliefs about asylum seekers) are associated with negative public attitudes. Louis and associates (2007) have further suggested intergroup processes related to social identity can lead to the endorsement of exclusionary behaviours. Taking another perspective, Pietsch and Marotta (2009) have drawn on the classic sociological concept of 'the stranger' to explain exclusionary beliefs. Studies such as these have all provided important theoretical insight into why Australians might exhibit exclusionary attitudes. Yet, while a number of studies have focussed upon identifying mechanisms of exclusion that are active within the Australian settled population, fewer have considered mechanisms of acceptance. At the theoretical level, there are different types of acceptance. There are constructs that describe instances of conditional acceptance and others that describe a more unqualified relationship between the person who is accepting and the person being accepted. At the empirical level, however, studies measuring acceptance have tended to view the concept as being more absolute in nature. In this study, we start to explore empirically the spectrum of acceptance and apply a methodological approach that considers not only *if* members of the Australian settled population are accepting, but also *how* they are accepting.

Past research has identified certain demographic characteristics that are associated with Australians who are supportive of asylum seekers. Women are more accepting than men (McKay et al. 2012; Markus 2013), as are people with left-wing political orientations (Pedersen et al. 2005; Hartley & Pedersen 2007; Markus 2013). In addition educational levels tend to moderate attitudes towards asylum seekers (Pedersen et al. 2005; McKay et al. 2012; Markus 2013). Nevertheless, a theoretical framework that better describes this acceptance is largely absent in the literature.

Little is also known about how young Australians are responding to this issue. Previous studies have tended to draw the data from adult Australians (e.g., Louis et al. 2007; McKay et al. 2012) and, while it has been noted that younger people may be generally more sympathetic towards asylum seekers, few studies have specifically examined the views of young Australians on this issue. Where they have (e.g., Nickerson & Louis 2008), the sample has been restricted (e.g., a university population), and not drawn from a representative sample of young people.

Researching the opinions of young people on this issue is important. Young people act as a gauge for measuring societal change (Mokwena 2001). They are, as Mokwena (2001, 29) argues, 'barometers through which we can measure the level of social cohesion, democratization or lack thereof'. Australia's

young people were raised in the shadow of the events of 11 September 2001 and the 2002 Bali bombings. During their formative years they were exposed to a socio-political environment where they were cautioned by government and media to be suspicious and vigilant. For more than a decade, media reports on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and stories of the purported invasion of asylum seekers attempting unlawfully to reach Australia have been commonplace. Consequently, it would be difficult to sustain an argument that these young Australians have not, in some way, been exposed to these messages. Given the socio-political backdrop of their formative years, it is important to investigate how younger Australians are responding to unexpected arrivals.

The aim of this study is to investigate the attitudes of young Australians towards people who come to Australia by boat to request asylum. We also compare the views of younger Australians with their Australian adult counterparts. Moreover, we believe it is important to explore the nature of this acceptance more rigorously. In this study, we therefore focus on the following research questions:

1. How willing are young Australians to accept 'boat people' into Australia, and are they more or less accepting than older Australians?

2. What social and political factors are associated with acceptance of 'boat people' by young Australians?

3. Are the social and political factors associated with acceptance of 'boat people' also associated with trust in people from other countries?

Data and methods

The data analysed here derives from the 'Social Futures and Life Pathways' project. Also known as the *Our Lives* study, this longitudinal study follows the social orientations of a single age cohort of young people from Queensland, Australia.[2] Commencing in 2006, *Our Lives* surveys have been carried out every 2–3 years. The 2006 baseline survey collected data on 7,031 young people aged 12–13 years old who were recruited from 213 government-funded, independent and Catholic schools across Queensland. A further 71 schools were approached, but declined to be involved in the project. The final sample of schools was representative of Queensland schools by geographic region, although there was an over-representation of female students and students from independent schools. This bias was corrected with post-stratification weighting in the univariate and bivariate responses and is further explained below.

The third wave of this project was undertaken in 2010, when the cohort was 16–17 years old and in their final year of secondary education. The Wave 3 survey included items on participants' attitudes, orientations and behaviours as well as questions on demographic background. Participants were contacted directly and the survey was conducted using online and hardcopy formats. The Wave 3 survey was administered in two versions. A full version of the survey was sent to participants who completed previous waves of the survey, with a condensed version sent to those from the baseline group who had not

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participated since Wave 1. There were 2,378 responses to the full version, and 761 responses to the shorter version of the survey. Wave 3 was the first time the *Our Lives* survey included a question relating to the participants' views towards 'boat people', which appeared in the full version of the survey instrument. This was the AES item: 'All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back'.

Our focus on the acceptance of 'boat people' by young Australians was initially informed by discussions on how accepting the Australian adult population is of these arrivals at the national level. Given that data from AES and *Our Lives* were being collected at the time, the inclusion of this AES item into the *Our Lives* survey enabled an excellent opportunity for making a direct comparison between an adult Australian sample and a sample of younger Australians. The data from this item can also be applied to understanding the nature of acceptance towards 'boat people'. As has been explained, toleration involves a deliberate decision not to prevent another from engaging in an action that is objectionable, despite the first party believing they have the power to do so. Toleration towards asylum seekers coming to Australia might then be demonstrated through expressing the belief that boats carrying asylum seekers should not be turned away, despite there being objection to the practice of asylum seekers coming to Australia by boat, and believing that Australia has the power to prevent them from doing so. Participants who indicate disagreement with the item 'All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back', are at the very least prepared to tolerate 'boat people'. However, some participants may be expressing a type of acceptance that does not involve objection, power, or deliberate restraint. We therefore investigate if any factors that predict acceptance of 'boat people' also predict a broader orientation towards trusting people who are from another country.

Two dependent variables are analysed. The first variable measures acceptance of asylum seekers who arrive in Australia by boat. Like the AES study, our participants were asked to respond to the statement: 'All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back', (responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale: strongly agree to strongly disagree). We model agreement and disagreement with the statement to measure acceptance. The second variable is a measure of trust in foreign others, derived from the question: 'How much trust do you have in people from another country?' (responses: a great deal of trust; quite a lot of trust; not very much trust; none at all).

Dummy (binary) variables were constructed to examine parental education, respondent sex, school type (government, independent and Catholic), respondent university intentions, political party identification, the importance of belonging to a global community, and the importance of being an Australian. A composite independent variable measures xenophobic attitudes (Hjerm 2001). This was constructed by combining the responses to the following:

> There are different opinions about the effects that immigrants have on Australia. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?: 1. Immigrants increase the crime rate; 2. Immigrants are generally good for Australia's

economy; 3. Immigrants take jobs away from people who are born in Australia; 4. Immigrants make Australia more open to new ideas and cultures.

The composite scale resulting from these four statements is reliable, with a Cronbach's Alpha of .76 (items 2 and 4 are reverse scored).

In the section that follows, Figure 1 shows the comparison of young peoples' responses to the 'boat people' statement with adult responses from the 2010 *Australian Election Study* (McAllister & Pietsch 2011). We weight the univariate responses that appear in Figure 1 and the bivariate (crosstabs) responses in Table 2. Other data presented here are not weighted. Unweighted regression estimates are preferable because they are 'unbiased, consistent, and have smaller standard errors' when the sampling weights applied are 'a function of independent variables included in the model' (Winship & Radbill 1994, 230), as they are in this instance.

The bivariate associations between the two dependent variables and various independent variables are examined in Table 1. Cross tabulations are presented with higher percentages representing more accepting attitudes towards 'boat people' and greater trust in people from other countries respectively. Probability values based upon chi-squared tests are presented to estimate the probability that the sample results hold in the population of Queensland's young people rather than only in our sample. Based upon binary logistic regression analysis (Agresti & Finlay 1997), associations between several independent variables and the two dependent variables are then presented in multivariate tables (Tables 2 and 3). The results presented are odds ratios in which asterisks denote the level of statistical significance. In Table 2, we examine the social and political background of the 'acceptance of boat people'dependent variable, and in Table 3 we examine the 'trust' dependent variable. Three models are presented in each table. Model 1 introduces social background variables to the regression equation; Model 2 adds several attitudinal variables; and Model 3 includes political party identification. As we argue that acceptance of 'boat people' may or may not be related to trust, we also include the trust measure in Table 3, Model 2, as an independent variable. This allows us to examine the extent to which trust in people from other countries shapes attitudes towards 'boat people' (see Appendix Table A for descriptive statistics on all variables).

Results

How accepting of 'boat people' are young Australians?

When measuring acceptance of 'boat people', the data from the *Our Lives* study display a fairly even distribution of opinion. Our findings suggest that 33 per cent of participants are accepting, in that they either strongly disagree or disagree that boats carrying asylum seekers towards Australia should be turned away. Another 36 per cent agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, and 31 per cent were ambivalent on the issue.[3]

By comparison, the 2010 AES (McAllister & Pietsch 2011) suggests Australian adults are less accommodating. Fifty one per cent of Australian adults supported the statement that the boats should be turned away, 20 per cent reported that they neither agreed or disagreed with the statement, and 29 per cent indicated they were accepting. The most notable difference between these two samples, therefore, is that while there is a spread of opinion in the sample of young people, the adult sample is skewed towards the rejection of boat people (Figure 1).

Figure 1: 'All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back' (per cent)
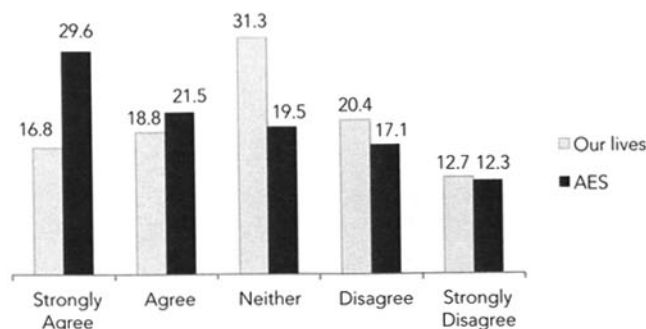
Sources: Our Lives 2010 (weighted); Australian Election Study 2010 (McAllister & Pietsch 2011).

Bivariate results

The bivariate results in Table 1 indicate that 33 per cent of the students sampled either disagree or strongly disagree that all boat people should be turned back, while 52 per cent have either a great deal or quite a lot of trust in people from other countries. With the exception of the association between sex and 'acceptance' (χ^2 p < .014) as well as sex and 'trust' (χ^2 p < .501), all of the results presented in Table 1 are highly statistically significant (χ^2 p < .0001). The cross-tabulations indicate that young women (36 per cent) are more accepting of 'boat people' than are young men (31 per cent). Parental education plays a role here, with the children of tertiary educated parents far more accepting of unexpected arrivals and trusting of people from other countries than the non-tertiary educated. Students who attend independent (41 per cent) and Catholic schools (40 per cent) are also far more accepting than government school students (28 per cent). Educational aspirations also have a strong influence, with those who intend to study at university after leaving school far more likely to exhibit favourable attitudes towards 'boat people' and more likely to trust people from other countries. Young people who see themselves as belonging to the 'global community' are more accepting of 'boat people' and trusting of foreign others, but those who believe in the importance of 'being Australian', exhibit opposite tendencies.

Political party affiliation is a very strong indicator here. Greens party identifiers are most likely to adopt a more accepting stance (60 per cent) towards 'boat people', compared to Liberal supporters (25 per cent), National party supporters

(11 per cent), or the non-aligned (29 per cent). Labor supporters (37 per cent) sit in between these extremes on the acceptance measure, but are quite similar to Liberal supporters on the trust measure.

Table 1: Acceptance of 'boat people' and trust in people from other countries (per cent)

	Acceptance	Trust
Sex		
Male	30.7	49.9
Female	35.5	49.8
p	< .014	.501
Parents have a degree		
No	26.2	43.8
One parent	37.6	55.8
Both parents	49.5	63.1
p	<.0001	<.0001
School		
Government	27.6	47.2
Independent	41.0	61.3
Catholic	40.2	45.6
p	<.0001	<.0001
University after school		
Yes	38.8	55.0
No	19.6	38.8
p	<.0001	<.0001
Importance of being Australian		
Not very important	70.5	64.2
Not important	46.0	53.4
Somewhat important	44.5	59.6
Important	35.4	52.9
Very Important	20.8	42.3
p	<.0001	<.0001
Part of global community		
Not very important	41.1	50.9
Not important	19.3	31.8
Somewhat important	26.8	45.0
Important	38.7	56.7
Very important	42.8	61.8
p	<.0001	<.0001
Political party		
Labor	36.7	50.4
Liberal	25.0	46.9
National	11.1	43.6
Green	59.5	67.0
None	29.2	47.1
p	<.0001	<.0001
Sample %	33.1	49.8

Notes: 'Acceptance' = percentage of those who disagree or strongly disagree that All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back; 'Trust' = those who have a great deal or quite a lot of trust in people from another country.
Source: Our Lives Data 2010 (weighted).

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Multivariate results

To identify the social and political determinants of acceptance of 'boat people' as well as trust in people from other countries in a more robust manner, we examined the two outcome measures using logistic regression analyses (Tables 2 and 3). For the 'acceptance of boat people' dependent variable (Table 2; Model 1), the findings suggest that women (OR 1.4) are more accepting than men. Other social background effects are also apparent. Parental education has an influence, with the children of tertiary educated parents more accepting of 'boat people', although the effects are much weaker when attitudes are controlled in models 2 and 3. Planning to pursue a tertiary education after leaving secondary school is also important. Those who intend to go to university are about twice as likely as other younger people to be accepting of 'boat people' (Model 3, OR 1.7). Controlling for differences in social background, young people who attend Catholic schools are 1.8 times more likely than government school students to hold favourable attitudes towards unexpected arrivals (Model 1), with both independent school and Catholic school effects remaining significant in all models when attitudinal and political party identification variables are included in the regression equation.

Table 2: All boats carrying asylum seekers should (not) be turned back (odds ratios)

Model	1	2	3
Father has a degree	1.5***	1.1	1.1
Mother has a degree	1.4***	1.3*	1.2*
Women	1.4***	1.3**	1.2*
University next	2.2***	1.7***	1.7***
Independent school	1.5***	1.4**	1.5***
Catholic school	1.8***	1.7***	1.7***
Global community	-	1.5***	1.4**
Being Australian	-	0.5***	0.6***
Xenophobia (scale)	-	0.6***	0.7***
Interpersonal trust	-	1.2*	1.2*
Trust people from another country	-	1.9***	1.8***
Labor ID	-	-	1.8***
Green ID	-	-	3.3***
No Party ID	-	-	1.4**
Nagelkerke R²	.12	.47	.49
N	(2,145)	(2,139)	(2,139)

* p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001
Source: Our Lives Data 2010

Table 3: How much trust do you have in people from another country? (odds ratios)

Model	1	2	3
Father has a degree	1.8***	1.5***	1.5***
Mother has a degree	1.1	1.0	1.0
Women	1.1	1.0	1.0
University next	1.6***	1.4**	1.4**
Independent school	1.3**	1.2	1.2*
Catholic school	0.8	0.7**	0.7**
Global community	-	1.8***	1.7***
Being Australian	-	0.7**	0.7**
Xenophobia	-	0.8***	0.8***
Interpersonal trust	-	2.0***	2.0***
Labor ID	-	-	1.2
Green ID	-	-	1.6**
No party ID	-	-	1.0
Nagelkerke R^2	.06	.24	.24
N	(2,273)	(2,270)	(2,270)

* $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$; *** $p<.001$
Source: Our Lives Data 2010

Attitudinal variables are strongly associated with the 'acceptance' dependent variable. Identification with the global community (Model 3; OR 1.4) is associated with increased acceptance, while those who stress the importance of being Australian are only about half as accepting as others. Not surprisingly, scoring high on the xenophobia scale is strongly associated with non-acceptance of 'boat people'. This finding holds after controlling for social background and political party identification (Model 3). Political party identification also has a strong impact of its own. The odds for Greens identifiers are over 3 times as large as those for Liberal and National supporters, suggesting Greens supporters are far more accepting of unexpected arrivals, with a similar but weaker effect apparent for Labor supporters (OR 1.8). The politically non-affiliated are also 40 per cent (OR 1.4) more likely than Coalition supporters to accept 'boat people'. The high Nagelkerke pseudo R^2 statistics (Nagelkerke 1991) suggest that the full model (Model 3) offers a good fit with these data.

While several independent variables are associated with acceptance of 'boat people', these patterns are less apparent for the trust dependent variable (Table 3). Firstly, the gender effect is absent for trust, with odds ratios of approximately 1.0 for each model, as although women are more inclined to be accepting of unexpected arrivals, gender does not predict trust in people from other countries. Independent school students (OR 1.2) are slightly more likely

than those who attend government schools to trust people from other countries, while Catholic school students are slightly less trusting than their government school counterparts (OR 0.7).

Other predictors of acceptance were also not as consistent in predicting trust. Those who plan to attend university scored highly on the 'acceptance of boat people' variable, but the effects are somewhat weaker for trust (Model 1; OR 1.6). Similarly, while Labor supporters were more accepting of 'boat people' than supporters of the conservative parties (i.e., Liberal and National), they were not significantly more trusting of foreign others at the 95 per cent level of statistical significance. Our findings show the only relatively strong and consistent predictors of accepting 'boat people' *and* trusting people from other countries are: university educational aspirations, a belief in the importance of belonging to the global community, and identification with the Australian Greens Party.

Discussion

This study examined survey data collected from a large sample of young people from Queensland, Australia in 2010 to understand their attitudes towards 'boat people' coming to Australia. Broad comparisons were then made with results of the Australian Election Survey, which measured the attitudes of adult Australians in the same year (McAllister & Pietsch 2011). In order to examine the extent to which trust shapes attitudes towards 'boat people', we also measured the levels of trust the sample of young Australians extended towards people who are from another country.

Our analyses revealed some important insights into attitudes on the issue. As with adult Australians, the political divide is also apparent among younger people. Yet, our research suggests young Australians are generally more accepting of asylum seekers who arrive in Australia by boat than their adult counterparts. This finding is consistent with other Australian studies, which also report a negative correlation between age and expressed acceptance of asylum seekers (e.g., McKay et al. 2012). This may be an age-based phenomenon where expressed views could alter over time (e.g., Stewart et al. 2009; Radvansky et al. 2010), or alternatively, it could be a generational phenomenon, by which younger Australians are, and will remain, more accepting of those requesting humanitarian assistance than older Australians. If this is the case, we will see this acceptance pattern sustained over time. Further longitudinal analysis is needed to investigate this and will be undertaken in subsequent *Our Lives* surveys. At this point in time, however, what we have found is that young people who were growing up in Australia during the first decade of this millennium were more accepting of 'boat people' than Australians who are older.

Our findings show that a number of social and political factors indicate increased likelihood of holding accepting views towards allowing 'boat people' into Australia. Consistent with McKay and associates (2012) and

Markus (2013), for example, we found that women are more inclined towards acceptance than men. Also, as has been reported in the past by authors such as Hartley and Pedersen (2007) and Markus (2013), political identification also plays a part. The results here show both Greens and Labor supporters, as well as those who have no political affiliation, as more accepting of unexpected arrivals than Coalition (i.e., conservative) supporters. A number of factors relating to education also contribute: parental education level, aspirations for university education, and the type of school a person attends. What we also discovered, however, was that while several demographic variables correspond to disagreement that boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned away from Australia, fewer variables predicted a broader trust in people from another country. The only exceptions were an intention to attend university, a sense in belonging to the global community, and identification with The Australian Greens. Groups with these attributes appear to possess an outlook that encourages a greater propensity to be inclusive and be trusting of 'boat people'.

What of those who express acceptance but trust less? We believe that this inconsistency points to the presence of a mechanism of acceptance that is not based on a preparedness to accept 'boat people' as future members of Australia's 'moral community', but on toleration. In making this distinction we are not suggesting that people who are prepared to tolerate 'boat people' should be viewed critically. After all, toleration serves a valuable function in contexts where diverse peoples are brought together, as it can prevent conflict and disharmony (Edyvane & Matravers 2011; Horton 2011; Balint 2013). Nevertheless, we do maintain that it is important for the differences between 'toleration' and 'trust' to be acknowledged and problematised.

While the study revealed several demographic variables relating to acceptance, it adds an additional perspective to the relationship between education and the acceptance of asylum seekers. Education level has long been associated with acceptance of minority groups by dominant groups (Bobo & Licari 1989; Hjerm 2001; Hello et al. 2006). Consistent with this pattern, previous studies report positive relationships between higher educational achievement and a willingness to accept asylum seekers (Betts 2001; Pedersen et al. 2005; McKay et al. 2012). As a single age cohort in their final year of secondary education, level of education and duration of education has been largely held constant. Due to this constancy,, we have found a positive relationship between attending non-government (i.e., independent and Catholic) schools and accepting asylum seekers. However, the influence of independent school education on young Australians' willingness to *trust* people from other countries is far weaker. Furthermore, Catholic school students are slightly more *distrusting* of foreign others than government school students. How do certain educational experiences inspire the conviction that asylum seekers should be allowed to enter the country, yet not necessarily inspire trust in them?

One possibility is that 'school type' is a proxy for socio-economic status. Enrolment in a non-government school is associated with financial privilege. Additionally, those who attend private schools are also more likely to achieve

higher learning outcomes than those in government-funded schools (Ryan & Sibieta 2011). Young people educated within the private school sector may, therefore, be less concerned about material threats that asylum seekers are seen to pose than those of lower socio-economic status, who may perceive asylum seekers as posing a threat to their livelihoods.

Another contributing factor may be the school environment. As is often pointed out, schools socialise students to their expected norms (e.g., Kingston et al. 2003; Hello et al. 2004). It is, therefore, possible that independent schools and Catholic schools do more to reinforce the expression of altruistic sentiment towards those less fortunate than do government-funded schools. Given that many independent schools in Australia have a religious affiliation (Independent Schools Council of Australia 2013), this is a distinct possibility. It may be, however, that there are few opportunities for young people in these schools to form bridging-type relationships with people who are different from themselves. We would suggest that within any primarily homogeneous school environment, expression of such sentiments might be serving to strengthen bonding-type trust relationships amongst members of the school community. They may be learning to trust those within their own group, but not necessarily those who are outside of that group (Green & Preston 2001). Perhaps if these schools could encourage positive contact between their students and humanitarian entrants living in the community, this willingness to tolerate could transform into a willingness to trust (Christ et al. 2014).

This study has investigated the extent to which young Australians are prepared to accept 'boat people' into Australia. It has also proposed a framework for better understanding the nature of that acceptance. Two items were measured. The first asked respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the statement: 'All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back'. The second asked respondents: 'How much trust do you have in people from another country?' We do, however, wish to place some caveats upon the use of these items.

The first relates to future application of the concept of toleration to the 'boat people' item. We remind the reader that the data were collected in 2010. At that time, federal government policy was to detain 'boat people ' within Australia while their applications were processed. Asylum seekers found to be 'genuine' refugees were then resettled in Australia. Australians who at this time disagreed with a policy of turning boats around were agreeing that passengers aboard these boats should be brought into Australia. This is no longer the case. The introduction of the 'Regional Resettlement Arrangement' by the Labor government in 2013 (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2013) and 'Operation Sovereign Borders' by the incumbent Coalition government (Liberal Party of Australia 2013), means people who disagree these boats should not be turned away are not necessarily indicating a preparedness to accept 'boat people' into Australia. Now, they may be expressing the view that 'boat people' should be given the opportunity to have their claims processed offshore and be resettled in countries other than Australia: a perspective that is not accepting.

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Secondly, the 'trust' measure was used to tap into broader trusting orientation towards people who are from countries other than Australia. This item contained no suggestion that the people from these countries were boat people, refugees, or for that matter migrants either living in, or wishing to come to, Australia. Our goal was to establish a baseline, 'no strings attached', measurement of trust towards foreign others. Without this general level of trust, we believe trust in 'boat people' would be more unlikely. While we believe that making associations between these two items is appropriate, in future studies we aim to measure more directly the willingness of Australians to live alongside, and trust, 'boat people' and other humanitarian entrants.

Conclusion

This study addresses an important issue currently facing Australia. It investigates the extent to which young Australians will be prepared to accept those who seek humanitarian protection, and the conditions under which acceptance will be offered. It also provides insight as to whether 'boat people' can expect to be merely endured, or, welcomed and trusted. Further investigation via subsequent waves of survey data collection and more research of a qualitative nature – both currently underway – will further expand our understanding of this phenomenon. Nevertheless, our study demonstrates that acceptance of 'boat people' into Australia is multi-dimensional and that it cannot always be assumed that all who are prepared to accept unexpected arrivals into Australia will be willing to enter into a relationship with them based on mutual reciprocity and trust.

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Endnotes

1. In 2013, a total of 20,587 people travelled to Australia by boat to seek asylum (Phillips 2014). The current federal government claims a reduction in those numbers since it was elected into government in September 2013 and implemented 'Operation Sovereign Borders' (Wilson 2014).

2. The Social Futures and Life Pathways (Our Lives) project is funded through several Australian Research Council Discovery Grants (DP0557667, DP0878781 and DP130101490). Website: http://artsonline.monash.edu.au/ourlives/

3. The Our Lives questions also contained a 'Don't know' category for the 'boat people' item, with six per cent of young people selecting this option. 'Don't know' responses were removed from the analyses here.

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Appendix Table A: Descriptive statistics

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range	N
Dependent Variables				
'Boat People'	3.01	1.25	1–5	2,251
Trust	2.50	0.68	1–4	2,377
Independent Variables				
Father has a degree	0.33	0.47	0/1	2,309
Mother has a degree	0.34	0.47	0/1	2,309
Women	0.64	0.48	0/1	2,377
Plan to attend University	0.74	0.44	0/1	2,386
Independent School	0.36	0.48	0/1	2,391
Catholic School	0.18	0.39	0/1	2,391
Global community	0.17	0.38	0/1	2,377
Being Australian	0.40	0.49	0/1	2,377
Xenophobia (scale)	11.21	2.80	4–20	2,391
Interpersonal trust	0.45	0.50	0/1	2,385
Labor ID	0.19	0.39	0/1	2,391
Green ID	0.13	0.33	0/1	2,391
No Party ID	0.39	0.49	0/1	2,391

Source: *Our Lives* Data (2010)

O. Published Paper

Crossing boundaries: Understanding the pro-asylum narratives of young Australians

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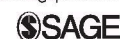
Bruce Tranter
University of Tasmania, Australia

Abstract

This paper uses interview data collected from young people in Queensland, Australia, to report the narratives of young Australians on the issue of 'boat people' and to explore the 'accepting' viewpoint. Consistent with existing literature, the 'anti-asylum' interviewees construct symbolic boundaries via language to justify why they believe exclusionary measures should be taken against asylum seekers who attempt to reach Australia by boat. In order to challenge this language of exclusion, our findings suggest the 'pro-asylum' participants adopt narratives aligned with the cosmopolitan principles of responsibility, openness and compassion. By doing so, they defend their belief that Australia's obligations towards the broader global community should take precedence over any challenges 'boat people' present to the Australian nation.

Keywords

Asylum seekers, symbolic boundaries, cosmopolitanism, acceptance, young people, Australia

Introduction

In Australia, there is ongoing public debate surrounding how the federal government should respond to asylum seekers who attempt to enter Australian territory by boat. Some Australians argue these boats should be turned away, whereas others believe that they should be admitted. The attitudes of Australians towards

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asylum seekers[1] have been the focus of numerous studies, with considerable attention paid to explaining negative perceptions of asylum seekers (e.g. Every and Augoustinos, 2007, 2008; McKay et al., 2012; O'Doherty and Augoustinos, 2008). The consensus is that asylum seekers, particularly 'boat people', are discursively constructed in a way that invokes a sense of fear and anxiety amongst the Australian public. However, while much research has been undertaken to investigate why asylum seekers are subjected to exclusionary pressures, less attention has been paid to understanding the mechanisms of acceptance. This paper is an attempt to redress this research bias.

In this study, we examine the narratives of young Australians who have definitive views on the issue of 'boat people' being permitted into Australia. Drawing on interview data collected from participants involved in an ongoing study of young people in Queensland, we compare and contrast the arguments of those who reject boat people with those who accept them. We suggest the language employed by young people who are accepting of unexpected arrivals to Australia reflects cosmopolitan principles. These narratives, we argue, countervail anti-asylum rhetoric that is common within Australian public discourse.

Symbolic boundaries

As a theoretical construct, the notion of 'boundary' has been applied extensively throughout the social sciences, providing a framework for understanding social identity, intergroup interaction and group exclusion. This concept has featured in the work of theorists such as Barth (1969), Tajfel and Turner (1979), and, more recently, Lamont and Molnár (2002). A boundary is conceptualised as a barrier that defines, contains and protects but also separates and limits. While boundaries may take the form of physical partitions, demarcating territorial possession, they are often symbolically codified (Barth, 1969; Lamont and Molnár, 2002). Boundaries constructed through the use of language, beliefs and ideas may not be directly visible but are equally powerful. Lamont and Molnár (2002: 168) have described symbolic boundaries as 'conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space'. This notion of distinction is important – while symbolic boundaries create a sense of similarity and cohesion between members of the same group, they also serve to highlight disparities between groups. By defining their own distinctive characteristics and differentiating themselves from others, a group creates a sense of who they are and what they represent. Those who share similar viewpoints and common goals are seen to belong and they are, as Barth (1969: 15) aptly describes, 'playing the same game'. On the other hand, those believed not to have the same views are categorised as being different and possibly incompatible (Barth, 1969; Lamont and Molnár, 2002; Tajfel and Turner, 1979).

Exclusion is an integral component of group identity and boundary maintenance. By excluding others deemed not to belong, the identity and integrity of a group is protected. This can be achieved through the construction of symbolic and

social boundaries, including the use of negative categorisations and stereotypes, whereby members of the outsider minority are attributed characteristics claimed to be undesirable or threatening. Based on these beliefs, exclusionary action can be considered justified (Tajfel and Turner, 1979).

The movement of asylum seekers across state borders poses a challenge to many nations and undermines self-assuredness about the composition of communities (Beck and Sznaider, 2010; Fine, 2007; Morris, 2009). One explanation for anti-asylum sentiment is that the values, cultures and behaviours of asylum seekers are deemed to be incompatible with those whose borders they are attempting to cross. Consequently, they are seen as undesirable (e.g. Malloch and Stanley, 2005; Welch and Schuster, 2005). As a signatory of the *1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* and its associated *1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees* (UNHCR, 2010), Australia has a responsibility to provide protection to individuals who enter its territory and request humanitarian protection (Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2014). Since 2001 however, asylum seekers have been the target of considerable antagonism in Australia. Events such as the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the *Tampa* incident and the 'Children Overboard' affair[2] have led to policies of border protection and asylum seeker deterrence has become a 'wedge' issue in Australian politics. Australians have found themselves challenged to meet humanitarian obligations while, at the same time, addressing concerns that asylum seekers present an unacceptable threat to their country (Haslam and Holland, 2012; O'Doherty and Augoustinos, 2008).

Discursive representations of asylum seekers as a threat to Australia have rein-forced a conviction that asylum seekers are not welcome; thus building barriers to their acceptance into Australia. Some literature describes, for example, how polit-icians and some elements of the media engage in anti-asylum rhetoric, which perpetuate the idea that asylum seekers have transgressed against Australia (e.g. Every and Augoustinos, 2007, 2008; McKay et al., 2011; Rowe and O'Brien, 2014). The legitimacy of asylum seeker claims, for example, is questioned by the sugges-tion that they are 'illegals', not entitled to sanctuary in Australia, or economic opportunists who are untruthful about having fled persecution. Moreover, asylum seekers are sometimes accused of being terrorists or 'extremists', who intend to cause disruption, or impose their own religious and cultural beliefs onto the Australian nation. Such constructions make it difficult for asylum seekers to be accepted by this country and its residents (Every and Augoustinos, 2008; Hartley and Pedersen, 2007; Haslam and Holland, 2012; McKay et al., 2012).

Not all Australians subscribe to this position, however, and are instead acting to challenge these boundaries. Research into pro-asylum discourse, for instance, has found that Australian politicians who advocate for a more inclusionary Australia use more accepting language (Every and Augoustinos, 2008; Rowe and O'Brien, 2014). Also, Fozdar and Pedersen (2013: 317) describe a 'counter-hegemonic discourse' used on blog sites to counteract anti-asylum sentiment. While such studies provide valuable evidence of 'accepting' rhetoric being used in Australia to challenge exclusionary views, we believe there is room to expand understanding

of the mechanisms that promote this language. We suggest that applying a framework based on the principles of cosmopolitanism will conceptually advance our comprehension of the strategies some people employ to actively deconstruct symbolic boundaries and instead advocate for the acceptance of asylum seekers in Australia.

Cosmopolitanism and the acceptance of asylum seekers

Sociological literature includes both theoretical (e.g. Beck and Sznaider, 2010; Delanty, 2006, 2012) and empirical (e.g. Lamont and Aksartova, 2002; Morris, 2009, 2010; Skrbiš and Woodward, 2007) accounts of cosmopolitan phenomena. According to Nussbaum (1996: 4), the 'cosmopolitan' is 'the person whose allegiance is to the worldwide community of human beings'. Similarly, Calhoun (2008: 428) describes cosmopolitanism as an act of 'focusing on the world as a whole rather than a particular locality or group within it'. The term may refer to a utopian ideal or political agenda (Delanty, 2006), the demonstration of competencies across the international stage (Roudometof, 2005) or preparedness to accept ethnic and cultural difference (Appiah, 2006; Lamont and Aksartova, 2002; Skrbiš and Woodward, 2007). While this paper does not allow us to expand upon the numerous arguments underpinning the concept of cosmopolitanism, suffice to say, at the core of this theoretical framework lies a strong ethic of inclusiveness and a preparedness to engage openly with all members of the global community.

When speaking of 'being cosmopolitan' Skrbiš and Woodward (2007: 734) believe the cosmopolitan individual is one who 'possesses skills to negotiate cultural diversity, hybridity and otherness'. The cosmopolitan individual understands that the people who inhabit this world are becoming increasingly (and often inextricably) interconnected. Moreover, they possess the skills that allow them to cross boundaries between what is familiar and what is not. For such a person, cosmopolitanism is an ethical outlook where a sense of responsibility, openness and compassion is shown towards the 'other' (Appiah, 2006; Nussbaum, 1996).

The cosmopolitan perspective can be observed within the everyday and ordinary domains (Lamont and Aksartova, 2002; Skrbiš and Woodward, 2007). In their oft-cited study of counter-racism discourses among blue-collar workers in the United States and France, Lamont and Aksartova (2002) refer to the term 'ordinary cosmopolitanism' as meaning an outlook of acceptance and inclusion shown by people who encounter ethnic and/or cultural diversity within the course of their everyday lives. While cosmopolitanism has been identified as a useful construct for observing and understanding engagement with difference, few studies have applied the framework for understanding the acceptance of asylum seekers. One exception is research undertaken by Morris (2009, 2010) where she recounts the rulings made by British judges on issues surrounding welfare payments to asylum seekers in the United Kingdom. Morris observes instances of either a 'national' or 'cosmopolitan' paradigm in these judgments, describing the approach taken by judges who emphasise the importance of human rights over national concerns, as a

'judicial cosmopolitan outlook' (Morris, 2009: 218). While her research makes an important connection between the empirical applicability of the cosmopolitan framework, empirical accounts that describe a more 'ordinary' cosmopolitan outlook – where acceptance of asylum seekers is articulated within everyday talk – are rare.

In this paper, we apply the cosmopolitan framework to describe the narratives used by young Australians who argue for the acceptance of asylum seekers. We believe it important to study the views of this population for two reasons. First, there is room to expand upon theorisation of the mechanisms that promote accepting rhetoric. Second, while a considerable body of literature exists on the attitudes of adult Australians towards asylum seekers, the views of younger Australians are less well understood (Laughland-Booÿ et al., 2014). As has been argued elsewhere, by investigating the views of young people we are able to measure the potential for social change (Laughland-Booÿ et al., 2014; Mokwena, 2001). Given Australia's current cohort of young people have been raised in a sociopolitical atmosphere saturated by debate on this issue, it is important to understand their views. This research may then provide insight into the attitudes of Australians on this matter in the future. We therefore use the concept of cosmopolitanism to demonstrate how some young Australians employ a narrative of acceptance to challenge current symbolic boundaries to the acceptance of asylum seekers in Australia.

Methods

This study uses qualitative data from participants involved in the ongoing 'Social Futures and Life Pathways of Young People in Queensland' study – also known as the 'Our Lives' project. This study follows the social orientations of a single age cohort of young people in Queensland, Australia, as they move from adolescence into adulthood.[3] The collection of the first wave of survey data was undertaken in 2006 and involved 7031 young people aged 12/13 years old. Three additional waves have since been undertaken, with Wave 4 completed in late 2013 as cohort members approached the age of 21.

Given the saliency of the asylum seeker issue within the Australian sociopolitical environment, an item in the 2010 Wave 3 Our Lives survey asked respondents to consider their opinion on the asylum seeker issue. In 2010, the participants were 17/18 years old, either approaching, or having reached, voting age (N=2413). The survey data provided a baseline measurement of the position of the cohort on this topical issue. This was achieved by measuring their responses to the item: 'All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back'.[4] Preliminary analyses showed that approximately 15% of the surveyed cohort 'strongly agreed' that boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned away, and 17% 'agreed' with the statement. On the other hand, 13% indicated that they 'strongly disagreed' with the suggestion and a further 20% 'disagreed'. A further 30% were ambivalent on the issue (Figure 1).
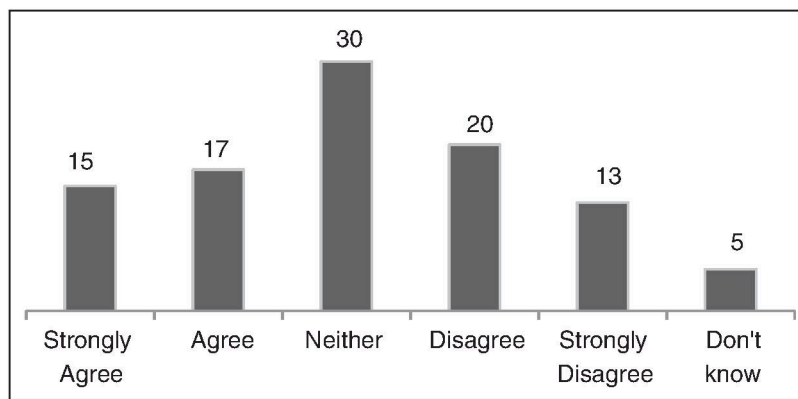
Figure 1. Percentage of responses to the statement '*All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back*' (N = 2413).
Source: Our Lives (2010).

Further interrogation of these data suggested several factors predict a tendency towards disagreement with this statement. Those found to be more likely to express an acceptance of 'boat people' were women, those whose parents have higher levels of education, students from Independent and Catholic schools, young people who aspired to attend university, supporters of The Australian Greens political party and those who identified strongly as being a member of the 'global community'. The findings also suggested that the views of this group were, in the main, more accepting of asylum seekers than the broader population of Australian adults (Laughland-Booÿ et al., 2014).

The quantitative data mentioned earlier offer a descriptive account of the broader orientations of young people in Queensland towards boat people. We also used these data as a framing strategy for conducting interviews on this issue. These interviews were carried out between April and July 2012 with 20 study participants who, at the time, were aged 19/20 years old. Our qualitative sample was not intended to be representative of this larger study. Instead, we endeavoured to capture the narratives of individuals who had strong views on the topic.

To allow for greater comparison and contrast of expressed attitudes, Wave 3 respondents who had firm views regarding asylum seekers (positive or negative) were sampled for interview. To this end, a purposive intensity sampling strategy was applied (Teddlie and Yu, 2007), whereby prospective interviewees were selected from members of the Our Lives cohort who had indicated they strongly disagreed with the statement ('pro-asylum', N=317) or strongly agreed with the statement ('anti-asylum', N=352). Twenty-five participants living in South East Queensland were asked if they would participate, with 20 agreeing to be interviewed. The final interview sample (11 female, nine male) comprised of 12 'pro-asylum' and eight 'anti-asylum' participants and was diverse in terms of socio-economic status. All participants were born in Australia and said that English was their main language

spoken at home. Fourteen reported that both parents had been born in Australia. The remainder had at least one parent who was born overseas.

One interviewer was involved in the data collection. Interviews were undertaken in a location of the participants' choice (usually in their home, at a café or on a university campus) and were approximately 1 h in duration. The primary focus of the interviews was to expand upon participant's survey responses to the suggestion that boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned away from Australia. The interviews were recorded and later fully transcribed. The transcripts were initially categorised as being either 'anti-asylum' or 'pro-asylum', and the data then open coded. During this process, data from two interviews were rejected, as the participants' opinion on this issue had become more moderate since they had completed the survey. Links with theoretical concepts were then made via the process of axial coding which is consistent with the analysis paradigm proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998).

The pro-asylum participants (eight female, three male) were all undertaking tertiary education. All except one had achieved an Overall Position (OP) score[5] in the range of 1–5, which academically placed them in the top 20% of Queensland OP eligible students in 2010 (Queensland Studies Authority, 2011). Ten had previously attended a private school (nine Independent, one Catholic). One pro-asylum interviewee had attended a state-funded school in a more affluent area of Brisbane.

Among the anti-asylum participants (four male, three female) there was greater diversity in terms of socio-economic status, school type and OP than the pro-asylum group. Some spoke of being financially comfortable and highly conservative in outlook. Others were of working-class origins and described how life had presented considerable challenge and adversity. While most in this group were attending some kind of tertiary institution, among this group there was also one sickness beneficiary and a young person who worked full-time at a fast food outlet.

The data are presented in the following two sections. In the first section, we demonstrate the narratives of the anti-asylum participants – young people who believe asylum seekers should be turned away from Australia. We then present the arguments offered by the pro-asylum group – those who argue that Australia should be more accepting.

Building boundaries

'It's not our problem' was the argument made by the anti-asylum participants who were of the opinion that Australia had no obligation to accept boat people, and that these asylum seekers were bringing cultural practices to Australia incompatible with the Australian way of life. Furthermore, this group contended that the characteristics and behaviours of boat people made them undeserving of compassion. These descriptions of difference were then used as justification for why those requesting asylum should be excluded. Although some anti-asylum participants acknowledged the condition of asylum seekers was unfortunate, they did not

believe it was the responsibility of Australia to take action to address the problem. From their perspective, since the cause of the problem did not derive from Australia, neither should the solution. Taylor,[6] for example, felt asylum seekers were not an issue Australia should 'take on board'; instead, believing the Australian government should focus on looking after its own citizens. Other anti-asylum participants such as Jemma thought that if Australia accepted asylum seekers, this would create added problems for the country: 'I don't think it should be our responsibility. We should be sending them back and telling their country to kind of, I don't know, deal with it'.

The anti-asylum participants also expressed a belief that asylum seekers were merely exploiting this country's generosity and the hard work of its people. According to Archer (2009: 178), the 'bludger' is 'the antithesis and the enemy of the worker' who has traditionally received the scorn of those resentful of their taxes being used to provide means to those considered lazy and undeserving. Such views have existed within the Australian discourse since the 1970s. As a consequence of efforts to instil more conservative welfare frames into the Australian psyche, a new discourse surrounding entitlement to government support was developed. During this time, the rights of the taxpayer were brought to the forefront and a dependence on government welfare support was considered tantamount to thievery (Archer, 2009). Similar sentiments have resonated in the rhetoric of the young people who took an anti-asylum stance. Here, the asylum seeker was framed as a type of person who would take what they did not deserve and was unwilling to work for their own keep. James, a student with a very conservative outlook, argued asylum seekers do not wish to act for the good of Australia but merely intend to be exploitative. He invoked the term 'bludging', describing asylum seekers as people who wanted to 'sit around and do nothing'. The contempt he felt towards those he saw as lazy and wanting to take advantage of Australia was strongly evident:

> It's just somewhere where they can come and bludge for the rest of their lives. They're on Centrelink [welfare support] straight away...They get looked after – nothing like that in Afghanistan, Pakistan or Iraq or where ever they come from. They come here, they sit around and do nothing, get everything they want and then get paid for it.

Rory also spoke of how asylum seekers were travelling to Australia with an intention to exploit the country. He used the term 'freeloader' to reinforce a belief that asylum seekers come to Australia to enjoy the benefits provided by the Australian taxpayer and do nothing in return. As a future taxpayer, he thought he should not have to contribute to their support.

Like the findings of other studies (e.g. Haslam and Holland, 2012; Louis et al., 2007), the rejecting group also took exception to the amount asylum seekers were receiving in welfare payments. Taylor, for example, said that he had heard asylum seekers were being given substantially more in welfare payments than aged Australians and believed this to be unfair. His thoughts were that Australia needed to 'set its priorities straight' and look after Australians instead of

'trying to keep asylum seekers happy'. Likewise, Jemma complained that the current policy of supporting humanitarian entrants in Australia was unjust. As she explained: 'I think it's a bit unfair on like the pensioners and stuff. They're not getting looked after. The asylum seekers come here and they get it all for free'.

The statistical analysis of the attitudes of the entire Our Lives cohort towards asylum seekers undertaken previously suggested those from lower socio-economic backgrounds may experience a sense of vulnerability, believing they will have to compete with asylum seekers for scarce resources such as employment and housing (Laughland-Booÿ et al., 2014). In this study, the accounts of the rejecting respondents offer further support for such an explanation. Here, we heard those from underprivileged backgrounds voice concerns about funding being directed away from Australians in need. Jemma, a young woman who had experienced considerable hardship throughout her life, was worried about the welfare of her grandparents and did not think it was right that asylum seekers be supported while her own family members struggled financially. She spoke of her grandfather's failing health, and her concerns about how his care would be paid for. Callum, who lived in subsidised housing within a low socio-economic area, was angry about the possibility of humanitarian entrants taking affordable housing from low-income Australians. His parents had recently received a letter from the local state Member of Parliament outlining a proposal that families move to smaller accommodation or share with another family to reduce costs and help address the shortage of state-provided houses. Callum was anxious that housing shortages would be exacerbated by increased numbers of refugees and asylum seekers being accepted into Australia, and that his own family would be made to move to a smaller house or share with strangers because of an increased demand for low-cost housing.

Another concern related to dissimilarities in cultural practices and an apprehension that the presence of boat people would 'change' Australia. Perceptions of how differences in the culture and religion of asylum seekers might jeopardise the makeup of Australian society have been noted in a number of studies (e.g. Louis et al., 2010; Schweitzer et al., 2005). Similar fears were articulated here. There was a conviction that some immigrants, including humanitarian entrants, were coming to 'change our country' with their own cultural practice. The consensus among this group was that migrants should instead 'follow our rules'. James spoke of how Australian culture would be altered should asylum seekers be accepted. He argued that anyone who came to this country should act in accordance with 'the Australian way':

> They're just going to start to change our values and our culture. Our culture will start to change. There's nothing wrong with having Chinese take away and eating Indian food – all that sort of stuff... Bring your food, we all love your food, but don't bring your governments and your morals to this country!

In Australia boat people are frequently portrayed by politicians and the media as being 'illegal immigrants' – people who have attempted to enter the country

without authorisation (Pedersen et al., 2012; Rowe and O'Brien, 2014). The subsequent public resentment towards asylum seekers has been well documented. Despite the fact that coming to Australia to request asylum is not illegal under the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol (UNHCR, 2010), the construction of asylum seekers as 'illegals' has led to many within Australia supporting their forced removal (Haslam and Holland, 2012). Many of the anti-asylum participants expressed a belief that, by coming to Australia by boat, asylum seekers were breaking the rules pertaining to legal entry into the country. By not 'doing the right thing', boat people were showing little regard for Australia and its laws. For instance, although Mandy acknowledged there might be a legitimate reason for why boat people would want to come to Australia, she also felt 'they just have to go by our way of doing it', and should adhere to the rules prescribed by the Australian government, rather than circumventing official processes. Furthermore, Kimberly was suspicious of the character of these individuals describing how 'they've got that kind of vicious streak in them' and were prepared to go to any lengths to reach Australia. If asylum seekers were not prepared to play by the rules, sympathy was simply not deserved. When asked if they were concerned about what might happen to these individuals should they be turned away, the position of the anti-asylum interviewees was that forcible exclusion was warranted because boat people had come through the 'wrong way'. As Jemma acknowledged, although this position seemed harsh and 'probably sounds wrong', it did not negate her belief that strict measures were appropriate and that Australia was under no obligation to demonstrate compassion.

It has been suggested in previous research that another motivation for such discourse is prejudice (e.g. Every and Augoustinos, 2007; Pedersen et al., 2005). Every and Augoustinos (2007: 411) believe that in Australia a 'categorical denial of racism and the simultaneous exclusion, oppression, and demonisation of minorities is a defining feature of contemporary responses to out-groups such as asylum seekers'. These authors suggest that some people are aware that blatant discrimination is no longer condoned in Australia and will instead demonstrate a 'new racism' whereby prejudicial views are expressed in a manner less likely to be identified as possessing discriminatory undertones. This is achieved by focusing on differences in cultural practice and behaviours rather than differences in skin colour. Although most of the anti-asylum participants distanced themselves from the concept of racism, in their descriptions of boat people they did apply rhetoric similar to that described by Every and Augoustinos (2007). While we cannot identify with certainty what motivates the views of the anti-asylum participants in this study, and we by no means wish to characterise these young people as being 'ugly and bad' (Hage, 2000: 184), the implications of constructing symbolic boundaries through exclusionary language and its continued pervasiveness in current discussions on the asylum seeker issue are very apparent. As we show below, the respondents who were accepting of asylum seekers followed a radically different referential framework; one more commonly associated with a cosmopolitan outlook.

Challenging boundaries

As we have outlined, cosmopolitanism presupposes a set of skills necessary for individuals to successfully cross boundaries between the familiar and the unfamiliar. This perspective can thus lend itself to an inclusive viewpoint. In this section, we focus upon the rhetoric of participants who argued that Australia should be accepting of asylum seekers. Specifically, the pro-asylum group described a belief that Australia has a responsibility to offer protection to asylum seekers; they showed openness towards asylum seekers and their ability to contribute to Australian society and expressed compassion for the plight of asylum seekers.

The recognition of responsibility towards all of humankind is an important element of cosmopolitan theory. There is, as Beck (2006: 73) explains, 'a growing awareness that we are living within a global network of responsibility from which none of us can escape'. From a cosmopolitan perspective, if one has the ability to do so, they should render assistance to others where there is need (Appiah, 2006; Beck, 2006; Parekh, 2003). Essentially, while we do not necessarily have to put our own vital well-being ahead of others, if there is no substantial cost to self, assistance should be offered (Parekh, 2003).

Whereas the position taken by the rejecting participants was that asylum seekers should be sent back, pro-asylum interviewees considered it unprincipled to be dismissive of the problems of others. They maintained it was Australia's responsibility to address this issue. Critical of any suggestion that boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned away, Daniel described this act as 'a death sentence' for those on board these vessels. He found it difficult to understand how such an action could be justified. While the anti-asylum group argued that by allowing asylum seekers into Australia the cost to Australians would be too great, the accepting group believed this was merely an excuse to evade responsibility towards others in need. As with the anti-asylum participants, the pro-asylum group also invoked the concept of fairness, but this time it was asylum seekers not being treated fairly. For these 'accepting' interviewees, fairness was in recognising one's own privilege and taking the steps to share that good fortune. They also argued that, as part of the global community, Australia needed to accept a fair share of the world's displaced. As Ashleigh stated, given Australia's relative wealth, Australia was much better positioned than many other nations to absorb people who required asylum:

> In my opinion they have it so much worse off than we do. Like, they're running away from their own country because they just can't live there... We obviously have a lot here – you know? We're living – doing whatever we want. So, kind of, why not help them out?

Many of the pro-asylum group pointed out that if Australians found themselves in the same situation, they would also ask for help. This was the view of Emma who was extremely passionate about the protection of those requesting asylum. She challenged those with anti-asylum sentiments to imagine themselves in the same situation before they abdicated their responsibility in finding a solution.

If Australians were to put themselves in the position of those aboard the boats, she believed they might change their views:

> I don't know what it feels like, but I think people have to try and imagine or think of themselves in that situation because I think if they did they – if people actually thought about, 'If I was in that situation, what would I want people to do?' They would want people to accept them. (Emma)

Cosmopolitans share a preparedness to encounter and positively interact with people, ideas and locations outside of their own national boundaries (Calhoun, 2008; Skrbiš and Woodward, 2011). This openness can manifest in various ways. For example, it may be an affinity towards consuming foreign commodities or experiencing foreign cultures (Skrbiš and Woodward, 2007). It may also be a willingness to tolerate a multicultural presence within one's day-to-day environment or a demonstration of inclusiveness and acceptance (Lamont and Aksartova, 2002).

While the anti-asylum group made the argument that asylum seekers would change Australia, the 'accepting' participants were more open to cultural difference. Ashleigh, for instance, saw Australia's cultural diversity as being the 'soul' of the nation and spoke of how its multi-cultural makeup gave Australia its distinctive 'spirit'. The view was that asylum seekers would add to, rather than detract from, Australia's cultural identity. Advocating for the pro-asylum stance, the accepting participants also emphasised the similarities between Australians and asylum seekers. The focus on commonality between different groups is a strategy identified by Pedersen et al. (2011) as a mechanism by which discrimination towards marginalised groups can be reduced. Since the majority of Australians originated from elsewhere, the accepting group suggested people should reflect on whether they had the right to decide who should come here and who should not. As Caitie claimed, it was unreasonable for those living in Australia to say asylum seekers do not belong, particularly when it was likely that, in the past, their own families would have taken advantage of the hospitality extended to immigrants by the Australian government.

In addition, it was argued that asylum seekers would make a material contribution to Australian society. As Daniel said, there was no reason why asylum seekers should not demonstrate the same level of initiative and commitment as past migrants. Moreover, Katrina pointed out that asylum seekers were likely to do the type of jobs some Australians did not want: 'Most of them are doing the jobs that we don't want to do anyway, like working 'til 5am at the 7-Eleven or, like driving our taxis. Not many Caucasian Australians want to do those jobs' (Katrina).

In showing openness towards asylum seekers, the pro-asylum participants suggested the motive behind much anti-asylum sentiment in Australia was racism and prejudice. Lily described the laws designed to keep asylum seekers out of Australia as being parochial. Referring to Australia's past discriminatory immigration policies, she said the current situation was 'like going back to the White Australia policy'. Caitie believed politicians and the media were deliberately exaggerating

the numbers of people from the Middle East aboard the boats in order to arouse prejudice and fear. Although noticeably uncomfortable with making such an accusation, Emma thought prejudicial sentiments were the source of much animosity by Australians towards asylum seekers. She felt the scenario might be different if asylum seekers were white.

Compassion is a response to the distress of others (Fine, 2012; Sznaider, 1998; van Hooft, 2009). This emotion involves the belief that suffering is bad and that concern is warranted (Nussbaum, 2001). Furthermore, compassion can be extended beyond close ties and can motivate us to 'act well' towards strangers (van Hooft, 2009: 2). As the pro-asylum participants argued for the protection of asylum seekers, they demonstrated a high degree of compassion towards them. Given the circumstances, Thomas believed the displaced had little choice but to transgress when survival is at stake. It was in his words 'a bit of a case of a beggar stealing a loaf of bread because he can't buy it'. Emma also spoke of there being no 'right way' to be a refugee, pointing out those who boarded the boats were desperately looking for a better life:

> I think if you're a refugee, you're a refugee and you're obviously fleeing from something horrific otherwise you wouldn't put yourself on a boat. You wouldn't – and people say, 'Oh, like how could they do that? How could they risk their lives like that?' That's how desperate they are. They're risking their lives because they think they're going to die if they stay where they are.

Where the rejecting participants advocated the building of boundaries to keep boat people out of Australia, the accepting group suggested strategies as to how Australians might view asylum seekers in a different light. When asked what they thought needed to be done to resolve tensions in Australia surrounding asylum seekers, they argued that this could be achieved only if the current discursive constructions used to describe asylum seekers were changed, and if public perceptions were challenged. Maddie, for instance, felt that one way to change public views was to address the way asylum seekers were being represented and 'change the language' surrounding asylum seekers. The pro-asylum interviewees highlighted education as being a possible tool for promoting and fostering the development of accepting views towards asylum seekers by the Australian public. For instance, in recognising that the media play an important role in shaping public opinion, some pro-asylum participants suggested it could also be used to promote accepting views towards asylum seekers and not just antagonism. Others believed schools could teach acceptance. As Caitie pointed out, a school and its 'whole philosophy' helps young people form their opinions and was an environment where attitudes of acceptance towards the displaced could be taught and reinforced. In the main, there was optimism amongst the pro-asylum people that Australians could eventually learn to look past their concerns and 'just see a person' who needed support and assistance. After all, as Ashleigh poignantly commented: 'We're all here; we may as well help each other out. We all just die in the end'.

Discussion and conclusion

Symbolic boundaries are built and maintained by those who seek to contain and protect 'their' space from outsiders (Barth, 1969; Lamont and Molnár, 2002). This boundary building can be achieved through the use of language intended to high-light the undesirable qualities of those outside the group or to provide justification for exclusionary practices. In Australia, the power of language in representing asylum seekers as objectionable is well documented (e.g. Every and Augoustinos, 2007; O'Doherty and Augoustinos, 2008). Similarly in the discourses of our participants who hold firm convictions that boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned away from Australian shores, we found evidence of symbolic boundary construction through language designed to obstruct the acceptance of asylum seekers. Whether they accused asylum seekers of acting illegally, argued their values would change Australian society, or described them as having a 'vicious streak', the underlying premise was that Australia had no responsibility towards these individuals and that compassion was not warranted.

We argue that the concept of cosmopolitanism delivers a framework for under-standing how the boundaries to acceptance are being challenged. Individuals with a cosmopolitan outlook are described as seeing themselves and their country as having an obligation towards the global community. They also display openness towards cultural diversity and express compassion towards members of the global community who are in need of protection (Appiah, 2006; Morris, 2009; Nussbaum, 1996). What we have found in this research are everyday young people demonstrat-ing a willingness to think beyond the boundaries set by their own nation and who engage in an open and reflexive manner with the global community.

We believe a cosmopolitan perspective can inform inclusive attitudes towards foreign others who are seeking refuge. Those young people who are supportive of Australia taking a more accepting stance towards asylum seekers clearly demon-strated such an outlook. In explaining why they opposed turning away asylum seeker boats, the pro-asylum individuals applied reasoning consistent with cosmo-politan principles. They argued that Australia had a global responsibility to be accepting and saw asylum seekers as being not only individuals in need of com-passion and protection but also as people who could contribute to Australia. These findings, therefore, provide an example of inclusive reasoning among young Australians, which is, as Lamont and Aksartova (2002: 18) argue, 'essential for understanding the process of bridging boundaries and for fighting more effectively against exclusion'.

If a 'cosmopolitan' acceptance of asylum seekers is to be reinforced in Australia, how might this be achieved? While acknowledging that we are walking what Roudometof (2012: 116) describes as the 'fine line between describing social life in the twenty-first century and simultaneously proposing new forms of thinking', we wish to make comment on this matter. Some of our pro-asylum participants spoke of how education might not only increase knowledge of other peoples' lived realities but also build concern for the circumstances asylum seekers are experien-cing. The importance of educating Australians about asylum seekers has also been

highlighted in the literature (e.g. Pedersen et al., 2005, 2012). In socio-political environments where hostility towards asylum seekers is palpable, perhaps exposure to cosmopolitan principles via the media or through formal education would facilitate a more compassionate understanding of asylum seeker issues. Maybe then, like the 'accepting' participants we identified in our study, more Australians would adopt a stance that is informed by the cosmopolitan principles of responsibility, openness and compassion.

In summary, the purpose of this paper was to isolate and explore the language of young people who have strong views on the issue of asylum seekers coming to Australia by boat. First, we showed how symbolic boundaries against the acceptance of asylum seekers by Australia are maintained in the language of young people who believe boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned away from Australia. We then demonstrated how the narratives of some young Australians challenge these boundaries. Furthermore, by arguing that Australia should not turn away boats carrying asylum seekers, the pro-asylum group articulated a viewpoint consistent with a cosmopolitan perspective. All too often boat people are constructed in such a manner as to justify strict exclusionary measures being imposed against them. Here, we have identified a narrative among young Australians that promotes a more accepting view and embraces the principles of cosmopolitanism. Such a perspective, we believe, has the potential to challenge the construction and maintenance of exclusionary symbolic boundaries against asylum seekers in Australia.

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Notes

1. The terms 'boat people' and 'unexpected arrivals' are used when specifically referring to asylum seekers who attempt to reach Australia by boat. When we refer more broadly to people seeking humanitarian refuge we use the term 'asylum seeker'.
2. In August 2001 the Liberal–National coalition government refused to allow a Norwegian vessel, the *MV Tampa*, which was carrying asylum seekers rescued from a fishing boat, entry to Australian waters. In October 2001 the Australian government also made allegations that asylum seekers had deliberately thrown their children into the ocean to avoid being turned away from Australian shores. Despite a Senate inquiry concluding the accusations were unfounded, this allegation is still used in anti-asylum rhetoric to support the belief that asylum seekers do not share the same moral standards as Australians.
3. For more information go to: http://artsonline.monash.edu.au/ourlives/

4. This item is also used in the Australian Election Study. Website: http://aes.anu.edu.au/
5. Equivalent to A-Levels in the United Kingdom. For further information go to: http://
   www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/
6. All names are pseudonyms.

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