

‘Sudanese refugees’ experiences with the Queensland criminal justice system

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<u>'SUDANESE REFUGEES' EXPERIENCES WITH THE QUEENSLAND CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM.....</u>	<u>1</u>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS	9
CHAPTER 1	10
INTRODUCTION	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
MAJOR RESEARCH AIMS	10
BACKGROUND	12
REFUGEES AND CRIME	13
CHAPTER 2	18
RESEARCH METHODS.....	18
METHODOLOGY	18
METHODOLOGICAL DETAILS	19
QUANTITATIVE METHODS	19
QUALITATIVE METHODS	21
CONCLUSION	22
CHAPTER 3	23
MEDIA DEPICTIONS AND MORAL PANICS: REPRESENTATIONS OF SUDANESE REFUGEES IN AUSTRALIA	23
BACKGROUND	23
QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGY	24
DATA CODING	25
SAMPLE.....	26
RESULTS	27
HOW THE MEDIA REPORTS ON SUDANESE REFUGEES.....	27
CONTENT OF ARTICLES.....	28
'VOICES'	29
SUDANESE REFUGEES, CRIME AND THE MEDIA.....	30
CRIME WAVES AND STEREOTYPING	32
QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS	34
CONCLUSION	50
CHAPTER 4	52
SERIOUS TALKING: COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS	52
INTEGRATING INTO AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY.....	52
GOVERNMENT INTERVENTIONS WITHIN THE DOMESTIC SPHERE	56
SUDANESE INTERACTIONS WITH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN	63
CONCLUSION	72
CHAPTER 5	76
QUEENSLAND'S SUDANESE COMMUNITY SURVEY.....	76
METHODOLOGY	76
SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS	80
SURVEY RESULTS	82
CONCLUSION	91
CHAPTER 6	93
POLICE PERSPECTIVES ON SUDANESE AUSTRALIANS	93
THE LIMITS OF CRIME DATA	94
DEMOGRAPHICS.....	96
PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF POLICE-SUDANESE INTERACTIONS.....	97
PERSPECTIVES ON SUDANESE PERCEPTIONS OF THE QPS.....	99
PERSPECTIVES OF SUDANESE OFFENDING AND VICTIMISATION	100
CONCLUSION	107

CHAPTER 7	108
CONCLUSIONS	108
REFERENCES	112
APPENDIX A.....	120
APPENDIX B.....	125

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Of course the final report remains the responsibility of the authors.

Executive Summary

This report represents the outcomes of an 18 month study of Sudanese Australians' interactions with the criminal justice system in Queensland. The study was conducted across three sites; Townsville, Brisbane, and Toowoomba. The research was structured to address six major aims which focused on the experiences of Sudanese Australians particularly in relation to their interactions with the Queensland Police Service (QPS). This study used a multi-methodological approach and focused on four key approaches to obtain data in order to address the aims: 1) A critical analysis of Australian print media was conducted to ascertain how Sudanese Australians are constructed and how these representations influence community attitudes and government policies; 2) Queensland police were interviewed to gain their perceptions about interactions with Sudanese Australians; 3) Attempts were made to examine quantitative data from police databases to ascertain the extent to which Sudanese are represented in the criminal justice system in terms of whether they were perpetrators or the victims of crime; 4) Finally the voices of Sudanese Australians were harnessed through focus group interviews and surveys from a representative sample of young people, elders and women across the three research sites.

The media analysis produced a number of key findings. First, media reportage about Sudanese people has changed its focus over the time period covered in this analysis. There was a dramatic increase in media reportage in 2007. This is attributable to a large number of stories about the Sudanese *problem* around issues relating to crime, problems associated with refugee integration, youth gangs, and cultures of violence. Second, the trends in reportage changed since 2007 with an equivalence of stories reporting Sudanese as perpetrators as well as victims of crime. However despite a higher number of positive stories about the successes of Sudanese people is still reportage which portray Sudanese youth in particular as threats to law and order.

The data from the focus groups conducted with the QPS differ to the outcomes of the media analysis. Police perceived Australian-Sudanese people pose no greater problem with relation to criminal activity than any other ethnic group. However police argued that they did encounter some problems during the early stages of integration in Queensland with a few individuals. One paradox arising from the police interviews was that while police stated that there were some problems they did point to a range of organisational responses to the 'non-problem' with particular emphasis on lack of knowledge of the legal system, particularly road laws. Certainly evidence from elsewhere, such as Victoria (Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission [VEOHRC], 2009), indicates tensions between police and Sudanese Australians that was not evident in Queensland police perspectives. One positive perspective from some police was that they were willing to be proactive by engaging with emerging communities rather than waiting for problems to arise.

The surveys and focus group interviews with the Sudanese communities diverge from the perceptions of the police and the media analysis. The majority of survey responses reported that Sudanese overwhelmingly perceived themselves as victims of the criminal justice system rather than as perpetrators. Additionally Sudanese identified that they received differential and unequal treatment from police compared to other Australians. However these findings need to be tempered by the other two key findings. First, less than a third (29.8%) of respondents agreed that the police treated Sudanese people in a similar way to other migrants and refugees, meaning two-thirds felt they were treated differently to other migrants and refugees. This was reinforced by the results from the questions which asked whether the Queensland police suspected Sudanese people of committing crimes relative to other groups. It was found around two-thirds believed Sudanese were more likely to be suspected of committing crimes than other groups (including other Africans, other minorities, Australians generally).

The focus group interviews with elders, women and young people support the findings of the surveys. This data was analysed around the themes of the challenges associated with integrating into Australian society, concerns about how the state intervenes into the private lives of Sudanese families, and the types of interactions this cohort has with police within the public domain. The major challenges associated with integrating into Australian society were linked to a lack of proficiency with English, attempting to find suitable employment, and encountering forms of institutional racism. It is argued in this research that when analysing Sudanese interactions with the criminal justice system broader social factors like poverty and lack of access to education or employment need to be taken into account.

The focus groups also identified concerns about the degree of state intervention into the private sphere of the lives of Sudanese families. It was perceived that such intervention by police or other government agencies served to weaken the traditional structure of Sudanese families which were dominated by males. Changes to the power structure in Sudanese families resulting from young people challenging the authority of parents as well as the empowerment of women often produced conflict culminating in cases of domestic violence. The rise in domestic violence resulted in increased forms of state intervention into Sudanese families which were interpreted by some as being culturally inappropriate particularly when children were removed and placed in non-Sudanese families.

A final theme of the focus groups concentrated on the types of interactions Sudanese Australians had with the criminal justice system within the public sphere. Young people in particular identified a number of problems with police specifically in public spaces due to public perceptions that they belonged to troublesome youth gangs. Sudanese youth perceived that due to factors such as their skin colour and collective kinship based social practices they were more likely to be have increased interactions with police than other groups. The

Sudanese youth in this study also argued that rather than being a threat when interacting in public spaces they felt vulnerable due to over-policing and actually occupied public spaces in groups for personal safety.

All focus groups expressed concern about the skewed public perceptions that labelled them as being criminogenic and threats to law and order. The source of such misperceptions came from some politicians and academics which were covered in a number of stories in the media analysis in this study. Finally a high number of interviewees observed that they were the victims of police harassment and that police were often unwilling to listen to their account of events. To this end there was a dominant perception that that they were often the victims rather than the perpetrators of crime which aligns with the survey data. The Sudanese community were keen to dispute the commonly held belief that negative interactions between police and themselves were the result of Sudanese not understanding the law. These people reported that the supposed lack of understanding is either baseless or over-emphasised and instead is a justification for further police intervention into Australian –African communities.

Policy Recommendations

The findings of this project lead to the following set of recommendations.

The Criminal Justice System

The Queensland state government invests in programmes which are designed to change the way in which young Sudanese Australian people and police interact.

Queensland police undertake training in order to gain an understanding of Sudanese culture and develop strategies for interacting with Sudanese young people.

Sudanese elders are consulted if there is a child protection order issued involving a Sudanese child. In addition, elders should accompany police when investigating purported cases of domestic violence.

Members of Sudanese Australian communities are recruited as mediators for family dispute purposes.

Community Agencies

Community agencies provide education programmes for Sudanese Australians pertaining to their rights and responsibilities in relation to the criminal justice system.

An independent organization or advisory board be established to pursue complaints from the Sudanese community about perceived injustices due to their interactions with the criminal justice system.

Media

Monitoring of the press is ongoing to better ensure that reporting is more balanced regarding the lives of Sudanese Australians.

Chapter 1

Introduction

This introductory chapter provides a broad outline of the research aims, literature informing the research project, and direction on the content of subsequent chapters.

Major Research Aims

This project was structured to address six major research aims, listed below. In essence, the project was an exploration of the experiences of Sudanese Australians with matters related to crime and the Queensland criminal justice system, particularly with the Queensland Police Service (QPS). The project addressed these aims and other problems that became apparent during our research. Our major aims were:

- I. What are the expectations, experiences, perceptions and extent of knowledge about policing and the Australian criminal justice system held by Sudanese immigrants?
- II. To what extent are their perceptions based on experiences in Australia, on experiences prior to arriving in Australia or a combination of both?
- III. To what extent is it accurate to characterise Sudanese young people as youth gangs involved in criminal activity?
- IV. How are crimes against Sudanese people recorded and able to be analysed in key Queensland Police Services (QPS) data bases? Conversely, how are crimes committed by Sudanese people recorded and analysed in such data bases?
- V. What are the experiences or perceptions of Queensland Police, local government and community NGO support agencies regarding the nature of Sudanese contact with criminal justice agencies and victim support services?
- VI. How are Sudanese immigrants portrayed in the media on crime and justice issues and to what extent does media portrayal shape the perceptions of either Sudanese refugees or CJS personnel?

Our study involved the triangulation of data in order to produce a systematic understanding of Sudanese peoples' interaction with the criminal justice system: how do they perceive their experiences as either victims or offenders? What views do they have of police and related agency practices? We conducted interviews, focus groups and a community survey to elicit this kind of information. In addition to Sudanese views, the research project also obtained the views of other key stakeholders, in particular police members and a range of refugee and immigrant service providers.

Finally, given the importance of media reports on this issue, the study undertook a comprehensive content analysis of Australian print media content to analyse how Sudanese peoples are portrayed. Is there a particular orientation in the media generally, or can it be identified that particular media forms and/or groups portray Sudanese in a particular light? To what extent has this influenced policy and practice amongst government and non-government agencies?

Chapters 3 – 6 provide details of main findings, as well as other matters relevant to a comprehensive understanding of Sudanese Australians living in Queensland. The research study addresses the above mentioned aims and related problems by analysing QPS data, media reports, community surveys and conducting focus groups and interviews with Sudanese refugees in four distinct metropolitan and regional Queensland communities, key non-government service providers to these communities, police, and other related government agency personnel. Chapter 3 examines media reporting of Sudanese Australians, suggesting that this field is somewhat unstable, shifting across different kinds of portrayals of Sudanese Australians. Our approach to media analysis combines quantitative and qualitative data.

Chapter 4 shifts our focus towards seeking Sudanese Australians' views regarding their perceptions and experiences of crime and justice in Queensland. This chapter uses focus groups and interviews to elicit rich, qualitative data giving voice to Sudanese Australians. The following chapter builds upon the qualitative data by analysing a Sudanese Australian community survey, highlighting the difficulties than can arise with this approach while also indicating some important findings regarding self-reported victimisation and views concerning unequal treatment at the hands of the police.

Chapter 6 is our last substantive primary research based chapter and reports on the views expressed by members of the Queensland Police. This chapter was planned to incorporate victim and offender data recorded by the QPS. However, due to concerns regarding the quality of that data we focus instead on the qualitative data collected on police perspectives.

The conclusion to this report summarizes our findings and points to area for further consideration. However, before proceeding to a discussion of methods in chapter 2 we need first to provide a background for the research undertaken.

Background

Australia has resettled different refugee groups throughout its history. The most publicized of recent years have been those escaping the atrocities of Sudan via refugee camps administered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in neighbouring countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Egypt. The 'lost boys' of Sudan and others resettled in Western countries, including the United States, Canada, and Australia.

Queensland is the third largest settlement state in Australia. Since 2002-03 to June 2007 there have been 6247 Sudanese resettled in Queensland under the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) humanitarian settlement program (DIAC, 2007). According to DIAC (2007) data the three major settlement destinations have been Brisbane, Logan/Beenleigh/Woodbridge, and Toowoomba. Townsville is fourth on the list. Essentially, peoples of Sudanese background far outweighed peoples from other countries who have been entrants into Australia under the humanitarian settlement program during this period (Shepley, 2007). While still a minority group in these locations, Sudanese Australians are a distinct group in these communities. Throughout the report we often use the term Sudanese to refer to this group of Australians.

As with previous new immigrant groups, Sudanese immigrants have attracted considerable attention and debate concerning the extent to which they have successfully negotiated their resettlement, and the extent to which they represent a *social problem*. For instance, there was an initial concern about whether racial vilification against Sudanese admitted into Australia was taking place (Coventry & Dawes, 2006). More recently, media coverage has focused on alleged involvement of Sudanese young men, akin to LA rap-style gangs, as being perpetrators of crime and social disorder. Politicians, right wing hate groups and some academics have been in the mix – a disturbing set of facts – whereby, the a dominant message is one of Sudanese born Australians being troublesome and needing to be disaggregated through regional relocation away from the temptations of vice and crime in major metropolitan centres in some Australian states.

While these issues are contentious, there is a distinct lack of detailed, systematic, and holistic criminological research examination and analysis of these and related issues through the eyes of stakeholders, inclusive of Sudanese Australians themselves and key agencies. This is a vital research issue regarding gaps in knowledge, the contested nature of immigrant experiences and behaviour, and the different perspectives of criminal behaviour as one ingredient of Sudanese re-settlement.

These brief introductory comments point to the fact that Sudanese Australians are currently attracting considerable political and policy attention - attention that is based on highly contestable understanding due to the lack of detailed research, particularly in relation to criminal justice issues. This study seeks to

provide the information necessary for shaping an evidence-based framework for future policy and practice developments.

Having established the broad parameters of the study we now turn our attention to the details, drawing upon a selective literature review to frame both the key issues and the theoretical orientation of the project. Following this we detail our research methods.

Refugees and Crime

We note that Pickering (2008) raises critical concerns about the criminalisation and demonization of refugees in Australia. Her analysis points to the intertwining of media depictions of race, anxieties about the 'other' (particularly post-911), and the social construction of those referred to by Anthony and Cunneen (2008) as 'new and undeserving' criminals (pg. 3). This broader context is supported by observations made by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC, 2004), which identified the complexities of immigrant experiences including that of discrimination, vilification, and prejudice across Australian communities. In other words, the Sudanese refugee experience is a complex one, involving political, economic, cultural, and social factors.

Whether Sudanese immigrants represent a crime problem is far from clear and in general the views expressed by police interviewees in this study (Chapter 6) indicate they are not the problem much of the media reporting suggests (Chapter 3). In reference to ethnic minorities, Poynting (2008: 119) identifies that a statistical connection with ethnic minority crime is 'scant', the data collection being 'patchy in quality' and 'haphazard' but still indicating ethnic crime is 'disproportionately low'. He suggests that it is moral panics regarding ethnic gangs that attract attention in public spaces. To what extent Poynting's observations apply to Sudanese refugees in Queensland communities partly shaped our approach to this present study.

When we consider available data at the hard edge of the criminal justice system – corrections – there is hardly the evidence that the Sudanese community is a correctional problem or issue. In Victoria, for example, Corrections Victoria data indicate that as of July 2008 only 10 out of 4,223 prisoners were of Sudanese background. Further, 26 out of 7,813 offenders on community corrections orders were identified as having a Sudanese background. When one considers Queensland, available ABS 2007 data indicate that there were only nine Sudanese prisoners out of a total of 5,567 which translates to 0.0017% of the state prison population. On the face of it, these data (not expressed in rates per population) indicate that, community-wide, Sudanese people hardly represent a major threat as serious criminal offenders.

It may well be, however, that Sudanese people do represent 'trouble' in earlier phases of the criminal justice system. For instance, Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2008) point to troublesome relationships between low socio-economic status

and highly visible African and Indigenous Australian young people. For these groups, material competition and symbolic resources lie at the heart of such tensions. We recognized, therefore, that such work required the research team to investigate the complexity of both victim and perpetrator statuses in their interactions with the criminal justice system. Consequently, this study will focus on the interactions of Sudanese refugees with police as the major point of interaction between Sudanese people and the criminal justice system and recognizing the broader context raised by Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2008).

Manifestations of these issues can be identified in recent media reports in Australia. Coventry and Dawes (2006) challenged damaging assertions made through the print media by former Associate Professor Andrew Fraser, who suggested, in 2005, that Sudanese refugees were inherently more criminogenic and possessed lower IQs than other Australian immigrants (e.g. Dick, 2005). The Australian League of Rights published what it refers to as the 'most relevant section of the essay...regarding the plight of Anglo- Australians' written by Fraser (Reed, 2005: 1). Around the same time another academic, Dr Jim Saleam (linked to a group called the Concerned Citizens Collective and previously convicted of shooting an African leader) claimed that refugee migration into Australia was a recipe for widespread social upheaval, in that such peoples came from 'utterly fractured societies where the use of the gun and the knife is the common way to settle disputes' ("Police clear Sudanese", 2005). It has been claimed that both of these academics have been connected to right wing white supremacist groups which have been reported to have links into Queensland communities such as Toowoomba. In other words, according to these views Sudanese Australians represented a fundamental threat to Australian social order (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2008).

Our preliminary research of media reporting regarding Sudanese refugees in Australia indicated some oscillation between reporting of these peoples as being victims as opposed to perpetrators of crime. This matter is detailed further in Chapter 3, where we delve more deeply into this issue, presenting both a quantitative analysis of media reporting and a qualitative assessment of the shifting trends in media reports.

Following Fraser's claims that expanding black refugee immigrants would likely lead to crime problems in Australian communities it is not surprising that some communities have received leaflet drops. For example, in 2007, a leaflet titled: *An urgent warning to residents: the Hastings is under imminent attack* was distributed, warning residents of Port Macquarie-Hastings (NSW) of the scourge brought by refugees regarding crime and disease (e.g. HIV/Aids, tuberculosis, snail fever etc.) (Defend the Hastings, defend Australia, 2007).

More importantly for our purposes, one of the key primary definers of crime and anti-social behaviour – the police – have been reported in the media as having contradictory views regarding the extent to which Sudanese refugees are considered to be a 'crime problem'. In Victoria, for instance, this debate

escalated under the circumstances of the murder of a young Sudanese refugee, as well as conflict between police and groups of young Sudanese in public space. The Chief Commissioner of Police has been reported to claim that Sudanese do not represent a crime problem, whereas the Victoria Police Association Secretary Paul Mullet urged a re-think on the need to 'properly educate' African immigrants in Australian values. For instance, Mullet claimed 'The Sudanese are very difficult to deal with – they come from a lawless background and they really have to be properly educated about Australian society's standards' (Kerbaj 2007a: 1).

It is not just police who have expressed opinion about African refugees. Politicians, such as the then Commonwealth Minister for Immigration Kevin Andrews, contended that the Sudanese community did not integrate well with the wider Australian community ("Deport Sudanese troublemakers", 2007) and the then NSW Premier Morris Iemma articulated concerns about African gang crime problems in Sydney (Clennell, 2007). Such claims as those made by Andrews were supported by Brisbane business representatives in the same broadcast. Conversely, Queensland Premier Anna Bligh suggested that Sudanese refugees are law-abiding citizens and do not commit crime at rates above other groups of immigrants to Australia. Furthermore, Brisbane's Lord Mayor, Councillor Newman, cut through the fray on October 10, 2007 by supporting the Sudanese community and refuting their alleged involvement in violence and anti-social behaviours ("Brisbane Mayor stands", 2007). Finally, it must be noted that these contestable issues are by no means limited to metropolitan centres but also extend into regional Australia. For instance, Tamworth has been embroiled in a debate concerning the undesirability of having Sudanese refugees settle in that district. How then might we begin to understand these differing viewpoints?

Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2008) argue that African immigrants are highly visible. Stature, skin colour, and kinship-based social practices (for instance seeking to congregate in large numbers in public places, albeit something that is generally seen to be problematic when involving young people in particular) may render them more vulnerable to being targeted by standard police operational practices which are attracted by young males congregating in groups in public spaces (Cunneen, 1995; White, 1996) despite ongoing doubts about the existence of so-called youth and/or ethnic gangs (White, Perrone, Guerra, & Lampugnani, 1999). Nevertheless, the interactions of Sudanese refugees and the police are important considerations with regard to their resettlement into Australian communities.

Relations between police and minority groups is a 'universal, pervasive and continuing problem' (Neyroud & Beckley, 2001: 159). Central to this issue is the need to ensure that trust is established between police and different minority groups that exist in any country. As the Macpherson inquiry in the UK indicated, 'seeking to achieve trust and confidence through a demonstration of fairness will not in itself be sufficient. It must be accompanied by a vigorous pursuit of openness and accountability' (Macpherson, 1999: 371).

Much of the Australian criminological and policing scholarship has been, appropriately, directed at the intersections between police and Indigenous Australians (Cunneen, 2001). However, there has also been some analysis of relations and interactions between police and other minority groups (Chan, 1997; Collins, Noble, Poynting, & Tabar, 2000; Cunneen, 1995; Poynting, 2002). Policing and criminal justice practices related to both 'groups' (indigenous and other minority groups) have also been a staple of various inquiries dating back to the early colonial period (for instance, see Finnane (1994), for policing Indigenous communities and policing Chinese immigrants in the first half of the nineteenth century).

A recent DIAC report on regional settlement of humanitarian immigrants highlighted the importance of social capital to successful settlement of refugees. In that report, social capital was measured through such variables as public safety, vandalism, and crime (as well as other measures such as health, happiness and economics). Further, 'these indicators are extremely important to their successful settlement' (Shepley, 2007: 8). However, the same report identifies that:

To date there is limited research into the experiences of humanitarian entrants living in regional and rural Australia or the impacts of their settlement on the established community, the services and economics of the region (p.7).

In addition, the Victoria Multicultural Commission and Multicultural Affairs Queensland funded research into the global crisis events on community relations in multicultural Australia (Bouma, Pickering, Dellal & Halahof, 2007). This report and associated toolkits identified that:

...initiatives aimed at promoting harmonious community relations ... seem to be most successful when relationships between Governments and CAULD communities are forged; when communities are consulted on policies; and when stakeholder networks are established to facilitate dialogue and effective communication (Bouma et al., 2007: 10).

Through interviews and focus groups the DIAC report did identify that there were some concerns that police services differed extensively across the various regions. Moreover, some interviewees believed police discriminate against black Africans and that too little was being done to target racism or harassment from the wider community. This illustrated a need to enhance fair and unbiased access to the justice systems (in particular, through access to appropriate interpreting services) and the necessity to develop procedures for identifying and encouraging suitable policing practices (Shepley, 2007).

The policing and criminal justice dimensions of this research project are precisely concerned with the documentation of perceptions and attitudes to police and criminal justice system, the broader factors shaping these perceptions, and the

identification and dissemination of good policing practice. Such problems are not limited to police interactions with immigrants (Brodeur, 1998)

DIAC is not alone in expressing concerns about the paucity of research in this area. The criminological literature also indicates that the research record of 'racial/ethnic/immigrant group attitudes towards the criminal justice system and the police' is limited (Martinez, 2007: 57), though such research generally finds that such groups have different attitudes to the dominant population (Weitzer & Tuch, 2005).

What is clear with regard to Sudanese refugees is that their high visibility in a 'white nation' (Hage, 1998: title), the lack of existing 'assimilability' factors such as 'invisibility' and established community ties, language, education and the limits placed on the 'advantageous self-identification or self-inclusion' that exists for white refugees (Colic-Peisker, 2005: 618, 624) produces challenges for Sudanese to obtain self-inclusion, let alone true social inclusion (Colic-Peisker, 2005; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007).

With regard to criminal justice oriented research, current and recent debates have been based on *ad hoc* events including 'signal crimes' (Innes, 2004: 335) that operate as warning signals concerning potential social problems beyond the case itself. These signal crimes may be more or less serious but their importance is the manner in which they are used to convey deeper meanings about social order, whereby the problem of crime is imbued with personal meaning that resonates with broader cultural concerns about 'the other' (Kerbaj, 2007b).

However, these anecdotal claims have not been subject to empirical study. Even limiting our concerns to attitudes towards and perceptions of police and the criminal justice system we also need to take into account the impact of broader social factors such as poverty and neighbourhood disadvantage (Sampson & Bartusch, 1998) and other neighbourhood characteristics specific to policing practices such as use of force, police misconduct, slower police response times (Brunson, 2007) and 'signal events' (Innes, 2004: 335). These shape perceptions of unfair and disrespectful treatment at the hands of police (and other agencies). However, little is known about the attitudes and perceptions, and factors shaping these, of Sudanese immigrants.

The research presented in this report will address these and related problems by analysing media reports and conducting focus groups, community surveys and interviews with Sudanese refugees in four distinct metropolitan and regional Queensland communities, key non-government service providers to these communities, police and other related government agency personnel. Not all of these planned research methods were fully enacted, as discussed in subsequent chapters of this report.

Chapter 2

Research Methods

The following outline of the methodological approach we have adopted establishes the broad framework for the research. Where additional detailed comments on method are needed these are included in each of the substantive chapters.

Methodology

This project was structured on five main types of research methodologies:

- Media quantitative (N=222) and qualitative analysis during the period of 2000 through 2009 (although, more recent 2010 reports are referred to as part of the qualitative analysis, mainly because we have noted another shift in the kinds of content being reported more recently);
- Community surveys (N=380) focussed on demographics of a sample of residents in Brisbane, Logan, Toowoomba, and Townsville and questions to elicit some basic information regarding the extent to which they have had involvement with the criminal justice system as victims and/or alleged offenders;
- Queensland Police Service arrest/charges/victim data from 2000 to 2009;
- Interview and focus group qualitative data obtained from QPS personnel in two regional centres and three Brisbane locations (N=14); and
- Focus group data and interviews with various community groupings in Brisbane, Logan, Toowoomba and Townsville.

It is most important, however, to report our experiences and reflexive thinking about working with the Sudanese communities in these aforementioned four communities. It was, and continues to be, a most challenging research engagement; exciting, enlightening and at times frustrating. Besides meeting our funded research objectives, the research team has maintained a strong commitment to enabling a sample of Sudanese Australian communities with an avenue to give voice to their experiences with the criminal justice system, particularly in Queensland and particularly with the Queensland Police Service. To this end and to assist in delivering our research objectives, we appointed Sudanese Australian Research Assistants – Bona, Abraham and Tony. These individuals have been most invaluable in opening up lines of communication between JCU researchers and their local communities. Without them, we would have met silence. We must also add that Bona joined the research team as a full member of the research group, part of the regular research team meetings (between fortnightly and monthly for most of the project), including attending

Research Steering Committee meetings. In addition, the research team has ensured that there has been a great deal of consultation about the project with Sudanese elders and other prominent individuals and non-government organisations.

Both media analyses and QPS data collection/analyses were less dependent on retaining Sudanese Australian Research Assistants for the conduct of these aspects of the project, compared to other research methodologies employed. Essentially, media analyses and QPS quantitative/qualitative data analyses were the responsibilities of the Principal Investigators, not requiring substantial involvement by the Sudanese Australian Research Assistants.

Methodological Details

The planned methodology for this project included the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data to produce a balanced analysis of how Sudanese people interact with the Australian criminal justice system. Methods of data collection include an analysis of incident reports from various QPS data bases about crimes involving Sudanese people, QPS arrest statistics (though, see chapter 6 indicating such data have not been incorporated in this report), an analysis of media reportage about Sudanese involvement in crimes or anti-social activities, a major survey of Sudanese people across four sites in Queensland, and a series of in-depth interviews/focus groups with Sudanese people, QPS, NGOs and local government.

Quantitative methods

Three forms of quantitative data have been collected. First, an analysis of police crime data about Sudanese people as victims and offenders. The rationale for analysing the QPS databases was to ascertain how police record crimes/incidents involving Sudanese peoples and how crimes committed by Sudanese are recorded. The data were to be analysed to highlight the extent of crime committed or experienced by Sudanese at each site. Unfortunately, as argued in Chapter 6, these data are too unstable to be used. The QPS use the term 'African Negro' to identify a range of different ethnic/racial groups, and even then it is not recorded. In other words, to clearly identify the precise numbers of Sudanese Australians as victims or perpetrators of crime in Queensland is not possible.

Second, quantitative data in the form of a survey of Sudanese people living in Townsville, Toowoomba, Brisbane, and Logan was collected over a six-month period. Our initial aim was to obtain a sample of 600 which would represent about 10 percent of the Sudanese population of Queensland. Due to a range of problems we did not achieve this number, with the final total of surveys completed being 380, by no means an insubstantial number. The questions covered topics relating to demographics such as age, gender, and locations lived while in Australia. Other topics focus on issues relating to Sudanese people's

experiences of integrating into the Australian community such as education, types of employment, and interactions with other institutions such as health services and the criminal justice system.

The other form of quantitative data consists of an analysis of print media reportage to gauge how Sudanese people who arrived in Australia as refugees are reflected in media coverage. The analysis includes a quantitative analysis of the number and types of reports featuring Sudanese refugees (N=222). The analysis shows the frequency of print and other media reports of Sudanese refugees as either victims or perpetrators of crimes (with the latter including membership of criminal gangs). Key national and local media will be featured in the analysis, including reports covering the period from 2000 to 2009.

Procedures for Survey Distribution and Collection

Our ideal approach started smoothly. Following initial contact with agencies, the research advisers, with assistance from NGOs, were to distribute surveys to people at each site through the use of snowball sampling (Berg, 2004). Each research participant at each site was to be given an additional set of surveys (each with planned pre-paid envelopes with the return address of one of the key researchers at the university). Participants were to be asked to specify how many surveys they would distribute and the appropriate number provided by the research assistant. Additional copies were to be made available at later dates upon request.

The research subjects were told that the surveys are strictly confidential and that there is no need to provide their names or other personal details. Confidentiality will be ensured. The snowball recruitment process was to continue until either:

- (a) Approximately 600 completed surveys are returned, or
- (b) The data collection period of three months expired.

Even though we extended the time for this aspect of the data collection we were still unable to achieve the objective of 600 completed surveys. Further details regarding some of the impediments regarding survey data can be found in Chapter 5. In brief, here, this approach for survey distribution and collection proved to be a failure. NGOs changed their clientele focus, changed staff and seemed somewhat unwilling to assist with the project. In addition, the communities were reticent to cooperate with our method, largely due to previous postgraduate researchers coming into the communities, undertaking fieldwork and failing to provide feedback to community members. We changed our approach.

Qualitative methods

The qualitative data was to be collected from two major sources:

- Four focus group interviews with five Sudanese people at each site (about 20 in total) together with two members of the research team, a Sudanese adviser and interpreter. It was envisaged that the focus groups would consist of males and females ranging from 20 years to 60 years of age.
- One focus group interview with up to eight police in each location. Each police focus group was to consist of a mix of operational police and managers, including police officers who deal directly with Sudanese people and Sudanese Police Liaison Officers. The interviews were held at police stations across each site. This approach has been used productively in other research with police (James & Warren, 1995).

Each focus group session was approximately one to one and one half hour in length and be structured to elicit information pertaining to the major research questions. In essence, the focus group discussions elaborate on survey data. Also, it is important to note that during site visits interviews were conducted with a sample of key stakeholders and the Sudanese communities to elaborate on focus group discussions.

All interviews were taped on a hand held tape recorder. The transcripts of the tapes were typed to aid in the analysis of the data. Informed consent was obtained prior to the surveys, focus groups and interviews.

The timeframe allowed ample time for each site visit to gather data, using methods which have proved successful in previous research undertaken by the researchers, including triangulation of data and method which has provided results that are rigorous, credible, and valid (e.g. Dawes & Roberts, 2007). Transcripts from all interviews were analysed to identify major themes and patterns. Only the transcripts from the Sudanese focus groups were analysed using nVivo.

Site visits were planned to be organised in three phases. A preliminary meeting to build trust and good faith, outline the processes involved in the research and identify expectations of different stakeholders. The second site visit was to concentrate on major data collection activities, while the third was to provide further opportunity for data collection and provide feedback to research participants. These planned visits required considerable ongoing monitoring and negotiation, clarification, and assurances.

Not surprisingly, all did not go to plan. The JCU research team experienced considerable difficulties organising meetings, experiencing day long delays on several occasions, changes in the political/program leadership of elders/NGOs (meaning that the objectives and processes of the research project required

continual negotiation), difficulties of focus group meetings being scheduled as 'add-ons' to religious and cultural events, and suspicions from some Sudanese community members about 'another research project that leads nowhere'.

Recruitment of Research Participants

The research team consisted of a Sudanese university student (Bona) who was paid as a part time research adviser/assistant. Bona has extensive contacts in the Townsville, Brisbane, Logan, and Toowoomba Sudanese communities and therefore was vital in assisting in the recruitment of potential research participants from each site. In addition, Bona assisted in locating local community members to act as paid interpreters when the research team made contact with the Sudanese community.

Initially, the research adviser/assistant coordinated with another Sudanese adviser located in Brisbane (Abraham), representing community development activities in Brisbane, Logan, and Toowoomba, in organizing focus group forums at each site and recruiting Sudanese people to attend. Later in the project a third Sudanese researcher was added (Tony) to assist with organisation of Toowoomba field research and data collection.

Conclusion

This brief overview of research methods provides an outline of the initial research plans and methods incorporated to achieve the research objectives. However, as is indicated at several points, the approach taken required considerable flexibility. The surveys were considerably more difficult to conduct and though the final number of 380 was well short of our aim of 600, in the context elaborated upon further in chapter 4, we argue that the final number is a considerable achievement. Focus groups similarly involved some adaptation on the part of the research team. Finally, the police quantitative data did not provide the hoped-for clarity on crime and victimisation trends, notwithstanding the general problems with official records of crime. Nonetheless, in general terms, while the practice of data collection required adaption and change, the general methods employed remained consistent. The following chapters address these issues in more detail and report the findings for each of the research phases and foci.

Chapter 3

Media Depictions and Moral Panics: Representations of Sudanese Refugees in Australia

Background

The place of the media is important in shaping – though not determining – the “emotional tones for the rhythms of life and reminders of ideals of the order and disorder that threaten peaceful neighbourhoods and the cosmologies of ‘normal order’” (Altheide & Michalowski, 1999: 475). While the important issues regarding settlement needs and services for migrants and refugees are often mentioned by the media, they are often over looked by the news media in favour of stories about crime and violence in refugee and migrant communities in Australia (Lee, 1997). Moreover, stories on settlement problems, long-term unemployment, English skills and welfare dependency are often framed by law and order issues and depict migrants and refugees as being a part of undesirable activities.

Indeed, racially based headlines and sensationalised media reports have the potential for the general public to associate specific ethnic groups with specific criminal activities (Lee, 1997). As Thompson, Young and Burns (2000) argue the media’s concentration on crime news not only influences public attitudes and opinions towards crime and criminals, it also helps to maintain crime as a salient political issue (Surette, 1992). Furthermore, media coverage can emphasize an issue, thus reinforcing it in the public agenda. There is also a tendency for the media to use an ‘us and them’ approach to reports on ethnic minorities (Lee, 1997).

One recent example of detailed media analyses concerning African refugees in Australia is Windle’s (2008) account of print media in Melbourne in 2007-2008, the critical peak of public and political debates that tied together the issues of refugees, crime and immigration policies. Windle (2008) found that African communities living in Melbourne have been constituted as the racialised ‘other’ through intense media coverage. This author found that there is little support for the idea that African refugees are more likely to commit crime than other groups, though journalists have an over reliance on using certain ‘primary definers’ such as government reports and police media releases to make certain stories fit specific frames. For example, Windle (2008) notes that the media directly quoted police at the scene of the Liep Gony bashing in Victoria who stated that Sudanese “...walk around in packs” (Kerbaj, 2007b). In addition,

Windle (2008) argues that Africans are stereotyped and racialised through descriptions of their appearance and build. 'Rake-thin', 'skinny', and 'tall' were identified in the media (Franklin, 2007: 1). Demeanor was depicted as 'defiant' and 'swaggering' and it was reported that 'their skin tone, height and clothing and a certain defiant attitude make these Sudanese born youths stand out' (Farouque & Cooke, 2007: 1). Furthermore, height in particular is frequently mentioned in relation to Sudanese men however rarely was height used to describe non-African groups (Windle, 2008).

Behind the labelling and stereotyping there is often an underlying cultural determinism captured by reference to an African culture of violence. Victoria Police Assistant Commissioner Paul Evans was quoted as stating that police are 'dealing with refugees who had come from a culture of boy soldiers and social violence' (Evans, 2007: 3). Further, the commissioner explained 'it is a cultural thing. A lot of these people are brought up as warriors in their own culture' (Mitchell, 2007: 25). Windle (2008: 553, 559) argues that the framing of African youth as a 'problem group' and 'youth gangs' resonates with wider moral panics about juvenile delinquency, the decline of traditional standards and parental authority.

This chapter continues the exploration of media images of Sudanese Australians analysis exploring the extent and content of crime reporting in Australia and in Queensland. The next section covers the quantitative analysis of crime news. We follow this analysis with a qualitative, interpretive account of crime reporting.

Quantitative Methodology

Data Collection Procedure

The selection of media archives to include in the study was influenced by a number of factors. First amongst these was that the archives be relevant to the present study. Second, the newspaper archives needed to cover the time period chosen for the study (2000-2009). Third, the archives needed to be complete and easily searched.

Three major newspapers were identified as relevant: *The Australian* and *The Age*, for their national coverage; and *The Courier-Mail*, for its coverage of Queensland. Local or regional newspapers were not included as their content was often selective, or otherwise incomplete.

For each newspaper a series of database searches were conducted. The terms *Sudan/Sudanese*, *migrant/refugee*, and *Australia*, were systematically combined for each newspaper. All identified articles were then accessed and saved to a local hard disk. All identified articles were also printed for subsequent analysis.

A variety of data verification processes were included in this study. Chief among these was collaboration with African refugee support groups that had their own media clipping services. Articles identified by the research team were cross-referenced to those of the clipping services (for the three selected newspapers the current research team identified every article provided by the clipping services).

Data coding

A data coding protocol was developed to depict the content of newspaper articles containing references to Sudanese refugees and migrants in Australia. The coders first identified whether an article was relevant, and then analysed the content.

Relevant content was defined as any content relating to Sudanese people living in Australia, whether as migrants or refugees. Irrelevant content was defined as any content in which the focus of the article was not on Sudanese people in Australia. Examples of irrelevant content included: news from Sudan (e.g., Sudanese elections); or Sudan being mentioned as an incidental part of an article, for example in an article about Ethiopian migrants, mentioning that the migrants had travelled through Sudan.

Content was then examined for the presence or absence of specific themes. For some items the coders also assessed whether the theme was *explicitly* (indicated or referred to clearly) or *implicitly* stated (not as clearly indicated, but still present). This was based on the coding scheme identified by Desmarais, Price, and Read (2008).

The final data coding sheet contained: six items concerned with identifying the source and general content of the story, six items on crime themes, four items on racial stereotyping, slurs and social exclusion, and six items on crime waves and stereotyping.

Section A: Data sources

- Newspaper name
- Year of article
- Month of article
- Type of story (e.g., editorial, news story)
- Main focus of story (e.g., crime report, sports)
- Voices (identification of quotations by individuals/groups)

Section B: Crime content of story

- Presence of crime theme

- Type of offence
- Racial identity of victim
- Racial identity of offender
- Crime statistics involving Sudanese people included in story (explicit/implicit)

Section C: Racial stereotyping, slurs, and social exclusion

- Sudanese people labelled as more criminogenic than other groups (explicit/implicit)
- Sudanese people labelled as lower intelligence than other groups (explicit/implicit)
- Sudanese people labelled as a threat to social order in Australia (explicit/implicit)
- Reference to Sudanese gangs (explicit/implicit)

Section D: Crime waves and stereotyping

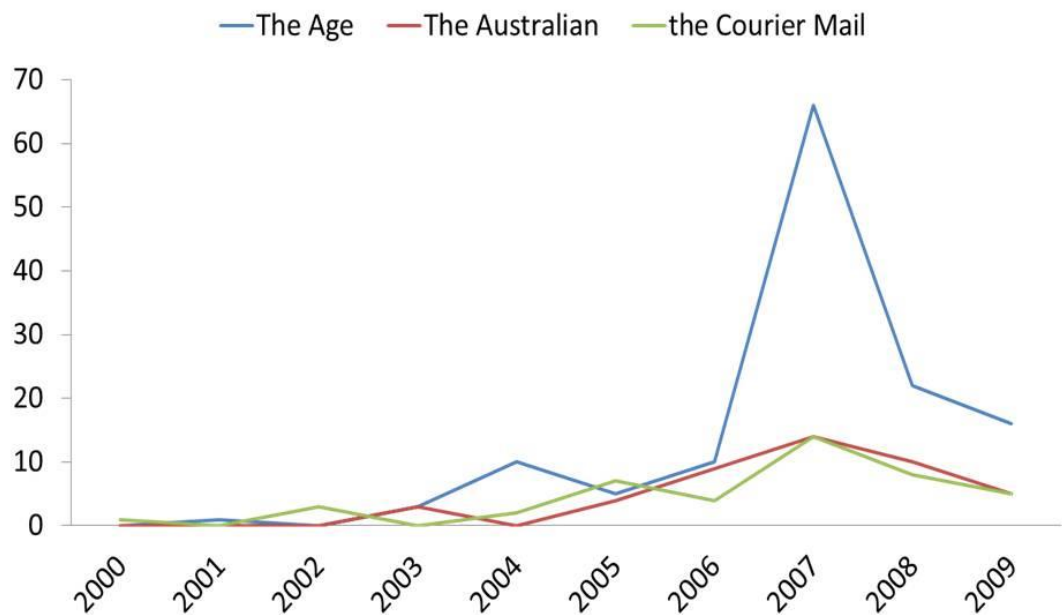
- Reference to Andrew Fraser (explicit/implicit)
- Reference to Kevin Andrews (explicit/implicit)
- Relocation of refugees to regional areas (explicit/implicit)
- Reference to Sudanese as highly criminogenic (explicit/implicit)
- Reference to Sudanese as having low intelligence (explicit/implicit)
- Reference to Sudanese as a threat to social order in Australia (explicit/implicit)

Sample

The data searches identified a total of 756 separate articles (duplicates were identified and removed manually). Of these, relevant content was identified in 222 articles which constitutes the final sample. This included 133 articles from *The Age*, 45 from *The Australian*, and 44 from the *Courier-Mail*. The year with the most articles was 2007 (94 articles, or 42.3% of the sample), and the years with the least were 2000 and 2001 (both with only one article each, or 0.5% of the sample).

The distribution of articles for each of the three newspapers over the period 2000-2009 is shown in Figure 1. It illustrates a steady increase in the number of articles about Sudanese refugees in Australia between 2000 and 2006, with a surge in articles in 2007, and a subsequent decline in the last two years.

Figure 1 Number of articles featuring references to Sudanese refugees in Australia in the Age, The Australian, and The Courier Mail, 2000-2009



Results

The results section is organised into three sections:

- How the media reports on Sudanese refugees
- Sudanese refugees and crime
- Crime waves, stereotyping and moral panics

How the Media Reports on Sudanese Refugees

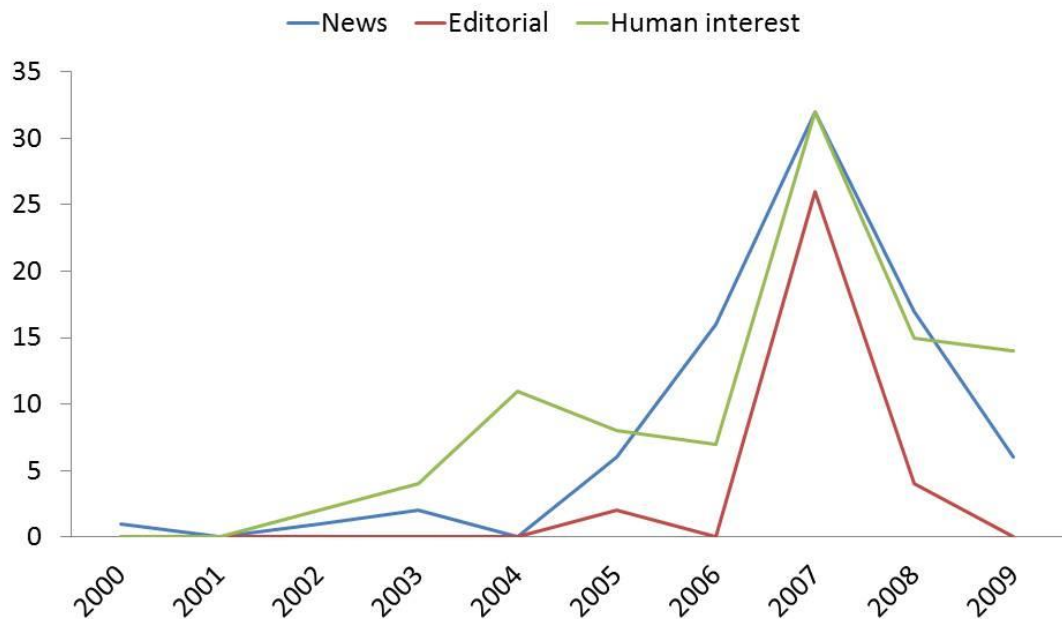
Types of Articles

The 222 articles were first classified by type of article. There were five main types of article, including: news stories (descriptions of recent events), editorials (the daily editorial), investigative journalism (in-depth articles on a single topic,

usually relating to criminal matters), human interest (articles about people and families), and lifestyle (articles about cultural issues such as food, music, and clothing).

The three most common types of articles (see Figure 2) were human interest (93 articles), news (81), and editorials (32).

Figure 2 Types of newspaper articles featuring references to Sudanese refugees in Australia 2000-2009



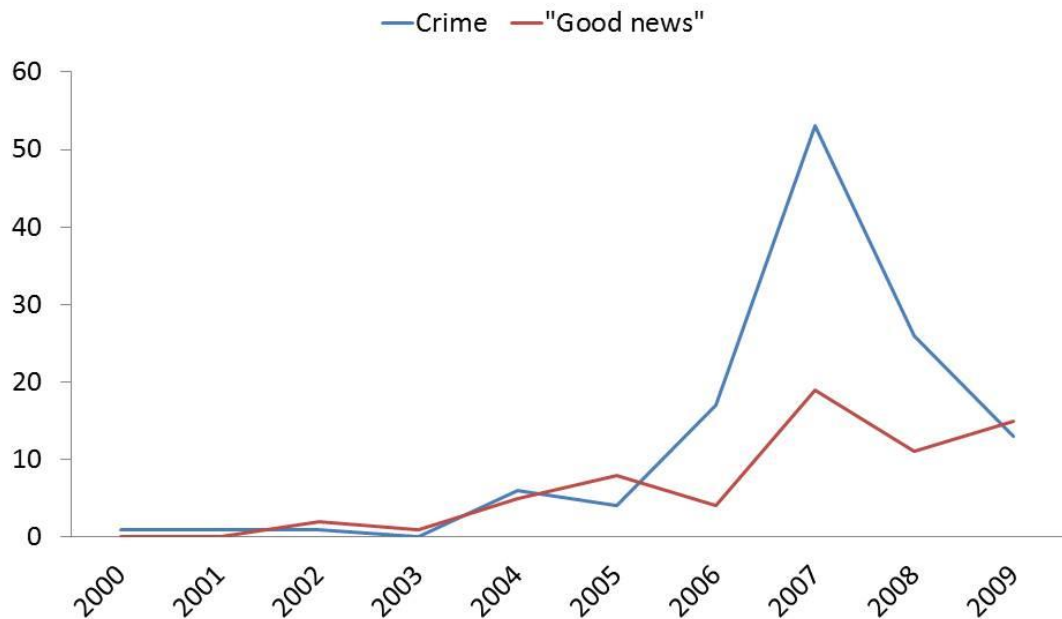
The frequency of all three of the main types of articles showed a similar pattern, with a slow increase in articles (2000-2006), a surge in 2007, followed by a decline (2008-2009).

Content of Articles

The main content areas in the articles were classified by the presence of crime themes (122 articles) and, conversely, 'good news' themes (65 articles). Good news articles included those on Sudanese fashion (14 articles), community life (13), sport (8), or involvement in research studies (30). The frequency of crime articles and 'good news' articles are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3 shows that crime and 'good news' related articles were equally prevalent across the periods 2000-2005 and also in 2009. However, in the period 2006-2008 the frequency of crime related articles was more prevalent.

Figure 3 Content of newspaper articles featuring references to Sudanese refugees in Australia 2000-2009

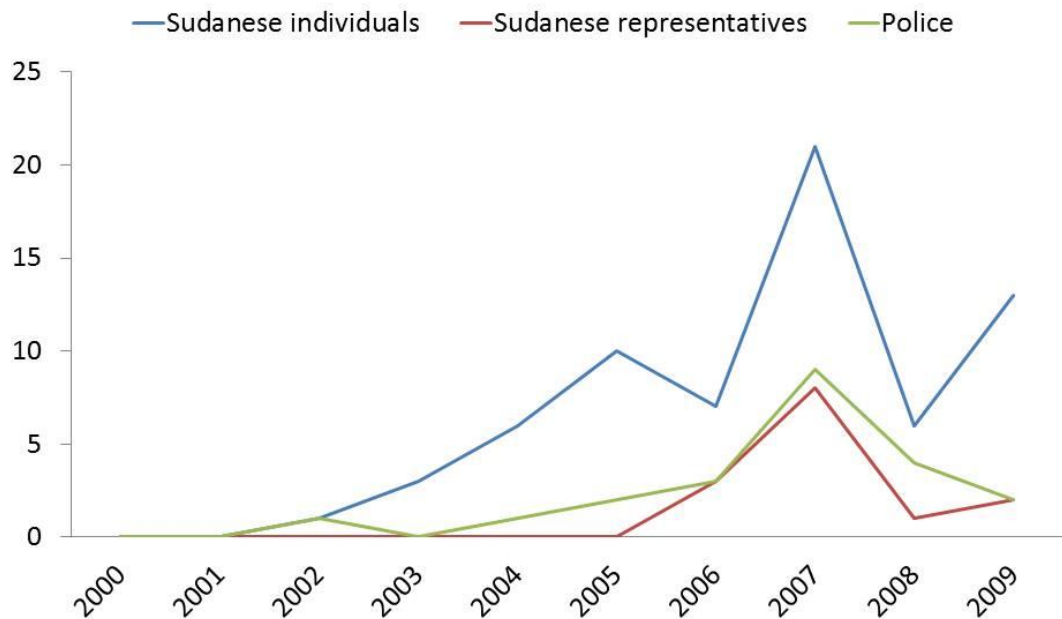


‘Voices’

In many of the articles there were quotes that could be directly attributed to Sudanese individuals, Sudanese groups (e.g. a spokesperson representing the Sudanese community), the police, and other sources (such as refugee support groups). Figure 4 illustrates how the frequency (by year) of the following ‘voices’: Sudanese individuals, Sudanese groups, and the police.

Figure 4 shows that during the period 2000-2009 that Sudanese individuals were the group most likely to be given a voice in newspaper articles (67 articles in total). Sudanese representatives were quoted in 14 articles, and the police in 22.

Figure 4 'Voices' in newspaper articles featuring references to Sudanese refugees in Australia 2000-2009



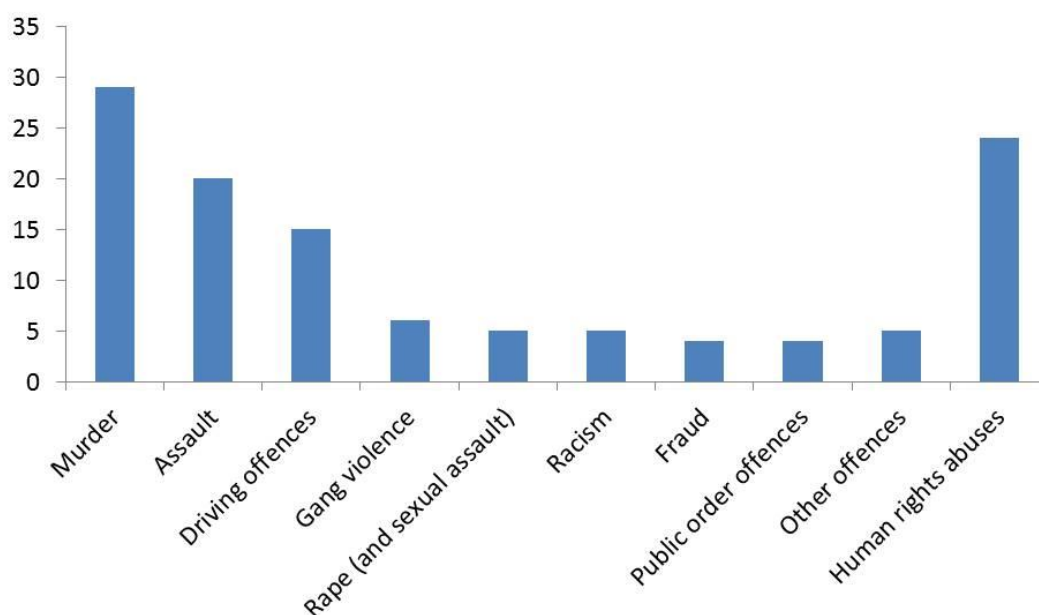
Sudanese Refugees, Crime, and the Media

Crime Stories

From the 122 articles featuring crime themes, a single main offence type was identified in 117 of the articles. In the remaining five articles no specific offence was stated. The frequency of the 10 most common offences is shown in Figure 5. Note that 'murder' includes one case of attempted murder, and 'assault' includes one case of grievous bodily harm. Crimes not shown include domestic dispute (2), arson, robbery, and terrorism (1 each).

In each of the articles featuring human rights abuse cases (24 articles) the offences occurred in Sudan. The remaining offences all occurred in Australia. Figure 5 shows that the most common single offence type in Australia was murder (29 articles), followed by assault (20), and driving offences (15).

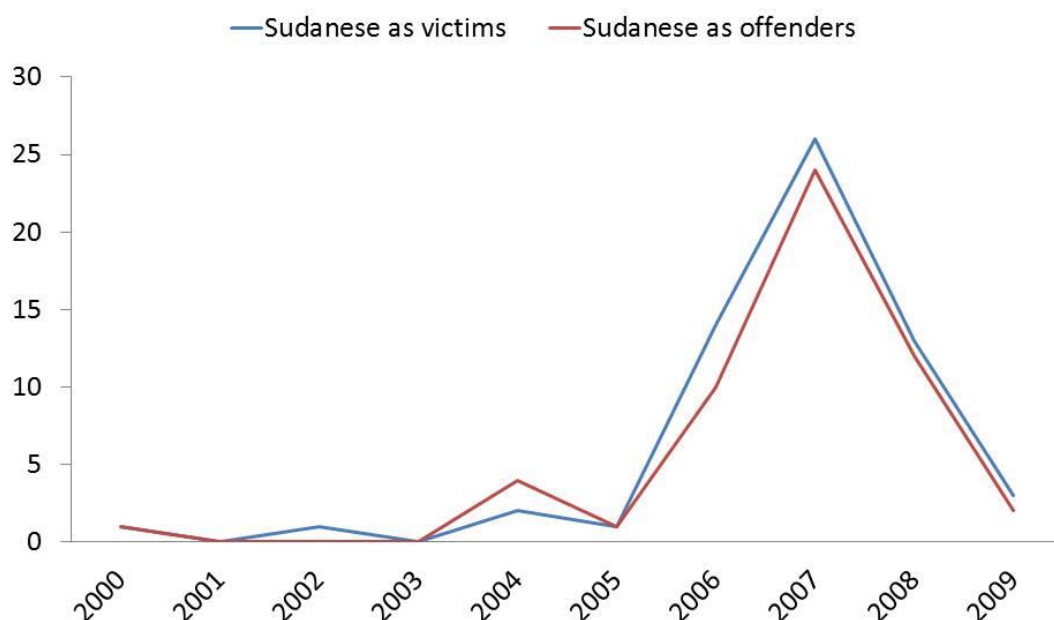
Figure 5 Number and Types of Crime stories featuring Sudanese People (2000-2009)



Articles were then analysed to determine whether the Sudanese people were described as either the offenders or victims of each crime. Offenders were identified in 61 cases, victims in 54; with no identifiable offenders or victims in the remaining articles.

The frequency with which articles featured Sudanese people as either an offender or as a victim is displayed in Figure 6. Figure 6 shows that the frequency with which Sudanese people are identified as either offenders or victims, has largely been equivalent between 2000 and 2009. That is, the newspapers featured here were equally likely to describe Sudanese people as a victim or an offender, a pattern that has been consistent for the last decade.

Figure 6 Number of Newspaper Articles Featuring Sudanese Refugees in Australia as Either Crime Victims or Offenders 2000-2009



Crime waves and Stereotyping

The newspaper articles were also analysed for the presence of themes suggesting a crime wave being committed in Australia by Sudanese people; and the stereotyping of Sudanese people, suggesting that they represent a threat to the social order in this country.

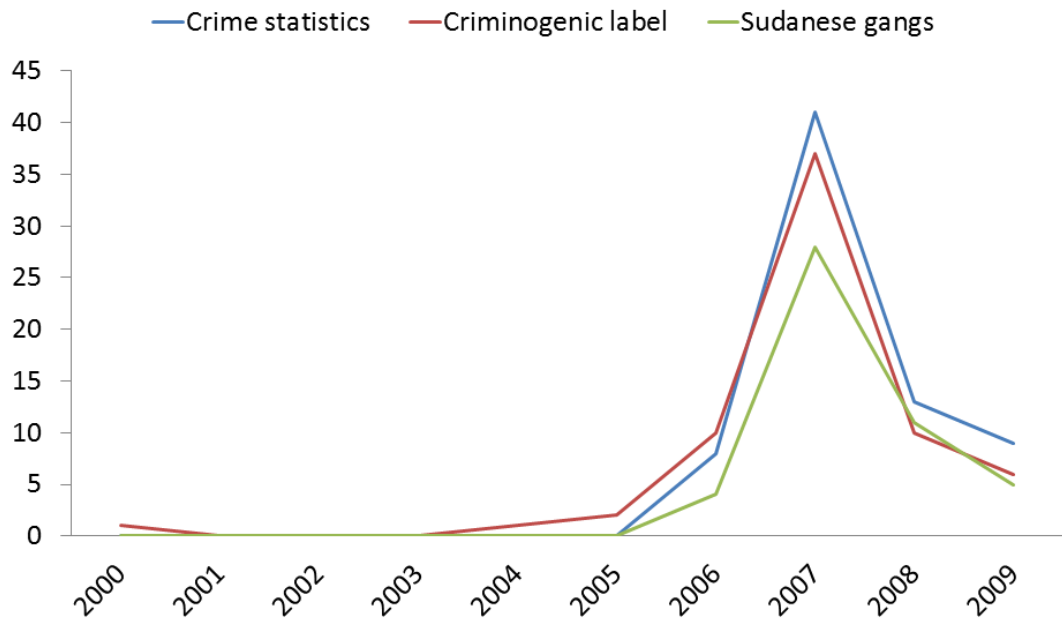
Figure 7 summarises the frequency with which articles contained references to the criminality of Sudanese people (whether stated either explicitly or implicitly). This included: the use of crime statistics (e.g. data showing rates of imprisonment of Sudanese people), the labelling of Sudanese people as more likely to commit crimes relative to other groups (noting that these first two themes often co-occur), and also to the existence of Sudanese gangs.

There were 71 articles in which crime statistics were cited. In 67 articles Sudanese people were described as more criminogenic than other groups (most common comparisons included either ‘other African refugees’ or ‘all refugees’). There were 48 articles containing references to ‘Sudanese gangs’.

In Figure 7 the frequency of each of these content areas only emerges as an issue (albeit a minor one) in 2006, when there were 22 articles (all three topic areas combined), up from only two such articles the previous year. This is then

followed by a remarkable surge in 2007 when there were 106 articles, and in turn there was a decline in both 2008 (down to 34 articles) and 2009 (down to 20 articles).

Figure 7 Number of Articles Suggesting a Sudanese Crime Wave in Australia 2000-2009



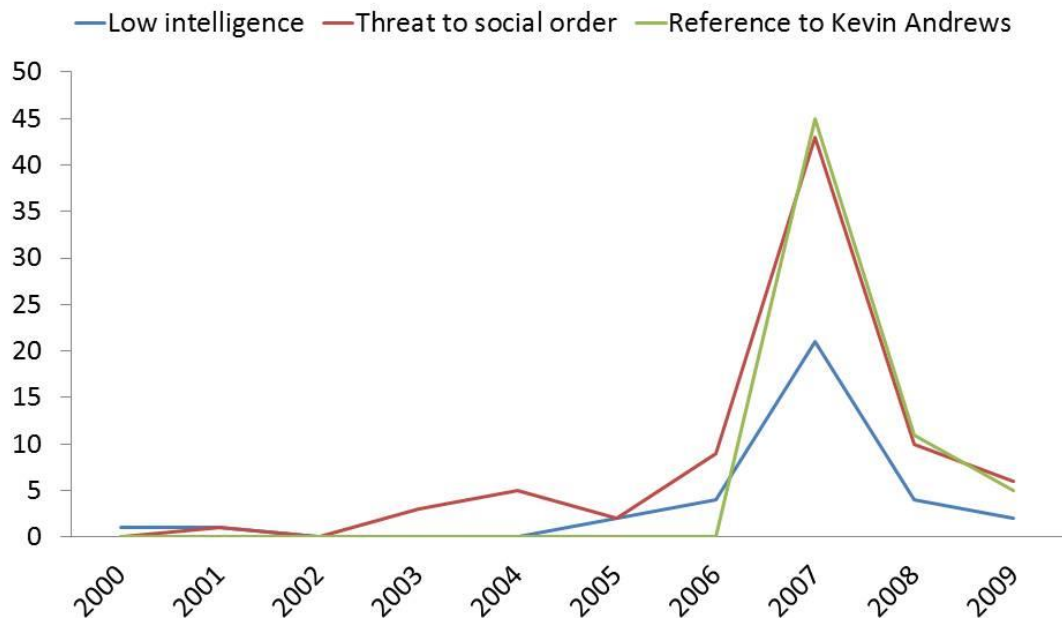
The newspaper articles were also analysed for other themes (explicit or implicitly stated) suggesting that Sudanese people represented a general threat to the established social order in Australia (79 articles), and that Sudanese people are lower in intelligence than other groups (35 articles). The latter suggestion is a viewpoint that is difficult to justify logically, and so most such aspersions lacked any obvious reference point (e.g. other African migrants or Australians). Data on these two themes are shown in Figure 8.

Articles were also analysed for references to either Kevin Andrews (data shown in Figure 8), and also Andrew Fraser (explicitly named in 3 articles).

As with Figure 7, there was a marked increase in the frequency of articles containing negative stereotypes (both low intelligence and threat to the social order) in 2006 (13 articles) and 2007 (64 articles). In 2005 there were only four such articles.

The three references to Andrew Fraser occurred once in each of the years 2006, 2007 and 2009. The references to Kevin Andrews peaked in 2007 (45 articles).

Figure 8 Number of Articles Featuring Negative Stereotypes about Sudanese Refugees in Australia 2000-2009



In addition, there were 76 articles referring to the relocation of Sudanese refugees from metropolitan to regional areas (0 in 2000-2003, 7 in 2004, 6 in 2005, and 8 in 2006, peaking at 33 articles in 2007, 13 in 2008, and 9 in 2009).

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative 'Foci' of Media Reporting

As discussed in the previous sections of this chapter, media reports vary with regard to content and style. Here, we dig a little deeper into the qualitative content and key messages being conveyed about Sudanese Australians since around 2004, when media reports were becoming more noticeable in the press. Our thematic analysis identifies what we consider as four main foci of media reports; which take on dominant roles in different periods since the second large intake of Sudanese refugees (predominantly from southern parts of Sudan) as Australian immigrants in the early to mid-2000s.

The four main foci can be referred to as emphasising:

- The Humanitarian Focus
- The Beginning of a Crime Focus
- The Demonisation and Perpetrator Focus
- The Cultural Focus

There is diffusion between the onset and cessation (if at all) of these foci. Particular media reports are identifiable by date and content. The articles are not mutually exclusive with regard to these foci in that they are often somewhat discursive and cover a range of relevant issues about contemporary debates. Nonetheless, there appears to be arguable evidence about specific foci of media reports since the early 21st century to the present, worthy of comment in a thematic way, which throws light on the so-called 'Sudanese' problem.

We submit qualitative evidence about media reporting in this part of the research report.

The Humanitarian Focus

Early on, with the beginning of a large intake of peoples from Southern Sudan, in particular, newspaper media articles tended to convey stories that emphasised the plight of Sudanese entering Australia from a war torn country. The message, although not great in terms of volume in media reports, was that these refugees should be afforded safe settlement within Australian borders, under the protection of UN conventions.

Elsewhere in this research report we provide some details about the traumas that were faced by many Sudanese young boys and girls in their escape to freedom. Some were participants in the present study.

Pamela Bone (2004, October 2) writes a most exposing piece in her cover story about the humanitarian crisis which enveloped those fleeing Darfur province and crossing the border into Chad. Crossing the border from a war torn western area of Sudan to camps that could not cope with needed humanitarian aid is a familiar story for more than one million Sudanese. Bone, under the auspices of Oxfam, presents a most telling piece of journalism, which gives insight into the kinds of lives experienced by many who eventually arrived in Australia.

Similarly, Larissa Dubecki (2007, October 20) reports on some aspects of the life story of a southern Sudan woman, Aguil De`Chut Deng born in the 1970s, who arrived in Australia in 1996. After the 1983 outbreak of civil war in Sudan she joined the Sudanese People's Liberation Army to support fighters. Her story continues, following her 2007 presentation to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Geneva on behalf of the International Council of Voluntary Agencies. According to Paul Power, CEO of the Refugee Council of Australia, 'It was deserving, as she is a vibrant and at times very outspoken member of the Sudanese community' (as cited in Dubecki, 2007).

These kinds of stories foster the Australian laconic expression of something like 'a fair go mate'. Scattered throughout the media reports we researched are some examples of opinion which suggest the need for political and program assistance for those of a Sudanese refugee background.

In a lengthy piece, Hewett (2007, October 23) provides an overview of some developments in regard to Australia's refugee policies under the Howard Government. Poignantly, Hewitt suggests the following:

It is time to speak out loudly and clearly for an Australian refugee policy which is non-discriminatory and firmly based on the humanitarian needs of those seeking to resettle in this country.

African-Australians have done nothing to deserve to be singled out for having apparently failed to integrate in their new home, Australia. They are no different from other groups such as South Americans, Cambodians and Vietnamese refugees who have previously looked to Australia for protection from persecution (Hewett, 2007).

According to Hewett (2007), Sudanese Australians are not the social problem that they have made out to be. Further, the article continues with an 'attack' on the then Minister for Immigration, Kevin Andrews:

Immigration Minister Kevin Andrews has the right to determine who does and doesn't come to Australia. But there is no substantive evidence to support the view that African refugees and humanitarian entrants are having more difficulty in resettling than others (Hewett, 2007).

Our data support this line of argument. In effect, Hewett (2007) raises questions about the validity of evidence regarding questions about Sudanese arrivals and their resettlement into various parts of Australia. Also, he opens up serious questions about 'scare mongering' regarding the extent of criminal activities allegedly perpetrated by members of Sudanese communities. They are law-abiding citizens. However Lane (2008) states:

SO-CALLED visible migrants and refugees -- think of dark-skinned Sudanese -- have been recent arrivals in country towns. "This is the cutting edge of migration resettlement," sociologist Brian Galligan said.

"If you're visibly distinct and you come to Melbourne, you can fit in, you can join a community (of fellow migrants). If you go to Colac (in country Victoria) or Albury (in NSW) you're going to be much more in a 'stand out' situation" (as cited in Lane, 2008).

Reference to crime data was also cited as indicating that the Sudanese community is not overly represented in criminal cases:

Police forces in a number of states have evidence that crime rates among the Sudanese community are no higher than those for the rest of Australia -- in fact, there are suggestions that Sudanese people are less likely to commit crime than other Australians (Hewett, 2007).

Farouque's (2007a, January 13) article broadens the debate further regarding settlement issues:

Whilst Dandenong, with cheap housing, is attractive for Sudanese, many question if the infrastructure and supports are still adequate. "It becomes a problem when you concentrate large numbers of people without language and skill deficiencies in a specific area," says demographer Bob Birrell, "We are not doing nearly enough for these people, it's a failure of state and federal governments".

Some months later, Farouque (2007b, October 13) provides a further insight into the lack of support and for Victoria's re-settlement program, focusing on quality of life issues, linked to employment:

Sudanese refugees are likely to experience a 'thin sense of belonging if they are unable to find jobs, according to research into their resettlement.

Nevertheless, most Australians have held sympathetic views about refugees from Africa. Matthew Ricketson (2007, October 15), in *The Age*, states:

Around two-thirds of radio talkback callers also supported the African refugees, according to Media Monitors analyst Patrick Baume. 'It certainly seems that the vast majority of people have no opinion at all or are simply not fussed about African immigrants...' By comparison, talkback callers in 2001 ran strongly against the asylum seekers on board the Tampa.

The Undercurrents of Racism?

So, what does the public get from the print media about Sudanese refugees settling in Australia? Arguably, one of the most comprehensive pieces was provided in *The Age* in October 2007 (Martin, 2007). To be kept in mind is that this Melbourne based newspaper has regularly reported on issues and events involving the Sudanese community and, therefore, needs inclusion in our analysis. The author points out that the intake of Sudanese refugees since 2004-2005 to 2005-2006 has markedly declined. Some important points regarding humanitarian issues raised in this article are re-produced here. The views of the then Immigration Minister, Kevin Andrews, feature most prominently around

2007. It is his outspoken comments that represent a shift in the tone of media reports that have disturbed Sudanese Australian communities across Australia:

Mr Andrews explained that the decision was based partly on concerns that refugees from Africa, particularly those from Sudan, were having trouble settling into the Australian way of life.

...Mr Andrews has expressed concern about African race-based gangs, crime and conflict. He says instead of Africa, the refugee intake will focus on Asia, in particular accepting refugees from Burma now waiting in camps in Thailand, as well as Iraqis in camps in Syria and Jordan.

...There is concern that the African community has been unfairly targeted. In 2004-05, Sudanese refugees made up the largest component of Australia's humanitarian program. In fleeing war and famine, they have commonly experienced torture and trauma, spending years in refugee camps with few opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills.

...In singling out one ethnic group, the Government is accused of making decisions based on race rather than need and fuelling racial prejudice for political advantage in the lead-up to the election. Police data shows that Sudanese refugees are not overrepresented in crime statistics and the Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria says refugee levels should be based on needs rather than perceptions about refugees' ability to integrate (Martin, 2007, October 15).

An editorial opinion *The Age* ('The rights of all refugees', 2007, October 3) stated concerns about the larger impact of the Commonwealth Government's apparent shift with regard to Sudanese refugees:

At issue here is not the size or make-up of Australia's refugee intake, but the Government's message to the wider community. Precisely how 'quickly' should 'we' expect people who come from such severe deprivation to adjust to the so-called Australian way of life? We take our refugees as we find them, which is not to absolve any group of civic responsibility. It simply means Australia must honour both the spirit and letter of its international obligations by accepting our share of refugees and demonstrating empathy, patience and goodwill thereafter.

In summary, the views of various community figures, including Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria chairman, Phong Nguyen, were canvassed by *The Age* ('Refugee cuts bordering on racist', 2007, October 3). Importantly, the following is stated:

It is simply inhumane for the Government to close the door on these people, based on perceptions that some African refugees are not integrating into the community. As with all refugees, their initial

settlement period will face challenges and the Australian-African community is facing discrimination and racism. Selecting refugees on perceptions of their capacity to integrate borders on racism.

The Beginnings of a Crime Focus

Following a possible 'caring' concern 'wave' across the media about the plight of Sudanese refugees entering various Australian sea and air ports, there was some media attention paid to whether this new immigrant group was a target for particular individuals or groups that were intent on inflicting psychological or physical suffering on them. Internationally, criminal justice system data regarding race hate crime incidents are largely unreliable. It is not surprising, therefore, that we are not able to conclude that there is evidence of such widespread incidents across Australia. However, we have been able to identify a few media reports which raise questions about the extent to which Sudanese Australians may have been victimised, in part because of comments attributed to some community 'leaders'.

But, we need to pay some attention to general public support for Sudanese arrivals. It seems that there was sympathy for African refugees when the Howard Government announced a cut in refugee intake from such countries.

THE deaths of two Sudanese migrants in Toowoomba on Tuesday night may have been a tragic murder-suicide, and not a race attack as suspected by some relatives (Artfield, 2005).

However, there seems to be some evidence of isolated incidents which may be racially motivated.

Police are investigating a warning to a Sudanese-born businessman in Toowoomba to leave the Queensland Darling Downs city within days or be 'destroyed'. John Yaak received the warning, the latest in a string of abusive letters he has received, in a note placed under the door of his discount shoe shop late last week. Toowoomba's 700-strong Sudanese refugee community has been harassed by right-wing extremists for months. Families have been forced to leave their homes and people have been pelted with rotten eggs and vegetables ('In Brief', 2006).

Certainly, elected spokespeople for Sudanese communities consider that the comments made by Mr Andrews are linked to attacks and abuse of some of its community members as indicated in the article by Doherty (2007):

Bol Gok, of the Sudanese Community Association of Australia, said that since Mr Andrews' original comments, attacks and instances of abuse against Sudanese Australians had increased dramatically.

He said the attack on police was condemned by the wider Sudanese community. The vast majority of Sudanese immigrants made enormous efforts to integrate in Australia, often under great duress, he said.

Police, too, played down the racial element of the attack.

Assistant Commissioner Paul Evans denied that there was a 'race problem' in Noble Park. 'Last night we had a group of drunken youths. It wouldn't matter if they were Australians, they were Sudanese, whatever nationality,' he said.

Mr Evans said many Sudanese youths were from backgrounds of extreme violence and deprivation, were suspicious and resentful of authority and it would be a long process to integrate them.

Sudanese, he said, were predominantly law-abiding, 'first rate' members of society, and all levels of government had to work together to smooth their path into Australian society (Doherty, 2007).

Some Local Government members, particularly in Melbourne, have fuelled negative images of our Sudanese Australians, which may hinder their successful settlement into Australian communities. Recall that the policy of moving Sudanese Australians out of metropolitan Melbourne into regional 'cities' and towns across Victoria was largely based on calls to neutralise the supposed criminogenic influencing factors that are found in metropolitan areas. Queensland has not adopted such a strategy.

(Former Mayor of the City of Greater Dandenong) Mr Brown's answer is to revisit the humanitarian element in the migration program. 'Africa is a basket case ... We're not going to sort out their problems by bringing out people here: Australia is not here to solve the problems of the world.

'Of all the immigrant groups that I've worked with and dealt with, the greatest amount of problems have been, time and time again, from the Sudanese community.'

Whilst Mr Brown lacks statistical evidence to back his assertions, he cites anecdotal evidence such as the weekend brawl. But others ask how many other brawls were there in Melbourne last weekend that went unaccounted in the media?

Mr Brown has no truck with that. 'If I behaved like some of these Sudanese youth are behaving I would be in the slammer before they would (be),' he says. Is there a spectre of the 'r' word in his diagnosis? 'It's been expressed to me that if a person chooses to criticise an aspect of the immigration program they are racist. I don't see that.' (Farouque, 2007a, January 13).

Victorian Police in the area may have a different view. For example:

Chief Inspector Bob Graham, from Victoria Police, who has oversight over the council area, takes a more longitudinal view. There are problems with some Sudanese youth, he concedes, but they echo issues that have arisen with previous generations of migrants and refugees (as cited in Farouque, 2007a).

In other words, there is debate about the extent to which Sudanese young people, in particular, pose a problem for policing in metropolitan areas (at least, in Victoria). As we repeatedly indicate in this research report there are different 'voices' about the extent to which the Sudanese community is involved in criminal activity. There is no evidence that they occupy disproportional numbers, as some Commonwealth, State, and Local Government members and 'right - wing' academics would like us to believe. Indeed, the balance of senior police views falls heavily in favour of the Sudanese community being very 'law-abiding' (apart from driving related offences, which we come to later in this report).

Of concern here, is the potential for remarks made by some that could inflame actions against Sudanese community members. Mr Brown's (Farouque, 2007a) comments are a case in point.

An illustration of this kind of possibility is highlighted by excerpts taken from the following article by Roberts (2005, August 22):

Right-wing extremists attached to a neo-Nazi group called the White Pride Coalition have targeted Toowoomba because 750 Sudanese refugees have been resettled in the Darling Downs city.

Inquiries by The Australian have established that Mr Perren is the White Pride Coalition's chief operative in the region.... When contacted by The Australian, Mr Perren did not deny his involvement in the race-hate campaign (Roberts, 2005).

Having said this, it should also be noted that, in the same article, Sudanese community leader Angelo Geng was reported to say that the majority of Toowoomba residents were sympathetic towards Sudanese refugees (Roberts, 2005).

Part of our considered understanding about the relative plight of many Sudanese Australians as potential victims of crime is derived from the work of Pickering (2008), drawing our attention to the 'other'. This notion of the 'other' and the distinction between 'us' and 'them' is critically important to a comprehensive analysis of the Sudanese Communities' interactions with the Queensland Criminal Justice System. Perhaps, ethnicity is not the key to understanding media

reports about these communities. It is representations of these people that lay the foundation of their demonization.

The background of 'child soldiers' and 'Lost Boys' (previously mentioned) may have overwhelmingly shaped the lives of young Sudanese who have settled across Australia and Queensland, according to media reporters. The focus from humanitarian to victim issues in reporting occurred, somewhat obliquely, but this then set the stage for another phase or wave: the demonisation and perpetrators of crime focus.

Now with the tribal and historical backgrounds of Sudanese refugees established, the vitriol of government and the press was about to be really unleashed. The following article illustrates the 'new' bent to be found in the press:

The negative perceptions were not so much about their ethnicity, culture or issues but about the kinds of people they were, Professor Babacan said. It was also found that young Sudanese were seen as 'tribal, they stick to the tribe, that they are used to fighting, that they have clans, and the few incidents that happen in Australia reiterate that negative image' (Jackson, 2007b, October 23).

The Demonisation and Perpetrator Focus

While earlier reports tended to depict Sudanese migrants and refugees as proactive, committed to education and hard-working, a shift occurred around 2006. In contrast to earlier reports, the media seemed to take on a different tack; and 'tacky' that was. We had witnessed a period after the height of the refugee intake when these people were being derided, at first relatively softly. Around the same time, difficulties with finding work and English language, as well as cultural differences regarding the operation of the family home, crept into the press. The 'other' had arrived: 'time to be an Aussie, mate' seemed to be a consolidated step to the separation of 'us' from 'them'.

We argue that this shift in the focus, at first subtle and then more overt as we will see, was part of a process that generated 'images' of the drift toward a more punitive and less socially inclusive way of reporting crime related news about Sudanese communities. There were both issues and debates we should pay attention to.

As previously indicated, one of the prominent politicians of this 2006-2007 period was Kevin Andrews, the then Minister for Immigration in the Howard Government. The reported views of Andrews are known widely throughout the Sudanese communities with which we engaged. We will begin with a couple of reports that provide an overview of the context on which the Howard Government set about changing the quotas for Sudanese and other African refugees in the last days of government. Criminogenic backgrounds (war torn country and child soldiers), and criminogenic areas (e.g. inner city areas) were

part of the mix. Then the notion of the gang is introduced and is applied to Sudanese young people. Reports tag young males, in particular.

There have been stark differences of opinion among police as to whether Sudanese young people represent a serious crime problem and whether they actually have formed gangs. The Victorian Police Association spokesman believes this to be the case:

Police Association secretary Paul Mullett has called for much more help to educate Victorian Sudanese about the 'Australian way of life'.

He does not believe that Sudanese are unfairly targeted by police, but does believe that ethnic gangs have emerged, which warrant a specialised taskforce.

'It's more they roam the streets in gangs and cause, at times, antisocial behaviour, and our members need the resourcing support to prevent that,' he said.

Mr Mullett said that African communities were finding Australian laws difficult to adjust to. They come from a lawless society and they find it difficult, not only with the better standards of living here, but also the higher standards of behaviour (Jackson, 2007a).

On the other hand, the Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police contends that they represent a miniscule number of those handled by the Victorian Police:

The killing of Liep Gony has sparked accusations of a disproportionate amount of crime within the Sudanese community. But, according to senior police figures, the reality does not back up this public perception.

'When you look at the numbers we're talking about, the young Sudanese who actually come into custody or dealt with us, only really make up about 1 per cent of the people we deal with,' Chief Commissioner Christine Nixon told 3AW radio. 'When we look at the data, what we're actually seeing is that they're not, in a sense, representing more than the proportion of them in the population.'

The reality for those at the coalface, however, might be slightly different, and it is believed some police have expressed frustration at having to parrot the line that there is "no problem" with African youth.

But overall, it is stressed, like any new migrant community, Africans will integrate over time - and have done so well in smaller communities, such as Morwell and Wonthaggi (Cooke, 2007).

But, demonisation also took on a new face, shifting from crime to allegations that Sudanese refugees were carriers of deadly diseases:

Immigration Minister Kevin Andrews has been labelled a racist after his comments on African migrants stirred up a pre-election storm.

Premier Anna Bligh blasted Mr Andrews' claims that Africans who have come to Australia are potential troublemakers, while refugee advocates threatened legal action.

Pauline Hanson emerged as one of Mr Andrews' few public allies yesterday when she said Sudanese were bringing diseases including AIDS, leprosy and tuberculosis into Australia.

Ms Bligh said police data showed Sudanese were not over-represented in southern Queensland's crime statistics.

'It has been a long time since I have heard such a pure form of racism out of the mouth of any Australian politician,' Ms Bligh told reporters. 'To hear this sort of attack on these people is, frankly, something that belongs to the deep South of America in the 1950s.'

But Mr Andrews refused to back away from his controversial comments and insisted Africans struggled to integrate into Australian society.

But Ms Hanson, Senate candidate and former One Nation leader, backed Mr Andrews.

Speaking at a Gold Coast Media Club lunch yesterday, Ms Hanson said Sudanese refugees were failing to assimilate, forming gangs and fighting.

'They're incompatible with our culture and our lifestyle,' she said. 'We don't need these people in Australia.'

'... Australians are fed up being told it's racist -- we have to protect our own society.'

The Federation of African Communities Council indicated it would lodge a racial discrimination complaint against Mr Andrews with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (Stolz, 2007, October 6).

While there is little support for the alleged existence of Sudanese gangs in Queensland, some Victorian police believe that Melbourne has them, while others suggest there are exaggerated claims:

Police in Melbourne fear the emergence of militant street gangs of young African refugees who have served in militia groups in their war-ravaged homelands.

Young African leader Ahmed Dini said some Somali, Sudanese and Eritrean men, predominantly aged between 16 and 25, felt disconnected from mainstream society and were either forming or joining ethnic groups for protection and also for a sense of belonging.

He said while he was not aware of any structured African community gangs in the city's inner north, he was aware young Sudanese men from the western suburbs were becoming more established and organised in their gang activities.

But a police source told The Australian the street gangs were not usually structured or organised. 'There isn't necessarily a leader and so on' (Kerbaj, 2006).

Nevertheless, senior police still hold to the view of gangs in Melbourne:

Assistant Commissioner Paul Evans confirmed the connection between street violence and gangs.

'What they do is imitate the American gang culture ... because they identify with the black American gangs,' Mr Evans told The Australian.

'The clothes they wear, the rap music -- you speak to them and they even talk like black Americans. But they've sort of got to realise that they live in Australia.'

Mr Evans stressed the vast majority of Sudanese and other African refugees were law-abiding citizens (Kerbaj, 2008, April 16).

The situation in Queensland seems to be quite different. In Moorooka, for example, Sudanese young people are seen to be little more than exhibiting being a public nuisance from time to time:

MOOROOKA residents and business owners say the only 'crimes' local Sudanese refugees commit are loitering and being loud in public.

The area's federal Liberal MP Gary Hardgrave said this week the local community was 'exhausted' by the intake of African refugees.

But police say the African community crime rate is not disproportionate to the rest of the population.

All the business owners and residents who spoke with The Courier-Mail yesterday agreed the migrants posed no problems (O'Loan & Heger, 2007, October 6).

And, in Toowoomba police say that there is no issue about gangs existing:

Southern police region Chief Superintendent Tony Wright said the 1000 Sudanese who lived in Toowoomba were not involved in gang activity and most were 'model citizens'.

'We've got no issues at all in relation to any African refugees,' Supt Wright said (Heywood, 2007b, October 5).

Further, community leaders are adamant that gangs do not exist in the larger Brisbane metropolitan area:

But Daniel Zingifuaboro, from Queensland's Sudanese Community Association, denied there was a youth gang problem in Brisbane and accused the Government of singling them out for unfair treatment.

Mr Zingifuaboro said Sudan was a collective society where young people generally socialised in groups. 'I don't think it is correct to say they are forming gangs,' he said (Heywood, 2007a, October 4)

More recently, television networks were severely chastised over inaccurate reporting regarding the death of the 19 year old Liep Gony in Melbourne was at the hands of a Sudanese gang. The Australian Communications and Media Authority found that the major commercial networks had no evidence that Sudanese young people were (wrongly) involved in this tragic event. We also note that the print media did little to provide an accurate reassessment of the facts:

The broadcasting watchdog has slammed three commercial TV stations for inaccuracy over news reports on alleged Sudanese crime gangs.

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) ruled that channels Ten, Nine and Seven breached the Commercial Television Industry code of practice by blaming Sudanese for violent offences and wrongly implying they were prone to crime.

In a submission to the authority, Seven acknowledged the gang 'was not exclusively Sudanese' and that the man arrested was a Pacific Islander.

A complainant told the authority the report was racist in presenting the footage 'as proof of Sudanese crime gangs' and that none of the youths in the security footage was black African.

Seven told ACMA it had been asked by police for privacy and safety reasons to remove footage that showed African men in and outside the store.

But ACMA found the 'ordinary reasonable viewer' would infer from the newsreader and reporter's commentary 'that they were witnessing an actual African gang at work. This was not the case.'

ACMA said Channel Nine's comments of 'Sudanese gangs terrorising shopkeepers in Noble Park' was similarly inaccurate. The authority said the ordinary viewer would have a strong impression 'that they were witnessing an actual African gang at work' but this was not the case.

On Channel Ten, ACMA found that commentary with the footage, such as 'angry locals ... blame Sudanese gangs for an outbreak of violence', wrongly implied to the viewer that the footage depicted 'an actual African gang at work' (Webb, 2009, December 1).

Similar complaints were lodged by the African Migrant Review Board:

Dr Andre Renzaho, chairman of the African Migrant Review Board, wrote to the three networks complaining about their portrayal of 'Sudanese gangs' in which footage depicting violence in a shop contained no Sudanese person (Farouque, 2007b).

The Cultural Focus

Since the inception of this CRC research project we have openly stated our preparedness to provide feedback about our project to the Sudanese Australian communities in Brisbane, Logan City, Toowoomba, and Townsville. As a research team we have maintained a strong commitment to reporting, as best we can, a representative sample of voices from these communities. These voices will be heard. Our focus groups' and survey data are part of that commitment. Sudanese Australians do express concerns about life in Australia and their interactions with the justice system. Many of these are of a negative tone.

But, there is more to consider. The lives of a few, but we think are encouraging signs that assist in positively shaping the lives of more Sudanese Australians, are featuring in the press. Here, we take a look at media reports, which we regard as positive news stories, as distinct from the 'maladaptive', 'crime prone' and 'dysfunctional' tenets of earlier media pieces we have considered.

Scattered before 2004 were media reports, which might be regarded as 'good news' stories. By 2010, culturally reported news about Sudanese Australians has become far more prominent. The politics surrounding the days of Kevin Andrews had passed by. To be sure, there are still media reports that focus on matters to do with victimisation and predation with regard to criminal matters. However,

we note a shift – one that has to do with more about social inclusion, rather than the labels of the ‘other’ and its consequent politics of social exclusion. Saba Abraham’s story lays testament to the importance of full inclusion of her people into Australian communities:

A Proud Achievement

‘I want to say thank you to the country which has given me human dignity and opportunity.’ Saba Abraham

Saba Abraham struggled to find the words to describe her feelings yesterday, but the message she communicated was one that brought many to tears.

‘I want to say thank you to the country which has given me human dignity and opportunity,” she said.

‘It’s the country we call heaven and earth.’

Born in Eritrea, the 47-year-old came to Australia 17 years ago as a Sudanese refugee.

She now runs the Mu’ooz restaurant at Moorooka, in Brisbane’s south, which offers work-based training programs for African women migrants.

She is also a founding member of the Queensland African Communities Council.

When her name was announced as the winner of the Fair Go Pride of Australia medal, it was to cheers from a group of African women at the back of the grand Customs House room.

Still clutching her medal closely after the ceremony yesterday, Ms Abraham said she did not expect to receive the honour of being selected from the list of finalists.

‘To come as a refugee in this country and be nominated and then a winner, is just a great privilege,’ she said.

Ms Abraham described the struggle refugees faced in coming to Australia, often with no English and no family support.

‘But you come here for peace and peace means everything.’

‘It’s an honour to be here,’ she said of the award ceremony, ‘but also in Australia’ (Chester, 2009, July 10).

A most important part for many Sudanese refugees who have settled in Australia is a commitment to education. It is recognised, however, that this commitment may well be a longer-term objective and is not without future risks;

It is a warning sounded by Dr Mark Copland, executive director, Catholic diocese of Toowoomba social justice commission. While there are excellent immediate settlement programs, funded by the Federal Government under the umbrella of Anglicare, there is still trouble on the horizon.

...A recent report on Toowoomba's newest ethnic group found: 'As a community we need to be considering the nature of the Sudanese Community in two, five and 10 years. While there is much to celebrate, great challenges also face the wider community.

'Leadership will be required in terms of advocacy for greater resourcing. With a low rate of full-time employment and a large section of the Sudanese population currently in education the very real work of long term settlement awaits us all.'

Dr Copland said not all refugees would achieve their high expectations of life in Australia.

'If these young men do not have something meaningful to do then like anywhere there will be social problems,' he said (Lloyd, 2006, February 11).

More recently, media reports have centred on secondary school educational scholarships for Sudanese Australians, the marketing of distinctly Sudanese products (African spices), and the introduction of Sudanese young people into the music industry. For example:

...Rob Hirst - of Midnight Oil fame -- was one of several professional artists lending their support to the project, called One for All (Christiansen, 2008, August 25).

Besides music, the Australian football league is about to showcase its first Sudanese-born player, following the 2009 rookie draft:

When Majak Daw was nine years old, his parents packed up the family and fled Sudan in search of a better life.

'I was just screaming. I was just so happy to be at North Melbourne and be the first Sudanese to achieve this. It is a big achievement.'

The 194cm excitement machine from the Western Jets understands the importance and impact his drafting will have on the African community.

'They are very proud of me to be the first Sudanese,' Daw said.

'A lot of them are migrants and refugees who have come from war-torn countries and they don't expect this to happen.

'When something like this happens, it really means a lot to them. It gives them a lot more confidence to sort of be involved in the community' (Gullan, 2009, December 17).

We know that Sudanese Australians and their organizations are pleased with this shift, in at least some of the kinds of reports that have more recently come to light. For the vast majority who came to Australia as refugees, their journey has been arduous, to say the least. There have been periods that may be tersely described as *give them a fair go, it's about time you became an Aussie and they have brought a culture of violence with them*. We are hopeful that rational and responsible reporting, based on factual evidence, not distorted evidence or innuendo, strengthens in the future and that a greater balance is given to the successful (and positive) contributions these communities make to life in Australia. Perhaps, with a diminished media emphasis on largely unsubstantiated crime events (more recently, so-called gangs) and with a shift in the balance toward where we believe the majority of the Australians started a decade ago these peoples will be given *a fair go*. We, like the community members we had hours of discussions with, believe this significant shift would help stem the tide of some of these Australian citizens returning to Sudan. Of course, there will always be those who wish to return to assist in country re-building. But, there are others who are being driven away, primarily because they are seen as unwanted others.

To conclude this chapter, Claudia's story summarizes much of what our qualitative analysis of the print media contains, especially since around 2004/2005 (peaking in terms of volume and controversy in 2007). Her words take up from the words of our case *Lost Boy* presented earlier. She talks of her Australian experiences. We would add the word 'proud' to her last sentence. The research team experienced many occasions with these communities where they were openly proud of each other. They deserve dignity and maybe just a touch of open appreciation, pride would be better, across Australian cities, regional centres and towns. The days of false moral panics should be laid to rest.

Claudia's story

I AM a 24-year-old African woman who has been living in Australia for nearly 16 years. I grew up in the northern suburbs, live in the eastern suburbs and now work as a youth worker for the Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues. My role is to assist migrant and refugee young people to access the Springers Leisure Centre. It shocked and hurt me to read the

damning, negative, racist comments made by Peter Brown (Letters, 9/1) aimed at all Africans.

It's evident to me that the actions of a few members of the African communities are being used to judge an entire race. This is unfair as it is not representative of the majority of young Africans (whether born here or migrants) who are working hard and trying to better themselves. There seem to be a lot of misconceptions about Africans, the way we think, our way of life, the laws and conditions in our countries.

These ill-informed comments ignore any efforts that my friends, family and I are making to integrate and establish ourselves in the community as successful and proud African Australians.

People often refer to me as "Aussie" despite having dark skin and another culture to embrace and be proud of. That's because, like most Aussies, I've completed primary, secondary and tertiary education - which I believe to be a great achievement. I've held a few part-time jobs, voted, been part of sporting teams/clubs, have an AFL team I barrack for and I appreciate and accept Australian laws and values. I also respect the values of my cultural background.

I was able to achieve this much so far, through the understanding, support and assistance offered and given to me by a range of different educational institutions, community groups and businesses. This is what is needed by all Africans and newly arrived migrants.

Don't judge or put us down without trying to understand us. I encourage you instead to take a step back and make an effort to get know someone who is of a black African background.

(2007, January 15). Letters & emails. *The Age*.

Conclusion

It is quite clear, from the preceding analysis, that media reporting changed considerable over the time period covered in this analysis. First, in terms of frequencies, with number of articles appearing increased dramatically in 2007. However, it should be noted that the main source of this dramatic rise was *The Age*, in no small way due to the 'signal crime' (Innes, 2004) regarding the murder of Sudanese Australian Leip Goney; wherein crime, refugee integration, gangs, cultures of violence, and immigration and refugee policies were brought together.

A second key finding concerns the 'voices' being reported. Recall that much of the academic literature on crime and the media has identified the central role of state-based primary definers, particularly police and the 'great and good'. We

have not found this to be so clear cut in relation to reporting on Sudanese Australians. As identified Sudanese voices run at approximately twice the frequency of police, even when – and in fact more so - we reach the critical 2007 period.

A third finding of interest is the approximate equivalence of reporting on Sudanese Australians as victims and as offenders. This holds true for the whole period of analysis, again including the peak period of 2007. It should be noted that this is in part explained by the Goney case wherein the victim was Sudanese Australian.

Fourth, and more aligned with dominant accounts of crime news, articles regarding Sudanese Australians are weighted towards the use of criminogenic labels and accounts of crime gangs (Figure 7) and Sudanese Australians as a threat to social order. This is in part due to the high circulation of reportage on the then Immigration Minister's comments questioning the suitability of Sudanese for immigration (Figure 8).

Finally, we have added an additional selective qualitative 'reading' of the trends in media reporting regarding Sudanese Australians, suggestive of the changing tone of media reporting.

Chapter 4

Serious Talking: Community Consultations

This chapter of the report analyses the outcomes of the focus group interviews with the Sudanese Australians across the three research sites. While the interviews were conducted with discrete groups consisting of elders, young people, and women, the reporting of the data has been organized into major themes to ascertain the interviewees' experiences with the criminal justice system in Queensland. The first theme examines the major challenges faced by Sudanese people when they attempted to integrate into Australian society. Following this the qualitative data focuses on the private sphere of Sudanese families in terms of domestic violence and their interactions with police and other government agencies. The final section examines Sudanese experiences in the public sphere in regards to their interactions with police and the court system in terms of how they were constructed as perpetrators of crime, as well as perceived victims of crime.

As part of the community consultations we conducted a number of wide-ranging discussions on a variety of topics that were important to the overall context of the project but somewhat outside our immediate terms of reference. In Appendix A we have included a personal account of the journey of a 'Lost Boy'. This personal account provides some important contextual information that supplements the following sections.

Integrating into Australian Society

He said that what he used to know about Australia – he knew Australia was a country that has evolved and advanced and there were no kind of like wars where people used guns and only when he comes here, the only people that you see using guns are the Army and the Police (Sudanese male elder).

The initial questions to the research participants focused on gaining their perceptions about what they thought Australian life would be like compared to their experiences as displaced persons in war ravaged Sudan. The majority of people identified that they thought life in Australia offered them the potential to start a new life which was free of conflict and where there was societal tolerance to people who came from different racial, cultural, and religious backgrounds. The emphasis on the need for personal safety with laws that were fairly applied to all citizens was another common expectation echoed by the majority of the interviewees:

For me, I remember where I came from as I know Australia is a multi-cultural country, they always welcome everyone so I need to be judged according to the rules of Australia so I love Australia more than anyone. So, for me, I need to be straight according to the Australian rules which can protect me and can protect anyone and that is why I love Australia, it's my beautiful country and it's my new country. Thank you, thank you very much (Sudanese male elder).

We think the Australians are good people and when we come, we got to Australia and then we settled in Australia in a good place and we got to leave the Moslem people because they are our people in Sudan – that is what we think of the land before we come to Australia (Sudanese male youth).

However while life in Australia offered a number of potential advantages over their previous life in Sudan, integrating into Australian society produced a number of challenges. The most confronting challenge, identified by the research participants, was gaining proficiency in English in order to interact with the wider community and with key government institutions such as Centrelink and the various agencies which support newly arrived Sudanese people. There were numerous accounts which highlighted the difficulties encountered by Sudanese people when attempting to read letters which were often written in a bureaucratic style of English which in turn produced feelings of frustration among some people. To overcome this problem Sudanese people often turned to members of their own community to assist with their difficulties in understanding the English language:

Yeah. But what I see as a problem with that, others kind of still do the thing on their own, independently but the problem could be the language, if they don't know how to speak English very well then it's very hard for them to go on their own to anything and then they have to come back to the Multicultural again and they're the only organization that helps migrants. When they come there, then they get the result like what I said before then you will be on your own so one has to come to the Sudanese people asking for help here or they drop in here saying I've got some letters can you read them for me? And the problem is when that person is not available, people cannot read them very well and tell them what is going on, it can be difficult for them. And most of the people that get the help are Sudanese because there will be somebody that will volunteer and do something for you. And the first time when we came here, the only advantage that we had was because of the language so it was okay for us but the rest of the families that came and they had difficulty with English, it's very hard so they have to call us when no one can read letters, translate them, fill out the form, take them shopping or anything else because there is a time when the agency has got to help us. And that's the only advantage, that's the only help that the Sudanese get amongst themselves and that's where they face a problem whereby you know here

in Australia you're expected to do your stuff alone and if you have a problem with English, how can you do them alone? (Sudanese elder).

Sudanese women experienced other kinds of difficulties associated with having limited English. For example members of the women's focus group described the difficulties they encountered with school principals when attempting to enrol their children into schools. Their lack of proficiency with English also hampered their ability to undertake everyday mundane tasks such as shopping for groceries so they could make informed decisions about the ingredients they could purchase for their children's school lunches:

Yeah it was hard because we don't have a car so we had to use Public Transport, take children there and go and pick them up, use the bus, so you have to have the money from Monday to Friday and you're not working so where are you going to find that amount of money for transport? Even for lunch boxes – we struggled to know what is in the shop because we don't know the language what is written there you know in the food container so you have to buy whatever you think it is and maybe when you open the container later to prepare a lunch box for your child, it could be something different. So the language in the world it is called in the shopping everywhere (Sudanese woman).

By comparison adult male members identified that entering the workforce to obtain paid work was a major challenge when attempting to integrate into Australia society. There were a number of accounts from Sudanese males who experienced frustration when told that their formal qualifications and work experience obtained in Sudan could not be recognized in Australia. In many cases these men were forced to accept menial unskilled employment or had to enrol in Australian university courses without gaining any credit for their existing qualifications from Sudanese institutions. These experiences were interpreted as a form of institutional racism which served to disempower Sudanese people. One response to this dilemma was for Sudanese people to return to their former country in the hope that they would acquire a better standard of living:

We hold a degree like after studying for 4 or 5 years and you get that degree. But later you just stay at home and in this 4 to 5 years you could have worked in a factory, you could have maybe over a hundred thousand dollars in that time. And you aimed to get this degree you don't get a job and if you think that there's no war back in the country and you've got this qualification sitting in the house you go back to the country. It's time to go back and stay because you are respected as a human being. People will respect you even if you don't have much money because that's your country (Sudanese male elder).

For many of those who chose to remain in Australia and gained formal qualifications in the tertiary or TAFE sector, there was no guarantee that this would necessarily translate into a paid professional position upon graduation. A

high number of interviewees described their unsuccessful bids at gaining professional positions. A number of young men gave up and settled for low paying unskilled jobs as a means of supporting their families:

I just think if there is a way that they could count our experience from back there, then maybe you know it would be better for us and that they should consider what we have done. If they can't give us a job here then why are we going back to school if we know that when we get our degrees we still won't get a job here? I came here as a teacher in a high school for ten years, now I have to study and work at night on a chicken farm just to survive. It's really hard (Sudanese male elder).

In the early phases of integration Sudanese people attempted to maintain the traditional roles in terms of the division of labour between males and females within the family unit. For example, Sudanese women stated that they were willing to defer to their male partners and continue their traditional roles in the domestic sphere consisting of unpaid work such as child-minding, cooking, and cleaning. The women interviewees observed that it was essential that the family remained stable despite the numerous challenges posed when attempting to adapt to a new lifestyle in Australia. Females identified the need to support their partners in finding paid employment as government benefits were insufficient for sustaining a family due to the high cost of living in Australia.

Most of the Sudanese wives they prefer their husband to go and they handle work in the kitchen so they can get a job quickly and come and support the family. So the lady will stay home with the children and when she goes to the shop or whatever, she can't support children because Centrelink payments are not enough. Sometime even the husband's wage is not enough (Sudanese female).

Sudanese women were therefore willing to wait until the family had a sound economic base before attempting to gain educational qualifications themselves. These women stated that they were content to work in low paying jobs to support their families while their male partners enrolled in university courses in order to gain qualifications:

Yes and we're still behind and you come and you find a husband with an education in Australia because we just got let the men go first and then because the women must be quicker in education because when you've got children you have to go back, look after them and do this and maybe you will be in the class so there's a lot of possibilities so we say we've got more time and we can do it later and the husband go (Sudanese female).

It could be argued that Sudanese women displayed a strong resilience in terms of supporting the family despite the numerous challenges when making the transition to Australian society. While supporting their male partners in a new

country women also identified another responsibility for sending money back to Sudan to support other family members who were often living in abject poverty:

When I came here I need to support my cousin back home and I need to support my half-sister back in Sudan but I don't have any income. The same with my husband too he wanted to support his brother but we don't have much money. When we come here we know we need to settle here and it was a big job to get everything right. But in other families they broke up because of the pressure (Sudanese female).

Government Interventions within the Domestic Sphere

As Sudanese women further integrated into Australian society greater numbers found paid employment which aided them in developing social networks within the wider community and with other Sudanese women. It also allowed them to access educational institutions to gain academic qualifications. One older female described her transition from the domestic sphere to a career as a carer in a nursing home:

I want to continue my studies and be more senior rather than be an assistant nurse. I would like to be in a better job now that my children are older and go to school. So I'm working in a nursing home and when I get my certificate I might even go to university and become a nurse (Sudanese female).

Locating paid work or gaining formal qualifications served to empower women by giving them a greater voice over how the family budget was spent. The increase in female participation in the public sphere also increased their self-esteem which was interpreted by some males as a challenge to the traditional forms of patriarchal power wielded by men within Sudanese families:

It's the way the people react, the way a woman and a husband behave because the Sudanese say that there's occasion The man has all the power – oh I'll put it in the way that the man has the sanction of the people – at the end of the day, he can say this is the way we will go. Yeah in a new country but back home, with us we have a share of duty what the woman will do and what the man will do – man has to struggle to feed the family, wife can bring things to the family, the wife has to take care of the house and you as the man have to take other responsibilities for food and all that stuff. So when some things happen here, then there's a mix in the share of duty and problems arise. Second to that, the main thing we do in Africa it's not just the way our people come together then they have kids but if they're bonding then some things have been done – there's a dowry that has been paid and people stick together and it's something that is respected so it's not something that people have in between. So that thing, when we come here to Australia, those bonds are

broken and there's no kind of understanding in between anymore but for us it is carrying out the responsibility whereby people have to do this – but here nobody listen to you anymore (Sudanese male).

Other fissures within the family surfaced in relation to parent's relationship with their children. Male and female elders expressed concern that as their children became immersed in the Australian way of life and developed their own networks of friends they contested the traditional forms of parental authority as experienced in Sudan. A number of parents complained that their children no longer showed them respect and felt that they had lost their former authority:

Yeah. You know the new life here, it's not just only the kids because the youths from 15 to 18 years, they don't respect us anymore. Like before, when we live in Africa, they've got to respect us at home – if they want to do anything, they can do it by themselves but in Africa – when we are in Africa, if you want to go somewhere you come and tell first please Dad, I'm going somewhere, can I go? You can tell them yes go but you can't do that here (Sudanese father).

In response to this observation young people stated that their parents were inconsistent in terms of how they treated males and females within families. Female interviewees identified the perceived inequality of how their parents allowed their brothers to socialize with friends in public spaces while imposing restrictions of when they could go out. The tension between traditional, as opposed to western, child-rearing practices produced conflicts between parents and their children as summed up by this Sudanese woman:

It happened a lot since between 2001 like because when you come into a new country, you sort of like, you don't know your rights, you don't know the things you can do but once you go into high school you know and you get to have friends and friends tell you like you know this is the way we live and these are the things that you should do and you shouldn't do and for example, if a girl wanted to go out for example and the parents they won't let her, they're like well you know it's the way that the society is and I think I should do the same thing you know what the people are doing but you know what the parents are? The parents they are protective, they just – they don't want like their daughter to go out and do something wrong and then the community comes up and talks about oh well we saw your girl doing this you know and all that sort of thing (Sudanese female).

Another source of conflict stemmed from parents who attempted to instil authority over their children through the use of corporal punishment. This traditional form of discipline was challenged by young people who in some cases reported these incidents to their teachers, who in turn reported the incidents to the Department of Child Safety. The incursion into the family home by agencies

such as Child Safety were interpreted by parents as an attempt by government agencies as undermining Sudanese culture:

So we talked to them and they said oh we talk about the discipline because when they pre-discipline our children, the child will go to the school and will complain my mum hit me here, my mum did this and that and then later on the Child Safety will come to the home and we have to take this child away and you're not a good mum. We ask them, in Australia here, do you do this when you discipline your children? They said, we discipline them but in a – what was it she said? – what do you call it? – she said some word and we said – 'reasonable' (Sudanese mother).

Another mother stated that discipline was very important within Sudanese culture as a means of preventing young people from becoming involved in crimes:

Could give you an example like if you have a child that has been doing like a secret thing like smoking, you know he's been going in the house and starts a fire in the house for example, if you didn't go about discipline that child in the next few kids it's a hundred percent definite he's going to commit crimes, do this, do that and you know his life is going to be incarcerated in prison, in and out. But if you have like a child that you know he does exactly the same thing but either the Mum or the Dad smack the child as a discipline, in the next few years that child will know that you know I've done this and I have got something and now I know that it's something bad and the kid will become respected. For example, now if you don't discipline the child, the child won't even respect the Dad or the Mother so there's also this thing where if you discipline the child, you're going to get the same respect back but if you don't discipline the child then the child will swear at you, will call you names (Sudanese mother).

As parents expressed their concerns about the erosion of their rights to discipline their children they also perceived that teachers, the police, and child-safety officers were more likely to believe the young person's account of events over the parents.

So like in all, what is going on is that among the Sudanese community or within the Sudanese community there's a crime that we lose control of our kids or we do not have control the way they used to discipline them anymore and kids do not have the kind of respect that they used to give the parent. So when the parent calls them or makes them listen, then they run away so that one and also the call of the Police and when the Police come in and then the child might be taken away or the Police will listen to what the child is saying more than the parent. So the parent has seen it

that they're scared of how to discipline their kids – if they want to discipline them when they see if they do this thing then they're afraid that the child will run away or the child will call the Police and the Police will listen to the child. So Australia goes by the child will learn bad manners and later on will do bad things (Sudanese parent).

Changes to the dynamics of Sudanese families in terms of the empowerment of some women and challenges to the authority of parents over their children impacted negatively on Sudanese males. Members of the male elder focus groups across all sites expressed a high level of concern about the challenges to their traditional patriarchal roles as husbands and fathers in since arriving in Australia. In essence these challenges could be interpreted as a direct threat to their masculinity. For example some men identified that they felt disempowered since arriving in Australia due to their inability to be successful providers for the family unit which impacted on their self-esteem. The empowerment of Sudanese women, in terms of gaining some economic independence through accessing Centrelink payments or finding paid employment outside the home, was interpreted by men as a threat to their traditional roles. Some men perceived that these factors contributed to acts of domestic violence, whereby males physically and emotionally abused their female partner. While acknowledging that domestic violence was an issue in some homes, this phenomena was rationalized by some males as a symptom of the threat to masculinity though the disintegration of traditional male roles and responsibilities and the resultant instability within the family unit:

To start with Domestic Violence, when it comes to what my colleagues say about what they've experienced. Especially in Australian culture, we men, especially, the African man is the black man, the Sudanese man – are looked to be violent. I remember one time someone put in the press in Australia, the women are Number 1 and they look to the women as Number 1 and they rear the children and the fathers are the dogs and the women are the fox. Someone one time said that this is how the Police look at people, that as an African, we are the dog and the women are the. And the other thing also I can say is the culture, you know fighting's right, because the Australian culture also encourages the women to fight to be equal to us the Australian culture considers women to be equal, to be equal to men. We come from Africa and that's not the case in Africa although there are certain areas that are changing but still our women have that in their mind that once we are in Australia, they are equal to men so you don't need to ask for that respect whereas in Africa the man is still the family head, is still the head of the family. Yeah it has changed everything because in our case it would be 50/50. Of course it – and like the Police say they don't know how they have but we have to figure out what it is (Sudanese male).

While acknowledging that society should impose sanctions against the perpetrators of domestic violence, some Sudanese males interpreted police

interventions as a factor for destabilizing marriages. There was a perception from males that when police arrived at the family home to investigate a domestic disturbance they automatically labelled the adult male as the perpetrator of the crime. To this end males identified themselves as victims due to the way they perceived police investigated cases of domestic violence:

I'm looking back to the beginning when I was at my house and indeed I was a victim of what had happened and I was in the marriage because of that they call the Police, they come to my house and sit down and have a cup of coffee and they do not even ask me what happened. They automatically talk to my wife and she tell them. They take me to the police station and I am charged. I was a victim of what had happened in Australia and how it ended my marriage (Sudanese male).

Interventions by agencies such as the police and child-safety into the domestic life of Sudanese people were also interpreted as a form of humiliation by many males. Some men described how these interventions led to further interactions with the criminal justice system which in one case resulted in a male being sent to prison for violating a court order. This male identified that these interactions resulted in the breakdown of his marriage, the loss of his children, and his loss of standing in the eyes of the Sudanese community:

Ended it, mm, because of what they call the Police and because of that I went to prison and because we had to stand alone and to see what was happening maybe I think this is a sign of submission and we never got anywhere. By coming here cut the nose off my face but I've come here to see if you are serious because I've been – many things have come and I don't know what they have done but we welcome strangers and I will never vote for that and I will never have my children, I will never be a whole human being because my family have been thrown away for no good reason and I know that my brothers, my boys, my elders and I have completely had to mistrust. I have the mistrust when you first come whether you're a good man or not a good one but I consider you in the same boat. Why? Because that is so very – and I'm not hung for anyone but all it means taking my house and I could be looking after my children with what little support I have and that's all – but if I need some support, I will never go to any organizations to support me except those of my own people, a group of Sudanese people support me. My brothers, my young people support me, I've been given more than we have given the Australian organization whatsoever and I've looked at quite a lot of things got knowledge about Australia because when I was in my country I had never been humiliated, I had been working as an educator for most of my life, 20 years and I had my students who were doctors in USA and some of them are here in Australia, seeing me getting into trouble and now I know the cost but they didn't understand. The other parties didn't understand what that means and that's why some other father becomes a victim.

Even in prison I was not happy because I was being termed as 'black bastard' (Sudanese male).

A number of interviewees interpreted police intervention as a form of harassment. Some interviewees argued that Sudanese families were often singled out for more police interventions due to the mistaken community perception that they were inherently more violent than other sectors of society. One male observed that there were more accounts of domestic violence committed by non-Sudanese in his suburb which never gained to attention of the police:

It is just a matter of misconception from Police because they are adhering to the Law and Sudanese and they haven't been listening and when you say something with the Police, the Police will never listen to you but I know the balance in the community is the same. Like where I live now, the people who live around me, they have a lot of violence at night, they abuse each other and they don't even call in the Police and the Police don't come and that's how they are. We don't even abuse ourselves but because of interference that's why I think Australians have described our culture. When you sit at night in your neighbourhood and there's this violence and the Police don't come, are you talking about Sudanese Australians or white Australians (Sudanese male).

Having identified some of the factors which contribute to domestic violence in the Sudanese community, the focus groups were asked to suggest a more appropriate strategy for managing this problem. There was consensus among the group that elders should accompany police or other agencies such as child safety when they visit Sudanese homes. It was felt that community elders would assist with interpreting the law to Sudanese family members and provide police with insights into Sudanese culture. In other cases there was a shared perception that Sudanese elder groups could assist in family mediations without involving the police or other government agencies:

What I am trying to say as a recommendation is that we are Sudanese know what the Justice System can do is to apply the law in equality and justice and be aware of the Sudanese cultural background. There are some issues in the community that if it asked then it should never go up to that far. In the case of Domestic Violence there are some that could be solved in the community or by the elders and should never result into family suppression. So what I mean is the Justice System should be aware of the Sudanese culture and background and apply the law with equality (Sudanese male elder).

Sudanese Interactions with the Criminal Justice System in the Public Domain

Sudan is a young nation and it has just come up in 2005, it was born in 2005 – so if they don't understand – it's very hard to understand the criminal law, it's a broad one, criminal law in Australia and they say criminality is the culture of our people. It's not our culture here like in Sudan (Sudanese youth).

The focus group interviews also yielded data relating to how Sudanese people experienced the criminal justice system within the public sphere. The data was categorized under a number of themes: communication problems with police, understanding the law, Sudanese as victims of crime, and young people and police.

There were numerous accounts whereby Sudanese people perceived that they were unfairly targeted by police as the perpetrators of crime. Most of these incidents took place in public spaces where groups of Sudanese congregated and were more visible. Young people in particular perceived that they had more interactions with police than other young Australians due to their physical appearance and the way they dressed. A common experience for young people was to be stopped by police and searched for weapons or stolen property. A number of youth reported that police often accused them of being members of organised gangs based purely on their appearance and demeanour. In one case a group of Sudanese were accused of having links with criminal African-American gangs because of their style of dress. One young person observed that popular media images of African American gang culture influenced the way the community perceived groups of Sudanese youth in public spaces:

I think this is a problem and I think we are connected to the other black society like America. But we are living here in Australia and the culture you see in the movies is not the Sudanese culture here in Australia. So we should not be connected to American culture with gangs and that, that's American culture. Number two the judicial system is based on the media and that too is based on American culture and American popular culture. So Sudanese are seen as troublemakers, thieves and the like. We are not like that at all (Sudanese young person).

Another youth rationalized that police were more likely to intervene when they saw Sudanese youth in public spaces due to the tendency of young people to gather in large numbers which was a feature of the collective nature of Sudanese culture. He argued that Sudanese gathered in large groups for protection from other youth groups and not due to the popular conception that they were organized gangs who were threats to the rest of society:

Yeah. You know like back home, not just Sudanese as African, we live in like – we like to be together all the time so that doesn't mean if we are 5, 6 or 7

like we are a gang or something – that's our way of living, that's the way we live back home. We go out in big groups so we can look after each other in case we meet another group. We don't want to hurt anyone or cause trouble because we are not like that (Sudanese young person).

Yeah as far as I have lived in this country for 9 years so I went through this stuff-I never saw something called a gang. Because a gang is an organization and I'm an active member of this community and I never see any gang of Sudanese. You can see a group of people walking down the street but that's not a gang .If you see 4 people walking on the street and you call me a name what do you think my reaction would be? You upset me. You will react with your friends whether you are white or Indian or whatever (Sudanese young person).

The youth focus group members observed that inaccurate and inflated media reports in the local and national press had produced a moral panic about young Sudanese and their purported involvement in criminal activity. Sudanese young people perceived that public concerns which were whipped up by the media created a Sudanese youth *problem* which had resulted in higher police interactions with this cohort. Two young people from Brisbane described how heightened public perceptions about Sudanese youth were the trigger for being questioned about purportedly stalking an elderly female:

They should, they should not judge just our side, we're not a bad people or our youth are not bad, there's nothing to say that Sudanese are the worst people because the media always says that Sudanese they're this, they're this, they're this, you know but actually we're not. My cousin and some other friends were walking down the road near our house one day and there was an old lady in front of us. She turned around and saw us and screamed and run off into another house. Next the police car pulled us over and told us to get in the car and we end up at the police station. I did not understand but they said we followed that old lady. But we did nothing but they don't ever believe us. They think we are all troublemakers. But this is not true (Sudanese young persons from Brisbane).

Sudanese elders also identified inflammatory comments made in the media by prominent academics and politicians which fuelled negative public responses about Sudanese people and their purported links to crime. There was a common perception that Sudanese lacked a voice to refute these claims which constituted an unequal balance of power relations in terms of responding to such criticisms:

Yes I'd just like to let you know that the problem of Sudanese crime has been like I said, the Sudanese are being targeted by Australian community by saying that the Sudanese are the people who make the crime like for example it's happened in New South Wales in the University of Macquarie, the Professor wrote a sentence about Sudanese and make a

comment about Sudanese how bad they are and thus when other communities say that they are Sudanese the Police are accepting that without checking their licence and the details of the background of the other communities. So what I say is this is what the Australian communities are hitting us in order that other communities depend on Sudanese. Coming today, we Sudanese defend ourselves, there's no way we can defend ourselves but we can say to Australia that we commit to that. Australian community have to make sure that they are Sudanese like they say they are because when we came to Australia everyone had his own report on the government that is here even your driving licence you have to have your own report that you are Sudanese or you are from somewhere different but the Australia community, they still enforcing that and they are accepting that and when I said I came from Sudan, they accepted that but they make some newspapers about some Sudanese are committing crime and that's what increasing the crime of Sudanese but I don't think it is Sudanese who are making the crime (Sudanese elder).

In some cases even positive media stories impacted negatively on Sudanese people. One woman described how a newspaper article describing how her family had successfully integrated into the community had resulted in a number of hostile phone calls containing derogatory language and racist slurs:

We got a call from other people because they find our number in the yellow pages. They swear at us and insult us, tell us to go back home. And so we don't understand the world now. We find some support here and we find somebody who will let you down the other way (Sudanese female).

However some young people conceded that Sudanese did react after being provoked by other youth. There were a number of cases where Sudanese were purportedly told to go back to the Sudan by other groups or sworn at which on some occasions provoked a physical response. It was reported that at times Sudanese youth had conflicts with other minority groups, such as South Sea Islanders, over females as discussed by members of the youth focus group:

I think that's the problem we have with the Islanders it's because you know we used to go to the pub and before you know it you've got an Islander girlfriend. They don't really like that, they're mad about that. You see the people at night clubs, maybe now you see Sudanese girls go to night clubs but not many Sudanese go to night clubs. I mean for some reason maybe because their parents won't let them, whatever that reason might be, but because the Islanders just see well you know those girls come in here and before you know they're hooked up. The jealousy comes in, right? All right, before you know it, they just try to do something and before you know it there's a fight. But because they're jealous, they feel threatened well those guys are going to come and take our girls and

before you know it we've got nothing. You know that's the trigger (Sudanese young male).

The young people were asked about the types of interactions they had with police in public spaces. A common perception among the group is that some police officers lacked an understanding of Sudanese culture and acted in an authoritarian manner when interacting with the young people. This often produced conflict between the youth and police resulting in some youth being charged for offensive language. There was agreement that the relationships between the Sudanese community and police would be improved if police adopted a more mediatory approach. The following scenario is one example as to how tensions between both groups escalated due to a breakdown in communications between both groups:

There's the misunderstanding between the cops and us, like between our youth so we're looking forward to working with them to understand our Sudanese youth. They're really good people but I think it's the way the Police approach us. So, the other day at the party, because I went to the party and then the Police actually she swore at me in the beginning, like she used the F word to me and I said 'sorry Police Officer can I have your name?' And she said 'I can't give you my name, can you give it to me? I'll give it to you after what happened' and I said 'I'm a Sudanese Special Affairs worker you know like I work and I know this thing. If you've got a problem I'll help you out because I'm here, I'll help you with these people' she said 'oh you F, F, F' and I said – and I swore back to her like I was just so offended like she was saying that because one of my friends was in Emergency, had a – it was, she has Asthma but not really an Asthma attack so I'm trying to help her too as well as to translate and at the same time I'm trying to tell her to quit that and she refused actually to give a hand with her. In the end the police officer warned me that I could be charged for swearing at her (Sudanese young person).

The negative public perceptions that labelled these youth as criminogenic were further reinforced when young people from other African nations identified as Sudanese when interrogated by police. The focus groups were also critical of police because they did not scrutinize the non-Sudanese youths' statements about their identity. According to the Sudanese youth these cases reinforced the need for more Sudanese Police and liaison officers who would work with police in areas where there were high numbers of this cohort:

As far as I know, in the past, and we've addressed these issues with the Police, I mean some Africans used to commit some other crimes or whatever and they used to call themselves Sudanese. So police and the public say yeah because you're black, you're Sudanese. But you tell me any black person walking, I can tell you straight away whether he's Sudanese or he's not Sudanese. That's where the lack of knowledge comes in with the Police – you know another person tells you he's Sudanese so

that means he's Sudanese. What you can do is, all right that's when we have a Liaison Police Officer. If the person's lying, they can identify, they can ask them a few questions to identify whether he's a Sudanese or not. All right, you can show your IDs, the name straight up will show you whether he's a Sudanese or not (Sudanese young person).

These sentiments were echoed in the male and female elder's focus groups who stated that a greater Sudanese representation in the police force would assist in inculcating police with knowledge about Sudanese culture as well as potentially reducing the conflict that often occurred when police interacted with young people in public places:

It is best to actually work with the Police Officers side by side, I think that would provide the Police themselves with a lot of knowledge. For example, if they have an incident that has happened to them instead of Sudanese person sat in with them and that's a lot of work experience with them. Okay, there seems to be an incident and there's some problems with this person, could you please come and help us deal with the first up person and I could say okay well I help you guys and then from there the person asks okay what's the first step we should do to boost our presence? This should be first followed by next and the other and problem is solved but that because with a lot of Sudanese they came from a bad country where there's a lot of violence. When they see somebody in a higher position like the Police for example, they don't have tension really but that tension will not explode unless someone in a higher position says something to trigger that other man and then that's how it happens. So you know by having the Police, by leaving the thing of being a mentor say okay we're looking for Sudanese people to come and work with us, you know it doesn't matter with pay, it doesn't matter if it's a volunteer or will pay \$15 an hour because there's a lot of them looking for work. Work experience and if you do a work experience with the Police that will stand out really well in your resume and people will employ you and by having those arms will actually educate the Police more, the Police will put more programs in to education the new, upcoming you know (Sudanese elder).

Older Sudanese people presented case studies which highlighted how Sudanese people were targeted by police for crimes that they said they did not commit. Most of these purported crimes were at the lower end of the crime spectrum, such as traffic infringements or public nuisance orders. While some Sudanese perceived that they were harassed by police, there was great deal of dissatisfaction with the way police presumed that they were the perpetrators of crime without fully investigating the incident. The following case study provides such an example of how a Sudanese man was constructed as the perpetrator of a minor car collision by police after another driver hit his car from behind:

MP: You know I just want to say something about the Police, last year I had an accident someone hit me at the traffic light

GD: Someone crashed into the back of you?

MP: Yes. So when the Police come, the Police just come and asked me

GD: They only spoke to you?

MP: Yeah, they spoke to me and asked me 'did you make an accident?'

GD: So they made you as the person that caused the accident?

MP: Yeah. And I think it's because you know I'm African, they think that made the accident, that's why they came and asked me. It's not my fault you know, someone hit me at the traffic light so I tell them it's not my fault someone hit me, I'm very shocked. And then he went to the other person who hit me, that one she drunk – she was a lady, she was as drunk as her boyfriend and then they are together and I'm expecting the Police to do something to them but they didn't do anything, they just made the report

In another instance a young Sudanese man reported that he was the victim of a violent assault after being hit over the head with a steel pole by a group of white youth. However when the police arrived they failed to question the other witnesses at the crime scene or ask the young person about the incidents that led up to the crime. Instead the youth was charged with inciting violence and handcuffed before being taken to hospital.

MP: Yeah I ended up being a victim of getting hit over the head with a star picket. I still get headaches today from that.

GD: So they hit you over the head?

MP: Yep. And I got a broken jaw and I ended up in hospital. The police were called and said well we'll just call an ambulance. Next I'm in handcuffs.

GD: They put you in handcuffs?

MP: Yeah while I'm laying in bed in the ambulance. When I stayed in hospital I was also handcuffed.

Other case studies support the perception of Sudanese as victims of police intimidation. For example, there were a number of cases where drivers were stopped by police for no apparent reason and had their cars examined for defects. These incidents were perceived as a form of police intimidation with the intention of provoking negative reactions from Sudanese people:

The policeman gets out of the car and looks over our car and he asked 'is this your car?' It happened to me when I was driving a friend's car and

then the Police pulled me over and said that the car had been reported as a stolen car and I said 'okay, that's fine, I'm here with the owner of the car and if it was reported as stolen, who stole it?' and then from there, they said the number plate are not the owner's and that they came to find out and I said 'well here is the owner' and then they went back onto the tyres and they said 'now, sir, your tyres are flat' But how did the whole thing get started? You see that's what provokes the situation whereby you get angry so the level of approach from the Police matters sometimes. The police cannot be trusted because what they are taught is the thing about crime and how to catch a criminal, so that when they approach a person, they approach you as a criminal and that's how they are taught. In the Police Force, everything is about the crime and how to catch a criminal so with that there's a lack of trust in between whereby they perceive you as a criminal (Sudanese tyouth).

There were high levels of resentment among the Sudanese interviewees about how police applied the laws to them in such a way as to exclude them from public spaces. Some accounts show that young people were not given adequate explanations by police as to why they were being charged for an offence. In particular, there was confusion among a number of the youth about their rights in contesting a charge, which in some cases resulted in young people being detained for resisting arrest. The example below demonstrates how a group of young people who failed to understand the move on law were charged by police for failing to follow a police instruction which resulted in a court appearance:

MP: It's an African club. A group of us came you know, we came in the back of a car and the Police pulled out behind us and they said 'you guys are not allowed to be here now' and I went like 'why?' and they said 'oh there'd been a noise' and the neighbours have reported that you guys have been making noise. Like we just came to get in the car and the neighbours reported the claim about the noise and obviously they heard the noise but they did not look to see who was making the noise. So we'd actually just came from home and they gave all of us a warning saying 'you guys are not allowed to come back to this street for the period of 6 hours'

GD: Yeah, the Move On law

MP: I was in the club and just opposite the club there's another café, I was actually like me and the girl were sitting there – they came back later and that same woman that saw me, actually you know he said 'I thought you were told not to be here – not to come back here' and I went 'I'm not there' This is the club that we actually like to go in and just opposite I was outside of it and this is besides this is actually Katherine Street. And the street that you guys gave us a warning on was another street. And that's it, they grabbed me and took me to the Watch House, that was my first time to go

to a Watch House. Yeah, in the morning – later you know like they send me to go to Court. When I went to Court they're going at everything and they said the reason that you know like I came there was because – actually mine was adjourned in the first place by the Judge because he couldn't understand why I was arrested on Katherine Street when I was given a warning in a different street. And they went and got another one added to it saying oh you know that was only 50 metres off the other street. Now, when he actually give me a warning, there was nothing saying oh you have to be 50 metres or anything like that, all I was told was move on directions and there was no like distance or anything and besides I can't actually, I can only estimate that I'm 50 metres away from that place. But, since I don't have a proper measurement, I can't be exact about it.

While there were a number of accounts about police harassment there were two cases where young Sudanese witnessed police physically assaulting young people in a public space. One incident in Brisbane described how a young person who was handcuffed was assaulted by two policemen with the incident being recorded on a mobile phone camera. The mobile phone was later destroyed by police:

J: Yeah. You can't prove it, that's the thing and the same thing with the Police – and if I can just get off that topic – but even with the Police a witnesses states that it was all right, that it was right but at the same time the Police you know to just do it but there's always no evidence. Last time, because there was this incident at South Bank where the Police you know got involved, brutally,

GD: Mm. So, tell me this, this happened at the South Bank and there was a Sudanese kid with a bully and he got beaten up

J: Yeah with a bully and the bully was beating him up

GD: The Police were beating him up

J: Yeah and one of the guys actually got a mobile phone to record it, to record the thing that has happened, because that was the only evidence they had and you know like they've gone and looked for him and got the mobile – yeah, grab it and chuck it out and break it

GD: Did they?

J: Yeah

GD: So what did the guy get beaten up for?

J: No one knows at all, no one knows at all but all I know is that you know like the Police are not supposed to put their hands on people especially if your hands are cuffed behind.

One graduate from university who had obtained a degree in Justice Administration summed up the problems experienced by some Sudanese as a lack of understanding of their basic rights when interacting with police:

Just before – let me say that – just before we get to that part about the Police need – what I would say is the Police are basically using a Sudanese community because of the lack of knowledge of the legal sides and lack of English. I've witnessed a couple of those, I can tell you a thousand stories about the Police but let me tell you this I have studied Justice Admin so I know exactly. So if the Police today face me, I would tell him exactly what are my rights but not half of the Sudanese understand what their rights are but that's the way the Police come in and abuse their power or their position. Because, today, you as a Police Officer, before you talk to me or anything, you should introduce yourself – say my name is Constable 'this', I am from Police Station 'this', I want to talk to you regarding this matter. They're just coming straight up without not even introducing themselves, even if you are in uniform, how the hell would I know that you are a Police Officer. Okay, you can introduce yourself or show me your badge, that way I know that you are a Police Officer – those are the things (Sudanese graduate).

When Sudanese people progressed further into the criminal justice system after being charged for offences they found court to be an alienating experience. The majority of those who attended court perceived that there was little chance that they would receive justice, due to the unfamiliarity of the setting, the formality of the language, as well as the limited representation they received. Members of the women's focus group in particular were critical because they could not afford private solicitors due to their economic situation and were dependent on the advice of court based solicitors. They perceived that this type of representation was not adequate due to the limited time they could prepare for cases, the failure of solicitors to adequately explain the charges as well as the likely outcomes of their court appearance. One female victim of domestic violence perceived that she could not understand the duty solicitor or the court process:

MP: The problem with lawyers is because we do not have money to do it.

GD: So you have to have a duty solicitor?

MP: Yeah we get legal aid with them.

GD: So you have to go to anybody?

MP: Yeah and they are not good. They lack the language and we do not understand what they mean sometimes. You say to the boy or whoever, there's too big a gap there so the story could twist around with one word and you know you can lose your rights. My court case fell to bits because they let my husband free and made me look like the problem.

The perceived inadequacy of representation led a number of people to question how fair the legal system was for people who came from disadvantaged social backgrounds, such as Sudanese Australians. Some people spoke about the inevitability of being found guilty and having to pay a fine, despite maintaining their innocence. Others described how they were told by their solicitor to plead guilty in order to receive a lighter sentence. This young person's description of his negative experiences within the justice were indicative of the feelings of helplessness experienced by other Sudanese people:

I have been to court twice and at the end of the day there's no justice and because I appear they say you're inside a social institution and you have been charged for interfering in police affairs. And we have a young man who comes from Sudan and speaks good English but someone will take advantage of him and tell him he is supposed to be a criminal. They tell you to speak English because you are in their country and then they don't believe what you say. I don't think you use the language and it's so complex. Every young person speaks of finance and there's no not guilty verdict for young Sudanese. They're always guilty because it's mentioned in the hearing and after that you have to pay something. I have seen young people who don't want to accept the hearing but you go to court and you don't walk out of it so you say I plead guilty (Sudanese male young person).

The focus group members were asked to suggest ways in which Sudanese people could be better supported when dealing with the criminal justice system. One suggestion was to employ more trained Sudanese people to work in an advocacy role with police when people were taken into custody. The advocates would be located in police watch houses and work with the detainee and liaise with their families to reduce the high levels of alienation and hopelessness experienced by many Sudanese when in custody. It was suggested that professional counsellors could be employed to reduce the rise in suicide attempts by Sudanese people, as a result of their interactions with the criminal justice system. The following account details how one young person experienced a sense of hopelessness and shame culminating in a successful suicide attempt after being released from custody:

I left the country because of war and came to a western country trying to be a better person. But the same treatment you have in your country is the same treatment that you have in this country. You better say that I have no choice to live in this world and that's why I make a choice to die

and hung themselves up. That person hung himself just because he went to the police station, got charged. He stay the whole night there in the watch house. In the morning when he came back home just like this tree he hung himself. His parents were living inside the house. He hung himself he was only a young guy 20 years old. And in this case nobody knows what the police have done to this person, nobody. Nobody knows and the person in charge of this problem, the police have not been charged because there is no evidence what happened, whether they abused the guy, no evidence. We tried to follow up the case but nothing. Yeah and the problem is the police are responsible for it because they took him to the watch house and then they discharged him from the watch house. They're supposed to bring him home and say to the family that you've got to keep him here. They didn't they said walk home and this person think ok. I'm a useless person (Sudanese mother).

Conclusion

In summary, the focus group data addresses three inter-related areas which impact on how Sudanese people interact with the criminal justice system in Queensland. The data initially explored the challenges experienced by Sudanese as they attempt to integrate into Australian society. A major challenge for the Sudanese in this study is to break out of the cycle of poverty by obtaining paid employment or gaining further educational qualifications. As identified in the literature in Chapter 1 of this report, studies by Sampson and Bartusch (1998) acknowledge that this is an important factor when considering Sudanese interactions with the criminal justice system. They argue that we cannot ignore broader social factors, such as poverty and lack of access into suitable employment or education, if we are to address this problem.

Overcoming the effects of social exclusion is another challenge identified by the research participants. The degree of success in assimilating into Australia, in terms of learning English finding suitable accommodation and paid employment, can be measured in terms of the degree of social capital an individual is able to build as identified in the DIAC report (Shepley, 2007; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007). Social capital is also important for individuals in terms of how they are able to extend their social networks to avoid becoming socially excluded or marginalized from the rest of the community. However this research also resonates with other studies showing that many Sudanese, despite their traumatic past, exhibit a high degree of optimism and resilience in making the transition from the Sudan to Australian society (Gifford, Correa-Velez, & Sampson, 2009).

The focus groups identified their concerns about the degree of state intervention into the private sphere of their lives, which in their perception threatened to weaken the traditional structure of Sudanese families. For example elders observed that their traditional roles as parents were undermined in terms of how they should discipline their children. As young Sudanese developed

extended social networks through interactions with non-Sudanese youth parents were concerned about the breakdown of traditional values such as respect towards their elders. There was also a perception that young people were more likely to challenge parental forms of authority which served to undermine and weaken the family unit. At the same time Sudanese women became empowered through participation in education and paid work, which in turn challenged the patriarchal roles of Sudanese males. Changes to the power structure within the family unit often produced conflict culminating in cases of domestic violence against women and children. The rise in domestic violence resulted in increased forms of state intervention into Sudanese families which were interpreted by some as being culturally inappropriate particularly when children were removed and placed in non-Sudanese families. This issue has been acknowledged in a recent protocol between the government and the Sudanese community in Toowoomba which stated that Sudanese elders should be consulted if there is a child protection issue involving a child from that community (Toowoomba Multicultural Protection Project 2007-2009).

The other focus of the interviews concentrated on how Sudanese people interacted with the criminal justice system within the public sphere. This research concurs with studies in other countries that the interactions between police and other ethnic groups remains as an ongoing problem (Neyroud & Beckley, 2001). In this research young people, in particular, identified a number of problems with police specifically when large groups of Sudanese youth congregate in public spaces, such as parks and shopping malls due to the popular misconception that they belong to troublesome ethnic gangs. Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2008) argued that one factor for negative interactions between police and groups of ethnic youth relates to their high visibility in terms of their height, skin colour and collective kinship based social practices. This makes them easier to be labelled as gangs despite a lack of any real proof (White et al., 1999). The Sudanese youth in this study, however, argued that rather than being a threat when interacting in public spaces they felt vulnerable due to over-policing and occupy public spaces in groups for personal safety.

Sudanese elders and young people in this study expressed concern about the skewed public perceptions that labelled them as being criminogenic and threats to law and order. The source of such misperceptions came from some politicians and academics which were covered in a number of media stories. The work of Pickering (2008) and Poynting (2008) suggests that such media reports and comments by influential individuals promote moral panics within the community which results in calls for increased surveillance and regulation by authority figures such as police.

A high number of Sudanese who were interviewed stated that they were the subjects of police harassment. They also felt that police were less likely to listen to their account of events and were often the victims of verbal and/or physical abuse. To this end there was an underlying perception that Sudanese were the victims of crime rather than the perpetrators of criminal activity. This proposition

is supported by other research, for example the DIAC report (Shepley, 2007) identified concerns that police discriminate against black Africans and that too little is being done to combat racism and harassment from the broader community. A commonly cited reason for negative interactions between police and Sudanese is that they do not understand the law or the roles of police. However this research supports the view of the DIAC report (Shepley, 2007) that the supposed *lack of understanding* is either baseless or over-emphasised and instead is a justification for increased police intervention into Australian –African communities. These misunderstandings serve to diminish the role that systematic racism and class disadvantage plays in social conflict and the ensuing discrimination faced by young Sudanese people.

Chapter 5

Queensland's Sudanese Community Survey

This chapter reports on the results of a community survey of Sudanese Australians. Survey data was obtained from Sudanese Australian residents in Brisbane, Logan, Toowoomba, and Townsville. The chapter begins with an overview of the method and data collection procedures. The survey was developed in part from previous survey literature but also in part from key issues being identified in the focus groups and interviews reported in the previous chapter. As will be seen below, the researchers also needed to adapt the proposed data collection techniques in order to work with the changing circumstances and contextual factors within the Sudanese Australian communities and associated community agencies within the research sites. The second section reports on basic demographic data. We then turn to more specific results concerning our more fundamental interest in Sudanese Australians perceptions, attitudes and experiences regarding victimisation and police responsiveness to, and treatment of Sudanese Australians. As was found in the previous chapter, there are important perspectives being raised regarding Sudanese Australian views about police. But first we must give a brief account of the development and iterative adjustment of the survey design and data collection procedures.

Methodology

Data Collection Procedure

The project initially aimed to recruit a sample of 600 respondents (or as many as could be recruited in a three-month data collection period). Survey data were to be collected from four major sites: Townsville, Toowoomba, Brisbane, and Logan. The data collection plan was to distribute a self-report survey instrument through a variety of non-government organizations that had extensive contacts with the Sudanese community. These agencies were first invited by letter to participate in the study and following their agreement, personal briefing sessions on how to administer the surveys (including issues of confidentiality and the need to translate materials for some respondents) were held. Despite extensive care and planning, this data collection method proved to be entirely unsuccessful. Key target groups for the agencies shifted to other refugee and early immigrant populations and key personnel at the agencies often left their jobs, leaving incoming staff with no instructions about how to handle the survey (not even contact details for the research team). On other occasions the staff confused this research project with other projects (see below for more information), meaning that surveys were not distributed. Finally, some staff assumed that they would

be employed to collect the data and when such funding was not forthcoming, they declined to participate. In short, the initial data collection procedures planned for this study did not succeed. Alternative data collection methods were thus developed.

First, the researchers attended community meetings (e.g. community elders and youth group meetings, after church services, and community cultural gatherings and events). The study was explained and the survey distributed to interested participants. Respondents completed the survey individually, sometimes with the help of other bi-lingual community members who translated the questions and assisted with survey completions.

Second, two community leaders were recruited as paid research assistants. These individuals distributed the surveys throughout their local communities, often assisting with translating and survey completions. Due to difficulties of administering surveys at community events, where our research project was often seen to be an 'add on' to the main event, early on in Toowoomba the research assistants took the initiative of administering surveys on a 'door to door' basis. This was considered to be a time consuming and costly approach, which was called to a halt when revealed to the JCU research team.

Given that many respondents required assistance with completing the survey, there was a need to avoid questions on sensitive or potentially embarrassing topics (such as committing criminal acts) an issue we now address in the context of the development of the survey instrument.

Survey Instrument

The development of a survey instrument and data collection methodology for this project required extensive pilot testing, as well as public consultations with Sudanese elders and community representatives. As mentioned above, it also required considerable trial and error in delivery methods.

In large part, the difficulties stemmed from a considerable reluctance on the part of Sudanese community members to complete 'yet another survey'. To our surprise, the Sudanese community in Brisbane and Toowoomba had recently been involved in several opinion surveys. In some cases the surveys and their authors (or supporting organizations: mostly universities) were easily identified. However, numerous individuals alerted us to a number of 'student research projects' which were far harder to identify. It was the latter group of studies that presented the most significant threats to the current project. It became apparent that several students had conducted overly-intrusive interviews with Sudanese people, and then to compound the problem further, these same students had not reported back any of their findings to the Sudanese community. This meant that the research team, involving Principal Investigators and a Research Assistant (who is a Sudanese 'Lost Boy') attended numerous community meetings

throughout our Queensland research sites to allay fears about this study and, most importantly, to explain how the data would be used.

Consequently, the survey instrument was drafted and redrafted in the light of extensive feedback from Sudanese community leaders, African refugee support groups, and many Sudanese individuals. Surveys designed in such a way invariably err on the side of caution, and the current survey was designed to minimise any possible adverse interpretations over what could be sensitive topics. For example, it was initially intended that we would ask questions about experiences of being questioned *as a suspect* in police investigations. Instead, following community advice, a less threatening question about being questioned by the police (with no reference to being either a victim, witness or suspect) was included.

In addition to dealing with a range of sensitivities about question *content*, the issue of question *format* also required considerable testing and revision. Initially, we planned to include questions from published scales (e.g. 'The Attitudes Toward the Criminal Legal System Scale', by Martin & Cohn, 2007) and surveys (e.g. 'Attitudes to Crime and Punishment: A New Zealand Study', devised by Paulin, Searle, & Knaggs, 2003). We also planned to ask a large number of open questions.

Pilot testing showed that questions involving scales were frequently answered incorrectly (e.g. multiple - often incompatible - responses), or not at all. Similarly, open questions were routinely ignored. Consequently, the final survey instrument involved only two fully open questions (one regarding why victims of crime had not reported the crime to the police, and the other an invitation for additional comments at the conclusion of the survey). Questions about respondent demographics were mainly presented as lists of possible response options (e.g. gender, marital status, languages spoken). Questions about 'Life in Australia' were phrased as closed questions, requiring either 'Yes' or 'No' responses only.

The final survey instrument comprised 22 questions (with two additional follow-up questions). There were seven questions about 'Personal details', six questions on 'Life in Sudan', eight questions about 'Life in Australia' (largely consisting of questions about the Australian police), and a final question asking for any additional comments.

Part 1: Personal Details

1. Are you male or female?
2. How old are you (years)?
3. What is your marital status?
4. How many people currently live in your household?
5. Which of the following languages do you speak?
6. How would you describe your level of English fluency?
7. What is your religion?

Part 2: Life in Sudan

8. Which part of Sudan are you from?
9. When you left Sudan what was your last profession/job (e.g., student, construction worker, Doctor)?
10. How old were you when you left Sudan?
11. Did you leave Sudan as a migrant or as a refugee?
12. How many members of your family left Sudan with you?
13. In Sudan, did you ever have any contact with police officers in connection with criminal investigations? This includes being either a victim, witness or suspect in a crime.

Part 3: Life in Australia

14. When you first arrived in Australia, in which town (e.g., Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane) did you initially reside?
15. In Australia have you ever been a victim of a crime?
16. Did you report the crime to the police? If No, why didn't you report it?
17. In Australia have you ever been questioned by the police (e.g., in the street, at work, at home, or in a police station)?
18. Do you think that the Australian police treat Sudanese people in a similar way to other migrants and refugees?

Do you think that Sudanese people are more likely to be suspected of committing a crime than:

19. Other African migrants and refugees
 20. Other non-African minority groups
 21. Other Australians
22. Do you have any comments to make about how Sudanese people in Australia are treated by the criminal justice system; or your experiences with the police in Sudan?

Respondent anonymity and the confidentiality of the data collected was emphasised at the start of the survey:

'Please note that you are not required to identify yourself at any time. Please do not put your name or any other details which might reveal your identity.'

The full survey instrument (with response options) is included in Appendix B.

Sample Characteristics

The final sample comprised 390 respondents. Sample characteristics are described in two broad categories: Personal characteristics (gender, age, etc.) and migrant characteristics (region of origin in Sudan, age on departure, etc.).

Personal Characteristics

Gender and Age

There were 276 males (70.8% of the sample) and 110 females (28.2%). The mean age of the respondents was 27.3 years ($SD = 7.53$, $min = 16$, $max = 55$). Data on gender were missing for four respondents and data for age was missing for 25 respondents.

Marital Status

Just over half (217 respondents, or 55.6%) were single; 142 (36.4%) were married; 24 were divorced (6.2%) and 4 (1.0%) were widowed. Data on marital status were missing for three respondents.

Languages spoken and English Fluency

Most of the respondents (323 respondents, or 82.8%) spoke two or more languages (e.g., English and Dinka; English and Arabic; English and Nuer). Only 15.9% spoke no English (Dinka only, 6.4%; Arabic only, 5.1%; Nuer only 3.6%). Data on languages spoken were missing for five respondents.

About a fifth of respondents (71 respondents, or 18.2%) described their English language fluency as either “No English” or “Some English”. Of the remaining respondents, 146 (37.4%) described their fluency as “Good”, and 161 (41.3%) described it as “Excellent”. Data on English fluency were missing for twelve respondents.

Religion

The majority of respondents identified their religion as Christian (361, or 92.6%), with 15 (3.8%) Muslims, and 8 (2.1%) ‘other’ unspecified religions. Data on religion were missing for six respondents.

Migration Characteristics

Region of Origin in Sudan

The majority of the respondents originally came from South Sudan (360 respondents, or 92.3%), with the remainder (15 respondents, or 3.8%) coming from the North of Sudan. Data on region of origin were missing for 15 respondents.

Age on Departure from Sudan

The average age of respondents when they left Sudan was 17.2 years (SD = 8.86, min = 0 years, max = 46). Over half (215 respondents, or 55.1%) were aged 0-17 years when departing Sudan, with 165 (42.3%) aged 18 years and over. Data on age on leaving Sudan were missing for 10 respondents.

Size of Family Group Departing from Sudan

The average size of family group when leaving Sudan was 3.6 people (SD = 3.66; min = 0 people; max = 30). Data on size of family group on leaving Sudan were missing for nineteen respondents.

Professions in Sudan

Nearly two thirds of the respondents (247 respondents, or 63.3%) were students when they left Sudan. It appears, therefore, that the majority of our survey sample were likely to fit within the so-called generation of *Lost Boys*, and to a lesser extent, *Lost Girls*. Another 41 (10.5%) responded that they left Sudan, having no profession and 35 of the respondents (9.0%) were construction workers. The remaining respondents formerly held a wide variety of professions, including retail (8 respondents) and the civil service (4 respondents). All other professions were held by three or less respondents.

Migrant or Refugee Status

The majority of the respondents (338 respondents, or 86.7%) arrived in Australia as 'refugees', with 50 (12.8%) arriving in Australia as 'migrants'. Data were missing for 15 respondents.

Contact with the Police in Sudan

The majority of the respondents (360, or 92.3%) had not had any contact with the police in Sudan. Only 15 (3.8%) had had contact with the police in Sudan. Data were missing for 15 respondents.

State or Territory in Which the Respondent first Arrived in Australia.

Despite the survey primarily being conducted in Queensland, the respondents were originally residents in many of the other Australian states. The Australian States and Territories in which respondents initially entered Australia are shown in Table 5.1. Data were missing on this demographic for 58 respondents.

Table 5.1 State or Territory in which the respondent first arrived in Australia

Australian State	Number of Respondents	Percentage of respondents
Queensland	144	36.9
NSW	82	21.0
VIC	55	14.1
WA	29	7.4
ACT	15	3.8
SA	6	1.5
TAS	1	0.3
Total	332	85

Given that all survey respondents were Queensland residents at the time of the survey, the above data shows that 188 of the respondents (48% of the total sample) had moved State since first arriving in Australia.

Survey Results

Respondents were asked about their experiences and perceptions of the Australian criminal justice system in two main topic areas:

- The Sudanese as victims and suspects of crime (three questions), and
- Perceptions of the police treatment of Sudanese people in Australia (four questions).

Data were analysed using *Chi-Square* statistics. For each of the seven questions, seven separate analyses involving 'predictor variables' were conducted. First, the relationship between three personal characteristics (gender, English fluency, and religion) and each question was analysed. Second, the relationship between four migrant characteristics (region of origin in Sudan, age group on departure, migrant or refugee status, and Australian State of first arrival) was analysed.

The categories for each of the predictor variables are shown in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Personal and Migrant Characteristics used in Statistical Analysis

Predictor variable	Type of data	Categories
Personal characteristics		
Gender	Nominal	1. Male 2. Female
English fluency	Ordinal	1. No English 2. Some English 3. Good English 4. Excellent English
Religion	Nominal	1. Christian 2. Other
Migrant characteristics		
Region or origin in Sudan	Nominal	1. North 2. South
Age group on leaving Sudan	Nominal	1. Child (0-17) 2. Adult (18 years and over)
Migrant or refugee status	Nominal	1. Migrant 2. Refugee
Australian State of first arrival	Nominal	1. Queensland 2. New South Wales 3. Western Australia 4. Victoria 5. Other

Note that while the Chi-Square statistic is calculated on observed cell counts, for ease of interpretation the data reported in the following tables has been converted to percentage scores.

Sudanese People as Victims of Crime

Respondents were asked (Q15) 'In Australia have you ever been a victim of crime?' Overall, 85 respondents (22.3%) reported having been the victim of a crime. Table 5.3 provides data relevant to the relationship between personal and migrant characteristics, and victimization.

Table 5.3 Characteristics associated with being a victim of crime

Variable	Total number of respondents	Percentage 'Victims of Crime'
Gender		
Male	266	19.9
Female	110	28.2
English fluency		
No English	12	41.7
Some English	57	28.1
Good English	140	17.9
Excellent English	159	23.9
Religion		
Christian	351	22.8
Other	23	17.4
Region of origin in Sudan		
North	15	13.3
South	350	22.3
Age group on leaving Sudan		
Child	210	19.0
Adult	160	26.3
Refugee status		
Migrant	49	16.3
Refugee	329	23.4
State of first arrival in Australia ^a		
QLD	143	23.8
NSW	82	22.0
WA	29	24.1
VIC	55	14.5
Other	22	50.0

^a $p < .05$

Table 5.3 indicates that 'State of first arrival in Australia' was significantly linked to victimization rates. Respondents first arriving in Victoria reported the lowest victimization rates (14.5%), with scores for the other identified states (QLD, NSW & WA) between 22.0% and 24.1%. No other personal or migrant characteristic was found to be significant with regard to victimization

Of the small number who indicated the types of crime that they were a victim of (n=9), most indicated assault (n=5), although it is interesting to note that a few commented that they were victims of police racism.

The respondents who reported that they had been a victim of crime were asked: Did you report the crime to the police? (Q16), followed by an open question to explain why cases had *not* been reported?

Most of the 85 victims of crime (74, or 87.1%) did report the crime to the police. Ten (11.8%) did not report the crime, with data missing for one respondent.

The reasons given for not reporting the crime included:

None of the police or other people working in public institutions will believe me, at most, I just choose to keep it all to myself now and never get police involved anymore because no one believes me anyway.

Case 35 (27 year old Male)

I don't trust that they will do anything.

Case 38 (25 year old male)

I asked the police officer and he said that 'all Sudanese look alike'.

Case 120 (32 year old male)

Because we do not report crime to the police in Sudan, we only report things to the community.

Case 389 (23 year old female)

The other six respondents did not offer a reason for not reporting the incident (either writing 'no reason' or not answering the question).

Police Questioning of Sudanese People

Respondents were asked (Q17) 'In Australia have you ever been questioned by the police?' Overall, almost two-thirds (62.5%) of the respondents reported having been the questioned by the police. Table 5.4 indicates the relationship between personal and migrant characteristics and whether respondents had been questioned by the police.

Table 5.4 Characteristics associated with being questioned by the police

Variable	Total number of respondents	Percentage 'Questioned by the Police'
Gender		
Male	263	59.3
Female	110	70.0
English fluency ^b		
No English	12	83.3
Some English	57	59.6
Good English	137	46.7
Excellent English	159	76.7
Religion		
Christian	215	61.8
Other	18	78.3
Region of origin in Sudan ^a		
North	15	33.3
South	347	63.7
Age group on leaving Sudan ^b		
Child	209	54.5
Adult	158	74.1
Refugee status ^a		
Migrant	48	79.2
Refugee	327	60.2
State of first arrival in Australia		
QLD	142	61.3
NSW	82	64.6
WA	29	58.6
VIC	54	59.3
Other	21	76.2

^a $p < .05$, ^b $p < .001$

The data presented in Table 5.4 indicate that level of English fluency (self-reported) was linked to police questioning. Somewhat curiously, the respondents with the least fluency and those with the greatest fluency were those reporting the highest rates of police questioning. Second, females report higher levels than males of being questioned by police, a finding that runs counter to most literature on this topic (White & Alder, 1994), even when substantial effort is directed towards changing these outcomes (see Brown, 1997 for a review of a decade of PACE in the UK).

The remaining data do not present a particularly clear picture. The difference concerning the impact of religion needs to be treated cautiously due to the low number of non-Christian respondents. The same is also true of 'region of origin' and 'age group on leaving Sudan'.

Perceptions of the Police Treatment of Sudanese People in Australia

Respondents were asked (Q18) 'Do you think that the Australian police treat Sudanese people in a similar way to other migrants and refugees?' Overall, about a third (29.8%) of respondents agreed that the police treated Sudanese people in a similar way to other migrants and refugees. We also examined a possible relationship between having been questioned by police (Q 17) and perceptions of different treatment (Q 18-21) and somewhat surprisingly found no significant differences. Table 5.5 indicates the various relationships between this perception of the police and personal and migrant characteristics.

Table 5.5 Characteristics associated with perception of whether the Australian police treat Sudanese people in a similar way to other migrants and refugees

Variable	Total number of respondents	Percentage 'agreeing' that Sudanese are treated in a similar way
Gender		
Male	260	27.7
Female	106	34.9
English fluency		
No English	12	25.0
Some English	55	29.1
Good English	135	23.7
Excellent English	156	35.3
Religion ^b		
Christian	343	28.0
Other	21	61.9
Region of origin in Sudan ^a		
North	15	6.7
South	341	30.5
Age group on leaving Sudan ^a		
Child	203	33.5
Adult	158	23.4
Refugee status ^b		
Migrant	48	75.0
Refugee	320	23.1
State of first arrival in Australia ^a		
QLD	140	30.0
NSW	79	31.6
WA	29	3.4
VIC	55	36.4
Other	20	35.0

^a $p < .05$, ^b $p < .001$

Table 5.5 data indicate that there is only one statistically significant link between perception of police treatment of Sudanese people and one personal

characteristic: religion. While the number of non-Christian respondents is low (only 21 respondents identified themselves as having non-Christian religions), there is a marked effect of religion; with non-Christians far more likely to agree that the police treat Sudanese people similarly to other migrants.

Table 5.5 also shows that all four migrant characteristics were associated with perception of police treatment of Sudanese people. Those from the South were more likely to agree than those from the North, those leaving Sudan as children were more likely to agree than those leaving as adults, migrants were far more likely to agree than refugees, and only 3.4% (i.e., one respondent) who first arrived in Western Australia agreed, compared to about a third arriving in all other States.

Respondents were then asked: 'Do you think that Sudanese people are more likely to be suspected of committing a crime than 'other African migrants and refugees' (Q19), 'other non-African minority groups' (Q20), and 'other Australians' (Q21). Responses are shown in Table 5.6 below.

Overall, 68.1% of the respondents agreed with the statement that Sudanese people are more likely to be suspected of committing a crime than 'other African migrants and refugees'. Slightly fewer (62.7%) agreed that the Sudanese are more likely to be suspected than 'non-African minority groups', and an almost identical number (62.9%) agreed that Sudanese people are more likely to be suspected than 'other Australians'.

There were only two statistically significant results in Table 5.6. First, a higher percentage of refugees than migrants believed that Sudanese were more likely to be suspected than 'other non-Africans'. Second, respondents originally from the North of Sudan were more likely than those from the South to believe that Sudanese people are more likely to be suspected than other Australians. The small sample sizes in these two groups (only 20 migrants, and 15 from the North) suggest the need to be cautious in the interpretation of these findings.

Table 5.6 Characteristics associated with perception of whether the Australian police suspect Sudanese People of committing crime relative to other reference groups

Sudanese more likely to be suspected than:

Variable	Other Africans		Other non-Africans		Other Australians	
	Total N	% agree	Total N	% agree	Total N	% agree
Gender						
Male	262	69.8	229	64.2	226	64.6
Female	108	63.9	93	59.1	92	58.7
English fluency						
No English	12	75.0	12	75.0	12	75.0
Some English	57	66.7	57	64.9	55	60.0
Good English	137	68.6	129	63.6	128	63.3
Excellent English	156	68.6	118	61.0	117	63.2
Religion						
Christian	346	67.1	307	62.9	302	63.2
Other	22	81.8	13	53.8	14	50.0
Region of origin in Sudan						
North	15	66.7	15	80.0	15	93.3^a
South	344	68.6	296	62.8	293	61.8
Age group on leaving Sudan						
Child	205	68.8	175	61.7	172	64.0
Adult	159	66.7	142	72.7	140	60.7
Refugee status						
Migrant	47	76.6	20	40.0^a	19	52.6
Refugee	325	66.5	304	63.8	301	63.1
State of first arrival in Australia						
QLD	139	65.5	132	64.4	130	60.8
NSW	80	73.8	65	64.6	64	65.6
WA	29	82.8	28	82.1	28	82.1
VIC	55	65.5	42	57.1	42	64.3
Other	22	54.5	20	50.0	21	57.1

^a $p < .05$

The final question (Q22) in the survey asked for any additional comments. This question was only answered by 25 respondents. Some of the main themes are identified below.

Cultural and language issues

Cultural understanding must be promoted vigorously to instil harmony and good relationships between the police and the community.

Case 12 (22 year old male)

The Australian police are truly unfair to the entire community, even the elders. They don't give us room to explain and our explanations are not accurate because of our English.

Case 16 (30 year old female)

I think that police officers need to be educated about the Sudanese people.

Case 120 (32 year old male)

Australians don't know about Sudanese cultures. They only rely on suspicions and assumptions.

Case 134 (53 year old male)

The police believe the Sudanese are not the right people for Australia because they don't want blacks in their country. Thanks Australia, I am going back to Sudan soon!!

Case 186 (24 year old male)

The police should respect our background, where we come from, also that our culture is different.

Case 334 (16 year old female)

The police are racist.

Case 328 (27 year old female)

Australian police come to the wrong judgement when one of the Sudanese fails to give a clear explanation because of language.

Case 341 (24 year old female)

Differences between justice in Australia and Sudan

No real justice for Sudanese in Australia.

Case 128 (30 year old male)

There is injustice in Australia. I believe Sudan is better than Australia in the way the police treated the Sudanese.

Case 286 (37 year old male)

There is justice in Australia compared to Sudan, where you can be convicted falsely.

Case 342 (25 year old female)

Media reporting on Sudanese people

The Sudanese image has been negatively portrayed in the media, for whatever reasons by the politicians. As such, Sudanese are seen as the perpetrators in a community.

Case 95 (no identifying details)

I think everyone is treated in a similar way, except in the way that the media report things.

Case 127 (27 year old male)

The futility of the current situation

There's no justice system in Australia, or within Australian police.

Case 227 19 year old male)

No hope for change.

Case 321 (27 year old male)

No comments because it will not help.

Case 333 (17 year old female)

Comments will not help or change the police idea about Sudanese people.

Case 340 (27 year old male)

Conclusion

One of the more surprising findings from the survey concerns the high rate of reporting of being a victim of crime: most of the 85 victims of crime (74, or 87.1%) did report the crime to the police. We suggest, that although in this chapter and throughout the report, there are a range of criticisms of police and beliefs concerning differential and unequal treatment there remains, at least from this sample, a positive basis from which to work further towards enhancing relations between police and Sudanese Australians. While we must be cautious against overstating this finding, and wary of some important limitations (crime reporting varies for a range of reasons such as type of offences and associated 'push' and 'pull' factors such as reporting requirements from insurance agencies or from residential authorities or private suppliers), we suggest there is a basis for important future efforts directed at further enhancing reports of victimisation and potentially to use of brief – though independent - 'exit' surveys of those reporting victimisation to capture their experiences and identify

ongoing ways to enhance service delivery, though of course this is something that equally applies to all people reporting being a victim of crime.

But the above also needs to be tempered by the other two key findings. First, only less than a third (29.8%) of respondents agreed that the police treated Sudanese people in a similar way to other migrants and refugees. Put the other way, two-thirds felt they were treated differently to other migrants and refugees. This is reinforced by the results from the questions asking views on whether the Australian police suspect Sudanese people of committing crime relative to other groups; where it was found overall around two-thirds believed Sudanese were more likely to be suspected of committing crime than each of the other groups (other Africans, other minorities, and Australians generally).

Finally, other factors that are suggestive of further research concerns such issues as language proficiency. While we have allowed for self-rating the survey results indicate that as self-assessed English fluency increases so does positive belief that Sudanese Australians are treated the same as other groups, albeit from a low of 25% for non-English speakers remaining at a worrying low of 35% excellent language skills and the lowest score (23.9%) for 'good English'.

Chapter 6

Police perspectives on Sudanese Australians

I've learnt a lot of stuff from the Sudanese community I use some of the things that they have taught me, ah, in my life now, you know some of the things about acceptance and some of the things they do in their culture are really amazing stuff they do ... ah that's all. I just think I have never, I've never had a bad experience even though they have come to me a bit upset about things um, like I said once we have worked through the issue we've communicated it has all been resolved...the other thing the majority of them come from a Christian background they come from good...they have pretty good values, you know (Police Interviewee 10).

We open this chapter with a quote taken from an interview with a member of the Queensland Police as it captures, to a significant degree, some of the key themes expressed by QPS personnel. In the first instance, it is an acknowledgement that there are the micro-specific issues regarding legitimate claims and grievances amongst Sudanese-Australians that are by no means insurmountable and can readily be overcome with good communication and an enriched or 'thick' understanding of Sudanese cultures. In addition, the interviewee seeks to locate these micro-issues within the broader, macro factors concerning an appreciation of not only what Sudanese-Australian refugees have experienced, but also the potential value of this new refugee group in contributing to a broader cultural enrichment within Australia. While other QPS personnel connect their work to this process of cultural engagement and transferral to police efforts to ensure an understanding of and compliance with Australian law, this interviewee also offers, in our view, a rather poignant reinterpretation of the cultural constructions concerning Sudanese-Australians as a crime problem (for a personal vignette by a Victorian-based journalist/writer see Simons, 2008). In the interviewees account, Sudanese-Australians offer something quite different to the imagined 'doxa of deviance' (or popularly imagined and assumed self-evident disproportionate levels of deviance). Finally, the quotation is also indicative of the limitation of focusing solely on police law enforcement practices and the artefacts produced in operational activities (arrests, recorded crime, etc.) as within police agencies, including the QPS, and within and across the state, the responses and practices are considerably more varied than such a limited focus allows.

The interaction between police and various minority groups has been a staple of policing research over many years (Jacob, 1971; Skolnick, 1966; and for historically informed Australian accounts see Cunneen, 2001; Finnane, 1994; and Chan, 1997). The reasons for this are many, including concerns with variation in treatment, discrimination, differential substantive justice outcomes,

mistreatment, failed organisational approaches and/or strategies, different levels of trust, and barriers to minority employment within police agencies. It will be recalled from our earlier discussion that the genesis of the development of this research project stemmed from the highly provocative and racialised comments concerning Sudanese Australians' predisposition towards, and subsequent over-involvement in, crime. Though such claims were made without any credible evidence, this raised concerns for us that we might have been witnessing an emerging moral panic about Sudanese Australian refugees and the likely subsequent effects of the different types or forms of injustices identified above (VEOHRC, 2009), matters that are not unique to contemporary Australia (see Thalhammer et al., 2001 for a Europe analysis); of longstanding concern within criminological research (see above) and addressed in numerous government reports (e.g. RCIADC, 1991; Australian Law Reform Commission, 1992; HREOC, 1991; 2004).

Much of this 'interaction and injustice' research (and we are not implying that it is research conducted under the method employed by symbolic interactionists) is covered by two approaches – an examination of the statistical variations between, or ethnographic observations of, different populations (e.g. different rates of the use of 'stop and search' or different rates in the use of arrest or caution), or minority views or perspectives of their treatment at the hands of police. We have already provided two chapters covering the views of Sudanese Australians via data collected in focus groups (Chapter 4) and in surveys (Chapter 5). This chapter explains the approach taken in this study regarding police data and police personnel perspectives. We begin by raising important questions regarding the limits of officially recorded crime data, again a matter of longstanding concern within criminology and numerous government and parliamentary reports (for a detailed critique in Queensland see Fitzgerald, 1989; a report and subsequent reviews which is essential reading for an understanding of policing in Queensland). We then shift our attention to interview data: providing background demographics of interviewees; police personal experiences of police-Sudanese interactions; police perspectives on Sudanese perceptions of the QPS; police perspectives of Sudanese offending and victimisation; police perspectives on QPS strategies for enhancing Sudanese perspectives of police; and finally police perceptions regarding areas to improve QPS-Sudanese interactions and Sudanese perspectives of the QPS. As can be seen from this brief outline, this chapter is focused solely on police perspectives and must be read in conjunction with other chapters examining and analysing Sudanese perspectives. To begin, we turn our attention to the problematic nature of officially recorded crime data and the dilemma's posed regarding the extent to which, and how, such data is to be utilised within this project.

The limits of crime data

The police dimension of the original research proposal involved the analysis of police crime data and interviews with police. As has been documented in most

studies of 'minority groups' (this term is used generically in this context), crime data – victimisation and offender numbers and rates and self-report studies – is notoriously unreliable. There are two main reasons for this regarding this research project. First, the police recording practises have been using antiquated and 'generic' terminology to categorise some racial groups. For instance, when seeking information about Sudanese, the main category employed by the QPS is 'African Negro'. Other descriptors can be used in other recording processes. However, and this is the second limitation, the recording practises rely heavily on two inter-related processes. The first step involves a person reporting a crime. The QPS interviewees acknowledge that this has been a problem within the Sudanese Australian community (see section 6.5 below). The second part of this process involves the relevant police officer making a judgement on ethnicity and, if making such a judgement then recording it appropriately. Of course, such subjective and *ad hoc* recording processes make it highly problematic to use such data. Indeed, it is too often the case that criminology researchers (and others) will point to the limitations of officially recorded crime data and then proceed to use this data as if the caveats noted do enough to allow the researcher to use the data to make factual claims about the nature of crime. We reject this approach, and while we acknowledge the benefits of using this data collection process as a means of enhancing our understanding of policing practices via the institutional artefacts produced – such as crime data – such accounts still need to be extremely sensitive to the very real possibilities that the 'constructivist' analyses are lost in the reading or interpretations made by the consumers of the knowledge produced.

The QPS Research and Ethics Committee approved our request for detailed statistics from all the Districts covered in our study for the period 2002 - 2009, including age and offence for victims and offenders, offences and any known outcomes. Although we attempted to *clean* the data after it was provided by the QPS we remained concerned about how the data was constructed (or what others might refer to as the *accuracy* of the data) and the extent that it could be used effectively to inform the analysis. It was determined that the above concerns meant it would be inappropriate to report crime statistics; so these are not included in the study. It should be noted that the QPS is in the process of changing the data collection techniques with a new recording system already developed but not implemented at the time of our data collection (which itself would have created some difficulties in any longitudinal analysis due to significantly changed recording processes). While we acknowledge the broader debates and concerns regarding the potential for recording ethnicity which in turn is then used to create moral panics and/or provide a rationalisation for and intensification of racial profiling – an issue that besets police operational practices generally - we must equally weigh concerns with moral panics created in the absence of data (an issue across different ethnicities and particularly evident in the recent controversies surrounding the victimisation of Indian's in Australia). These issues inform the first two recommendations of the chapter.

Recommendation 1: The QPS should implement the recording of ethnicity for victims and offenders, including a review of the ways in which operational police use the different police recording tools and processes.

Recommendation 2: The QPS should implement an audit of police recording of ethnicity for victims and offenders, including consideration being given to observational studies and the use of 'live' *in situ* case management reviews of the ways in which operational police use the different police recording tools and processes (for instance checking recording practices when a person is taken into custody or when a victim reports a crime).

The remainder of this chapter of the report draws on interviews with members of the Queensland Police Service conducted during April – June 2010. Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview schedule that was developed in light of the existing literature on police and minorities generally, studies of these relations in Australia, and studies specific to police and refugees; the preliminary findings arising from focus groups and interviews with members of the Australian Sudanese community; and preliminary analysis of QPS crime data. Interviews were transcribed and reviewed manually to determine key themes and issues drawn from the original research questions informing this study. Interviews were held in each of the four key locations identified in the community perspectives chapter (Townsville, Toowoomba, Brisbane metro South, City) with the addition of one inner Metropolitan police area (Brisbane metro North). This additional research site was added on the advice of the QPS Research and Ethics Committee due to the increasing number of Sudanese Australians settling in this area subsequent to the research funding application.

A total of 14 police were interviewed. Some interviews were conducted with individuals, others as part of a focus group. The use of different interviewing techniques was largely determined by police availability and on the basis of police willingness to be involved in either format.

Demographics

As indicated in Table 6.1 interviewees came from a variety of occupational positions, ranging from Police Liaison Officers (non-sworn) up to the senior District management levels (Superintendent). The majority of interviewees were male (n= 11), and the age ranged from 30s – 50s though only one person was under the age of 40 years. In terms of length of policing experience these ranged from 3 years to 27 years.

Table 6.1: Interviewee Demographics

Interviewee no.	Gender	Age category	Rank	Time in QPS	Time in current position	Current role
1	M	50s	Sgt	27	1	CCLO
2	M	50s	Snr Sgt	18	10	Cult Adv Unit
3	F	30s	PLO	3	3	PLO
4	M	40s	Sgt	10	3	Shift supervisor
5	F	50s	Sgt	10	3.5	CCLO
6	M	40s	Sgt	24		CCLO
7	M	40s	Det. Insp.	23		Child Protection
8	F	30s	Sgt	19		Projects
9	M	40s	Insp.	25		Projects
10	M	40s	Sgt	16	6	Crime prevention
11	M	40s	Acting SI	26	-	SI
12	M	40s	Det. Snr Sgt	23	1.5	Child Protection
13	M	40s	Det Snr Sgt	18.5	1.5	Child Protection
14	M	50s	Snr Constable	7	1	Beat & CCLO

In the era following the Fitzgerald Inquiry (post-1989), the QPS has developed a range of strategies, policies and programs, including:

1. Ensure that Queensland Police Service policy and program development is responsive to the needs of ethnic communities.
2. Provide appropriate education for police to increase their knowledge and interpersonal skills in policing a multicultural society.
3. Provide ongoing specialist support for the provision of equitable service delivery to ethnic communities throughout Queensland.
4. Provide open, effective and visible communication with all ethnic communities and organisations.
5. Implement culturally sensitive human resource management and equal employment opportunity principles and practices.

Personal experiences of police-Sudanese interactions

The importance of personal experiences shape two key factors pertaining to this research. On the one hand, our interviewees are not random but rather selected

on the basis that they had some experience in interacting with Sudanese Australians. On the other hand, as will be identified in the interview data and can be seen readily from the opening quotation to this chapter, interviewees readily identify the importance of such interaction, even if framed in other 'strategic' language such as community engagement or community policing.

One QPS interviewee expressed frustration with the interaction between Sudanese Australians and the QPS:

So what has happened over the 8, 9, 10 years of settlement there have been many agencies and many support services and many community centres and many actions all happening on the south side. There has only been comparatively small numbers of settlement here on the north side and what that has meant is that there has been fragmented community so although there is a north side Sudanese sub association of the Sudanese community, because the Sudanese have had no specific meeting place, they've had no place they can call their own that association has been fragmented. It's been very difficult to get contact with them as a group because they don't have meeting places. My liaising with them has been by person – so different people, or different elders or different respected persons in that community would come to me or I would go to them on issues but we haven't actually had the privilege of having them as a group. I'm hoping now that James as the new leader of the Sudanese community that that is able to change in some way. But in saying that the tribes that live here, I know the leaders of any job that comes to police attention, where there is a requirement or a facility for advise, will come to me and through that I will talk to the Sudanese PLO on the South Side, particularly Mary Kenji, the female and she assists me and is of great assistance to me at the moment with a job. So my association with the community has been quite wide but not as good as I would like because there is no formality about it which is very frustrating (Police Interviewee 5).

The level of 'surprise' is also found in another interview:

...we've had probably six to seven years of the African communities coming into Brisbane. I could stand corrected on that, but we first like everybody I guess became aware of it from a policing perspective with lots of issues in relation to youth in particular, settlement issues through our consultations with the settlement agencies; multicultural development association and Anglicare, and then also through driver's licensing issues and taxi issues and all those sort of culminated and it all kind of sprang up very quickly I guess from our perspective. Prior to, and again, timeframe I can't tell you exactly, say 6 or 7 years ago we'd hardly heard of the African community and then when migration and refugees began arriving in numbers lots of issues came out of the woodwork (Police Sergeant).

However, there is also a longer history to these developments, as indicated in the quotation below:

...12, 13, 14, probably 15 years ago there seemed to be a need when the Vietnamese community was creating issues, had created issues for us, we employed a couple of Vietnamese police liaison officers in Anala, which is in the Metropolitan West area. They were seen to just change the dynamics overnight. The employment of people from the Vietnamese community just made such a difference and as I said it was so significant and so quick that people actually, or the service recognised the value in having people from specific cultural groups other than aboriginal (Police Interviewee 2).

Perspectives on Sudanese perceptions of the QPS

The dominant theme identified in the interviews concerned the belief that Sudanese Australians had previously experienced various forms of police malpractice prior to coming to Australia and that this, in turn, influenced their attitudes to police generally. For QPS personnel, it was a matter of attempting to develop various 'community engagement' strategies to overcome this previous experience.

...often you'll find that the community may have built up a stereotype of police officers or they may have had a bad experience with a police officers – they may have gotten a traffic ticket and they hate police because of that. So you've immediately got a stereotype and it's very difficult to, even you can talk to them in the most courteous manner imaginable and they will still respond aggressively towards you. Not necessarily so with PLO's [Police Liaison Officers]. Often if you get the PLO's to do the communication and you just stand back you can deescalate a situation which may have escalated if you were dealing with them directly. So from that point of view, I think PLO's serve a very, very valuable, provide a very valuable service (Police Interviewee 4)

One of the issues concerns whether this prior experience means that it is extraordinarily difficult to attract Sudanese Australians to the QPS, or at least to the role of Police Liaison Officers:

Q: Do you think Sudanese if possible, otherwise African; do you think that there is a concern within the community about becoming a police liaison officer?

A: No, no, no. In fact we've had a suitable candidate or two and it's somewhat problematic and we find the same in remote indigenous

communities; a lot of the people who are probably the best people for these positions may not in fact be squeaky clean and particularly the people who may have come here in their late teens or early twenties who are now reaching their 27, 28 and becoming citizens I'll call it – I don't mean becoming citizens, as in citizenship, I mean realising they have a place in society etcetera. May have done some silly things when they arrived and so that comes back to bite them. Unfortunately from an ethical standpoint and from a regulatory framework we have to be very very careful who we employ. Sunday Mail fest. How would it be...You understand that? We have one in fact currently who is applying who has a significant conviction for underage dealing with a minor. The circumstances are interesting and probably from his perspective he didn't see much wrong with what he was doing, consenting child and all that sort of stuff, but anyway, it's all come back to bite him and now he probably, from his skills and abilities and the way that he is, would be a perfect candidate for a police liaison officer position, however it's going to be incredibly difficult for us to justify his position within the Queensland police service. So that is the issue that we are faced with at the moment (Police Interviewee 2).

Perspectives of Sudanese offending and victimisation

This section is divided between discussion of offending and discussion of victimisation. Interview questions were designed to elicit individual perspectives on each of these items, as well as any practices employed to shape the processes associated with each of these, such as efforts directed towards understanding offending behaviour and strategies designed to reduce offending, and efforts directed towards understanding the nature and level of victimisation and processes that might enhance dealing with victimisation (for instance improving the capacity or likelihood of victims to report crime). As one interviewee indicated:

I'm not seeing a lot of African offenders or victims, not what I'm looking at in terms of criminal activities (Police Interviewee 5)

Offending

When asked 'Is there a problem with Sudanese-Australians as offenders?', the general response is that they are not a relatively high offending group. There are specific individuals or small groups that cause some problems and offending appears to be occurring in two basic offences groups – domestic violence and road or traffic offences.

As one interviewee indicated, when asked if the Sudanese Australians are a 'crime problem':

No. I'd have to say that as a group, as a community group, as an ethnic group they are not one of our major cause[s] for service. Having said that there are issues in that community that are of concern to police and by that I mean we have had experiences of quite deliberate and ongoing exploitation of that group by members of that community. So a person that has arrived here previously has taken advantage of new arrivals by giving false information basically by saying if you need this you come and see me first, it works in Australia. And of course the new arrivals believe what the established members of the community have got to say. So we have had some fraud and theft issues there. We have ongoing domestic violence reports. We have tried to tackle the understanding that a driver's learner's permit is not a driver's license. A lot of the people from that community go and get a learners permit and think that that is a driver's license and they continue to drive and subsequently breach and of course they have a rudimentary understanding of what the traffic laws are in Queensland as a very specific example. So we try and tackle that information by regularly saying this is what you need to drive in Queensland. These are the road rules. A lot of them don't have, or they are remarkable drivers but don't have very good knowledge of Queensland road rules so consequently when the boys are out patrolling and they see an African person in the car they will intercept that person because...I know from experience that more than likely there will be breaches there of road rules and regulations (Police Interviewee 1).

Beyond addressing the general themes related to offending behaviour, the interviewee also introduces an additional issue regarding 'intra-group' offending (domestic violence is generally an 'intra-group' offence, as the recency of immigration means there has been limited inter-cultural/ethnic partnering) and property offences (fraud and theft). The other, and perhaps more dominant narrative concerns offences related to road laws, or more specifically licensing.

On the other hand, there is a view that these 'fields' are more fully understood than others:

...they may understand the laws on domestic violence and traffic better than what they did when they first arrived, but those other laws perhaps

may not be as understood as what we would like. But I could say that that if you looked at Caucasian children you'd probably find the same level of misunderstanding would exist without the language barriers (Police Interviewee 5).

Victimisation

A key theme in the victim-oriented literature concerns the extent that individuals or groups are willing to report a perceived crime to police. This is not specific to Sudanese Australians, and has been identified as a problem with specific forms of crime (most notably domestic or family violence) or groups (e.g. children) as well as more general factors shaping reporting process such as levels of trust of police and/or their willingness or ability to do anything about the victimisation (see Tyler & Lind, 1992 and subsequent research on trust and police legitimacy). In some areas, this has been addressed through significant changes to reporting structures such as mandatory reporting by key professional groups (e.g. doctors and teachers). In other areas, it has shaped police efforts directed at improving relations, improving trust, and improving methods of handling reports. These issues are identified in interviews with QPS personnel who acknowledge that the willingness of Sudanese Australians to report victimisation is a problem and have identified and implemented a range of strategies to enhance the willingness of victims to report crime.

As one liaison officer indicated:

The message we put out there all the time is report it to the police. Ring the police. We make sure they have the 24-hour report phone numbers. We make sure they can put a face to the QPS and often they will ring me here to report something. I see that as an added arm if you like to my liaison role and I will facilitate them through the system or give them a friendly face for them to contact or a name even to contact here so they feel that they are getting some sort of personal service there (Police Interview 1)

Others state concerns regarding inter-racial conflict:

I would think that they [Sudanese Australians] would probably also be victims of provocation from Pacific Islander groups now that there is this tension between the two groups I would think that there would probably be quite a few instances where the Pacific Islanders would have also provoked the Sudanese into melees. But in terms of property offences, that sort of stuff I know Dutton Park deals with quite a few domestic violence issues and when they do tend to get violent it seems as if they like to use weapons. Which obviously escalates a whole interaction with police is that it seems as if they are going to become violent they will resort to some sort of bladed weapon (Police Interviewee 4).

There are two key elements regarding the issue of perceptions of reporting victimisation to police.

Perspectives on QPS strategies for enhancing Sudanese perspectives of police

Police agencies have been seeking to identify ways of enhancing engagement with various cultural, racial and ethnic groups for many years on the understanding that enhanced engagement will increase the understanding and trust between police and these groups. There is a long-standing policing literature emphasising the importance of the exercise of police discretion and the significance of substantive justice outcomes. In recent years, the literature on procedural justice, and in particular the influential work of Tyler and colleagues (e.g. Tyler & Folger, 1980; Tyler & Lind, 1992), has attracted considerable attention with its focus on developing more measurable, or quantifiable, indicators which suggest that improving positive interaction between police and the community, enhancing engagement, and building trust in the fairness of police operational practice are important determinants for shaping the degree people are law-abiding and willing to cooperate with the police. However, the concerns with procedural fairness – and discretion and substantive justice outcomes as indicated above - have long been identified within the policing literature as being important in shaping citizen attitudes and perceptions (Skolnick, 1966).

Such approaches are captured in the interviews. As one interviewee stated:

...we are very much in the realms of community engagement and crime prevention. We are also trying desperately to remove some of the stereotypical barriers that we have toward police action both by the community and that's the wider community, not just the Sudanese/Africans, and also the culture of [the] QPS to engage these new and emerging communities

...it's probably one of the most multicultural and diverse communities in Queensland. So the QPS has seen the need to have someone who can focus on those cross cultural issues and bring not only the concerns of the QPS to the notice of the community but to reverse that role and bring community issues back to the QPS (Police Interviewee 1)

As the interviewee indicates, community engagement requires an approach or understanding that this is a two-way process – engaging the community to enhance their understanding of police, but also enhancing police personnel and the police organisational understanding of the issues to communities deem to be important to them. A QPS Cross Cultural Liaison Officer indicated:

Basically what it is, is I'm the catalyst I guess you would say between the emerging communities, the refugee communities, the international

students, anybody that comes from a cultural background as well as aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons. It's my job is to liaise with them. To educate them obviously on legislation, things that they might not know, my job is to build trust and understanding. It's also to educate police on some of the cultural issues that may arise (Police Interviewee 5)

However, one of the key problems that always confront police concerns the ways in which trust and engagement is established and then maintained. A major issue here is the constant turnover of police in their respective roles:

It's taken me 3 years to get to that stage. So the trust isn't there either. Your name's not known with police. Now I'm getting, I'm constantly getting emails. I've noticed there's a difference. It's happened, but your right. It's a difficult position - something that I've tried to speak to senior officers about. In a normal position I could go on leave and I could give my job ... I used to do, I could give my tasks to somebody and I could let them go and do it, no problem. In the cultural job it's all about relationships. They make one 'stuff up' and they've stuffed up that relationship and it worries me completely about not having that person to give the job to when you do go on holidays because you can't just get a taste of the relieving. You actually have to be trusted by all the many communities. Now the Sudanese community, if you go back to where we started, they do trust me. They've learnt that if they ask me something they will get an answer. They've learnt that even if I can't help them I'll refer them somewhere else. I've built that trust. It's taken me three years to get to this position where they know who I am and they trust me completely so it's not an easily relieved job

Q: There is an institutional risk there then?

Absolutely. Completely. Probably more because I don't think the bosses even understand it because most of the bosses haven't gone through the culture. The bosses are in their 40's and 50's Australia has changed a lot. I've seen that just in the ten years I've been in the QPS, I've seen the difference between when I first started and in [my area]. Even the first time I relieved over here which would have been five years ago just for a small period of time there was hardly any issues. It was almost like what do I do? I'll go around and visit the mosques. I've seen that change just with the refugees and international students, the media attention, the asylum seekers, the boat people. Sometimes you'll hear comments from Caucasian communities reflecting an unease (Police Interviewee 5)

Areas to improve QPS - Sudanese interactions and Sudanese perspectives of the QPS.

One of the key developments within the QPS has been the expansion of the Police Liaison Officer initiative, originally focused on indigenous communities

but now part of a broader process for engaging a range of different communities (Cherney & Chui, 2010). While the position of PLO's is important there are limits to recruiting and placing PLO's:

The first time all the applicants were unable to answer the key selection criteria. So that was a major problem. The applicants that were deemed suitable the second time the same thing happened. The core applicants that were applying weren't deemed suitable to hold the position. We've experienced that now three times, this is the fourth time we've advertised this position. We've done extensive work with networks to get the position advertised externally but I can say that it's only been advertised since last Friday week and I've probably taken 50 phone calls from African people who speak English as probably a forth language. So I'm finding that even with the wide advertisement of the position, the level of understanding within the community of the position and the way in which the key selection criteria is advertised has proven a little difficult

Q: Is speaking English one of the main barriers?

No it's not. The applicants speak English. I think it could be the literacy to answer a government ad maybe a problem. The literacy in putting in play an application to key selection criteria as government requires I think that's the barrier and also perhaps the applicants who are considering the job may not have the full qualifications. When I say qualifications people don't have to be completely literate in computer but they have to have an ability to use the computer obviously. They also have to be accepted by the Sudanese community. They also have to be acceptable to QPS. One of the tests if you were working for the QPS in this type of position is obviously integrity and no criminal history are two very big things. So we were having some problems.

Q: I'd imagine for a lot of Sudanese apart from their time in Australia that the background checks outside the time in Australia would at least be fragmented?

That's done by our specialist Intel staff but I think that if you look at criminal history you could call drink driving a criminal history, you could call domestic violence one if there was repeat criminal history and you'd probably know as well as I do that when the Africans first came here they had very little knowledge of our road rules and they also had very little knowledge of our domestic violence laws so you could see probably that that may prohibit some people from working for QPS (Police Inspector).

However, the role of the PLO is not so clear cut for two reason: first because they were originally indigenous position, and second because the role itself was vaguely designed.

In addition, as one respondent indicates:

I'm an absolute believer in the way we do it. The one thing I think we do badly is, the football scenario is actually as well as highlights a good, highlights a bad is that what we tend to do is that's a liaison issue send a PLO – what it doesn't do is drag the police officer with them. So what we tend to end up with is a great relationship between the PLO and the community, and not a great relationship with the police and the Sudanese or any community and that is something that I'd like to see more of where the police see value. (Police Interviewee 2)

Conclusion

What we have done here in [...] is you don't ignore the elephant in the room. We realised that when the Sudanese refugees were coming to [...] we would have issues. There will be things that will come up. OK let's not wait for them to happen and I think it is a lesson to be learnt by police services in relation to any group whatsoever. They come in, get on the front foot, don't wait for issues to start build up because by the time that happens it is too late and you know years of good will can be broken down overnight by one bad experience and this is something I have really learnt and I will keep with me for the rest of my career wherever I go (Police interviewee 11)

This chapter has reported on police perspectives of Police-Sudanese Australian interactions and perceptions. Of course, we must necessarily acknowledge that these are perceptions only, and that the number of police interviewed was small and by no means approximates a random sample. On the other hand, we have deliberately focused our attention on those police more likely to have direct contact with the Sudanese-Australian community and/or to be supervising personnel and overseeing programs to enhance relations between the two. We were also fortunate in having access to police who had considerable experience in this area.

If there is an overarching 'police perspective' expressed by Queensland police interviewees it is that the Australian-Sudanese community is certainly not a greater problem for the police than any other ethnic group. While there is some reference to 'early problems' or a 'few individuals' the general tenor of the police voice is that while this refugee group (and others) is not a significant problem, it might have been different if police had not adjusted their practices. Herein lies one of the paradoxes that have emerged in this research. The police say there is no problem but then point to a range of organisational responses to the 'non-problem', with particular emphasis on lack of knowledge of the legal system, particularly road laws. Certainly evidence from elsewhere, such as Victoria (VEOHRC, 2009), indicates tensions between police and Sudanese Australians that was not evident in Queensland police perspectives. However, earlier chapters, and in particular Chapter 4 where Sudanese Australian focus group data was presented, indicate that there is concern within the Sudanese Australian communities regarding how they perceive their treatment at the hands of the police generally. On the other hand, at least some police have indicated that they attempted to 'get on the front foot' by engaging emerging communities rather than waiting for problems to arise.

Chapter 7

Conclusions

To conclude, this research focused on a number of perspectives to gain a systematic and balanced understanding of Sudanese peoples' interaction with the criminal justice system in Queensland. In essence the study presented a comprehensive content analysis of Australian print media and how these institutions portray Sudanese Australians, which in turn influence community attitudes and policy and practice amongst government and non-government agencies. In addition, police were interviewed to gain their views about the kind of interactions they have with the Sudanese community. An additional form of data collection consisted of giving voice to the Sudanese community through the surveys and focus groups to gain their perspectives about their interactions with the criminal justice system.

An analysis of the qualitative media highlights that media reportage about Sudanese people has changed its focus over the time period covered in this analysis. First, in terms of frequencies, the number of articles appearing increased dramatically in 2007. However, it should be noted that the main source of this dramatic rise was due to coverage in newspapers such as *The Age*, in no small way due to the 'signal crime' (Innes, 2004: 335) regarding the murder of Sudanese Australian Leip Goney. This incident amplified concerns about the Sudanese 'problem' around issues relating to crime, problems associated with refugee integration, youth gangs, and cultures of violence.

A second key finding concerns the 'voices' being reported across the media spectrum. The literature review on crime and the media identified that it was more likely that state-based primary definers, such as the police, were more likely to have their views reported compared to Sudanese Australians. However the media analysis in this research has not found this to be so clear cut in relation to reporting on Sudanese Australians. As identified in the content analysis Sudanese voices in fact run at approximately twice the frequency of police, even when – and in fact more so - we reach the critical 2007 period.

A third finding of interest is the rough equivalence of reporting on Sudanese Australians as victims as well as perpetrators of crime. This holds true for the whole period of analysis, again including the peak period of 2007. This could be partly explained by the large amount of media coverage on the Goney case wherein the victim was Sudanese Australian.

Fourth, and more aligned with dominant accounts of crime news, articles regarding Sudanese Australians are weighted towards the use of criminogenic labels and accounts of crime gangs. From this perspective, Sudanese Australians are portrayed as threats to the social order in part due to the high circulation of

reportage on the then Immigration Minister's comments questioning the suitability of Sudanese for immigration based on his view that these people were inherently criminogenic and possessed low intelligence V.

By comparison the data extracted from the police focus group interviews highlights that the Australian-Sudanese community is certainly not a greater problem for the police than any other ethnic group. While there is some reference to 'early problems' or a 'few individuals' the general tone of the police voice is that while this refugee group (and others) is not a significant problem, it might have been different if police had not adjusted their practices. Herein lies one of the paradoxes that have emerged in this research. The police say there is no problem but then point to a range of organisational responses to the 'non-problem' with particular emphasis on lack of knowledge of the legal system, particularly road laws. Certainly evidence from elsewhere, such as Victoria (VEOHRC, 2009), indicates tensions between police and Sudanese Australians that was not evident in Queensland police perspectives. One positive perspective from some police is that they were willing to be proactive by engaging with emerging communities rather than waiting for problems to arise. However, the views of police are at odds with the results of the survey data and focus groups with the Sudanese communities across the three sites. One of the more surprising findings from the survey concerns the high rates of people who reported that they were the victims of crimes with 87.1% of the cohort indicating that they reported the crime to police. While this data indicates concerns from the Sudanese about differential and unequal treatment from police there remains the potential to work towards enhancing relations between police and Sudanese Australians. While we must be cautious against overstating this finding and wary of some important limitations (crime reporting varies for a range of reasons such as type of offences and associated 'push' and 'pull' factors such as reporting requirements from insurance agencies or from residential authorities or private suppliers) we suggest there is a basis for important future efforts directed at further enhancing reports of victimisation and potentially the use of brief – though independent - 'exit' surveys of those reporting victimisation, in order to capture their experiences and identify ongoing ways to enhance service delivery. Though of course this is something that applies equally to all people reporting being a victim of crime.

However the above also needs to be tempered by the other two key findings. First, only less than a third (29.8%) of respondents agreed that the police treated Sudanese people in a similar way to other migrants and refugees meaning two-thirds felt they were treated differently to other migrants and refugees. This is reinforced by the results from the questions asking views on whether the Australian police suspect Sudanese people of committing crimes relative to other groups, where it was found overall around two-thirds believed Sudanese were more likely to be suspected of committing crime than each of the other groups (other Africans, other minorities, Australians generally). Finally, other factors that are suggestive of further research concern such issues as language proficiency. While we have allowed for 'self-rating' the survey

results indicate that as self-assessed English fluency increases so does positive belief that Sudanese Australians are treated the same as other groups, albeit from a low of 25% for non-English speakers remaining at a worrying low of 35% excellent language skills and the lowest score (23.9%) for 'good English'.

By comparison the focus group data captures the voices of Sudanese Australians by focusing on three inter-related areas which impact on the types of interactions they have with the criminal justice system in Queensland. The data initially explored the challenges experienced by Sudanese as they attempt to integrate into Australian society. A major challenge for the Sudanese in this study is to break out of the cycle of poverty by obtaining paid employment or gaining further educational qualifications. As identified in the literature chapter earlier in this report studies by Sampson and Bartusch (1998) acknowledge that this is an important factor when considering Sudanese interactions with the criminal justice system. They argue that we cannot ignore broader social factors, such as poverty and lack of access into suitable employment or education, if we are to address this problem.

Overcoming the effects of social exclusion is another challenge identified by the research participants. The degree of success in assimilating into Australia, in terms of learning English, finding suitable accommodation and paid employment, can be measured in terms of the degree of social capital an individual is able to build as identified in the DIAC report (Shepley, 2007; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007). Social capital is also important for individuals in terms of how they are able to extend their social networks to avoid becoming socially excluded or marginalized from the rest of the community. However this research also resonates with other studies showing that many Sudanese, despite their traumatic past, exhibit a high degree of optimism and resilience in making the transition from the Sudan to Australian society (Gifford, Correa-Velez, & Sampson, 2009).

The focus groups identified their concerns about the degree of state intervention into the private sphere of their lives, which in their perception threatened to weaken the traditional structure of Sudanese families. For example elders observed that their traditional roles as parents were undermined in terms of how they should discipline their children. As young Sudanese developed extended social networks, through interactions with non-Sudanese youth, parents were concerned about the breakdown of traditional values such as respect towards their elders. There was also a perception that young people were more likely to challenge parental forms of authority which served to undermine and weaken the family unit. At the same time Sudanese women became empowered through participation in education and paid work, which in turn challenged the patriarchal roles of Sudanese males. Changes to the power structure within the family unit often produced conflict culminating in cases of domestic violence against women and children. The rise in domestic violence resulted in increased forms of state intervention into Sudanese families, which were interpreted by some as being culturally inappropriate

particularly when children were removed and placed in non-Sudanese families. This issue has been acknowledged in a recent protocol between the government and the Sudanese community in Toowoomba, which stated that Sudanese elders should be consulted if there is a child protection issue involving a child from that community (Toowoomba Multi-cultural Protection Project, 2007-2009).

The other focus of the interviews concentrated on how Sudanese people interacted with the criminal justice system within the public sphere. This research concurs with studies in other countries that the interaction between police and other ethnic groups remains as an ongoing problem (Neyroud & Beckley, 2001). In this research young people in particular identified a number of problems with police, specifically when large groups of Sudanese youth congregate in public spaces such as parks and shopping malls, due to the popular misconception that they belong to troublesome ethnic gangs. Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2008) argued that one factor for negative interactions between police and groups of ethnic youth relates to their high visibility in terms of their height, skin colour and collective kinship based social practices. This makes them easier to be labelled as gangs despite a lack of any real proof (White et al., 1999). The Sudanese youth in this study however argued that rather than being a threat when interacting in public spaces they felt vulnerable due to over-policing and occupy public spaces in groups for personal safety.

Sudanese elders and young people in this study expressed concern about the skewed public perceptions that labelled them as being criminogenic and threats to law and order. The source of such misperceptions came from some politicians and academics which were covered in a number of media stories. The work of Pickering (2008) and Poynting (2008) suggests that such media reports and comments by influential individuals promote moral panics within the community which results in calls for increased surveillance and regulation by authority figures such as police.

A high number of Sudanese who were interviewed stated that they were the subjects of police harassment. They also felt that police were less likely to listen to their account of events and were often the victims of verbal and/or physical abuse. To this end there was an underlying perception that Sudanese were the victims of crime rather than the perpetrators of criminal activity. This proposition is supported by other research such as the DIAC report (Shepley, 2007), which identified concerns that police discriminate against black Africans and that too little is being done to combat racism and harassment from the broader community. A commonly cited reason for negative interactions between police and Sudanese is that they do not understand the law or the roles of police. However this research supports the view of the DIAC report (Shepley, 2007), that the supposed 'lack of understanding' is either baseless or over-emphasised and instead is a justification for increased police intervention into Australian-African communities. These misunderstandings serve to

diminish the role that systematic racism and class disadvantage play in social conflict and the ensuing discrimination faced by young Sudanese people.

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Appendix A

The 'Lost boy': A Synopsis of a Queensland Lost Boy's Journey

The Lost Boy: A Synopsis of a Queensland Lost Boy's Journey

The following story is taken from an edited 2010 transcript by a young Sudanese Australian, residing in Queensland, who declares himself to be one of the so-called Lost Boys. His story, like many other young boys and girls from Southern Sudan, in particular, provides us with a stark narrative about the enormous difficulties faced by many of this generation that are part of Australia's roughly 36,000 and Queensland's 6,500 Sudanese born peoples that have been resettled into parts of Australia.

There has been minor editing of this transcript undertaken for purposes of clarity only. The content nuances of expressed language have been preserved. This story enables us to consider the background context of many of the research participants who willingly talked with the research team from 2008-2010. They are not 'war soldiers' as some would have us to countenance. These are young people who experienced war, famine and illnesses that most Australians would have no first-hand experience of. Their experiences with the Queensland criminal justice system is largely framed, not by their direct engagement with 'authority' powers (whether they be the military, police or others), but by communication and cultural differences as this report intends to throw some light upon.

We contend that this type of story, many of which were stated to us in slightly different terms, different locales and explicit details, nonetheless, conveys the need to bestow the vast majority of Sudanese Australians with a strong sense of credit for their pursuit of a just resettlement process, their commitment to education and family and their willingness to assimilate into Queensland communities.

I'll talk about my journey from home, which is Sudan, to Ethiopia and then some life experiences in Ethiopia, our return to Sudan and, then from Sudan to Kenya. After that, I would like to talk about some of my experiences after leaving Kenya for Australia.

I left my home in Sudan in 1987 during the war. I was not 10 years old. We trekked all the way from Sudan to Ethiopia, and on the way there it was a difficult journey. We were travelling day and night. We encountered a lot of problems on the way; like snakes, wild animals and attacks from other tribes along the way.

Luckily we made our journey to Ethiopia but it was a hard one. We got into a refugee camp and stayed for four years. Before we left Ethiopia, during the time there and before, life was very difficult because there was no food at that time. The UN did not arrive at the right time and people were suffering. So, the only main foods for survival were for people to go out to the bush and gather wild plants, come back, cook and eat some. That is how life was, and it was very, very hard. As there was no food a lot of the boys, who were with us, fell sick and died of various causes; a lot from malaria and diarrhoea - any kind of disease that people were vulnerable to.

Eventually, the UN did come with food relief. Around the same time, we started to go to school under the tree. That was the first class. I would go and pick up a small rock in the bush and put it under the tree and that would be your 'place in class'. You sit on it and before they brought some exercises we used to write on the ground, practicing for ABCD (the alphabet). When the teaching finished, you would go home. And, the next day it would start like that again.

So life was very hard in Ethiopia, because even though the UN were bringing some food and some medicine, supplies were not enough. People were always dying.

War in Ethiopia broke out again in 1991. We made the same kind of return trekking journey towards Sudan. It was the rainy season; so a lot of rivers were full. Crossing the rivers, especially for those that could not swim, meant that some were swept away and drowned. For others, it was still the same repetition of what happened when we were going to Ethiopia. Animal attacks, lack of food etc. made it a difficult trek from Ethiopia to Sudan, when we eventually arrived at the border town – Pacella. We stayed here for a while, but things were not much better: there was little to no access to food, the UN could not reach people and the war was going on in both Ethiopia and in Sudan.

I remember any kind of aeroplane to bring the food by the Red Cross was a very hard time. It came once in a while but had to drop the food from above and leave the town because they could not land, for risks involved in landing at the airport. So life was also hard in Pacella; people survived by going to the bush and getting some wild plants and fruits to eat. Also, the river was overflowing so there was not any kind of lucky chances for fishing. So life goes on like that and it was still the continuation of people falling sick and dying and you could see your relatives or friends dying - the next day somebody and then the next day. So you don't know when you will die, what you are waiting for, when your day is coming. Life was hard and then when we took off from Pacella, the town was getting bombed by the Sudan government.

People then left from there to the inner part of the Sudan, in the direction heading to Kenya. Along our way, we were being bombed by aeroplanes, so the only safest thing that people decided to do was to travel at night and spend daytime hiding. And another thing why people were travelling at night was

because of lack of water on the way. So that was done because when you travel at night it was a little bit cooler and then when it became daytime, people would rest at some places that was next to some water. That is how it was along from Sudan to Kenya. It was also a hard trek, because the same things happened with attacks on the way by animal, by other tribes and other kind of things that happen in the bush. People fell sick, they could not walk anymore, and then what has to be done, is either you carry them or they die so you leave them there under the tree because there is no time for burial and no tools for digging the ground, and people were weak. So when someone dies it is a matter of taking him under the tree and cover the body with tree leaves and then leave them there and walk on.

In all, these journeys were different kinds of settings for us (but were common in that hunger, illness and dangers were always present) and, entirely for the Lost Boys. The oldest, by that time, were around about 13 or 15. Those were the oldest ones among us, and the rest were younger. Walking along that distance and seeing all these kinds of problems on the way, traumatises a person. We were so young. So we trekked all the way from Ethiopia, passing back through Sudan to Kenya.

We came to Kenya to the Kakuma refugee camp, where the UN was located. At this camp there were so many nationalities, not only Sudanese, but nationalities from other warring African countries. Sudanese were a majority amongst the other refugees. Again, life in Kakuma was also very hard because of the lack of food supplies and sufficient medicine being supplied through the UN. Even when medicines were brought in and people were falling sick, some of the medicine (let me say that there was not enough medicine for all and beside that there were not enough doctors) given were for headaches and not malaria or something like that. Because of the lack of enough foods and good hygienic precautions, the camp was full of several diseases. So, people just survived day by day and life goes on: some die, some survive.

When it comes to the side of the school, the school in the Kakuma camp was like the one in Ethiopia. We started our schooling under the tree - that is where they start teaching us about how to spell some words and the continuation of like ABCD and all sorts of stuff. After that, the UN builds some of the houses that were being made for a classroom. And there was also lack of enough exercise books and textbooks for the reading. Books would be shared and, depending on class sizes, it could take you a whole semester to get to your textbook, to touch the book or even get to read it. So, the only thing you could do was to depend on the notes given to you by the teacher. But, there was no electricity and so people could do reading only at daytime.

Maybe it is not surprising that during this time there was a high dropout rate from the school, because of the situation at the school and the lack of teachers. First, the UN could only hire Kenyan teachers and, later, some Ethiopians. After that, some Sudanese teachers were in the area but there were not enough for

the thousands of students that were living there. So, when life was becoming hard, there was hunger and people falling sick, there was a high rate of drop out from the school. Some would leave the school and not come back again. When you wake up in the morning and you wake up with an empty stomach and you are going to the school and you stay there the whole day and come back, it is hard. So the ones that could make it, just persevered to just let them do it, no matter what and others were saying (e.g. No, I can't go anymore.... let me just stay at home and wait for any kind of aid that could be distributed tomorrow or anything like that).

It went on like that in Ethiopia, where things go up and down like that and when there is enough supplies of food, life getting normal, and; when there is a shortage then things get worse again. And the medication part was another problem. We just lived day by day and surviving like that, until we finished our studies. It was (and still is) a matter of keeping struggling when others are doing it – asking yourself, then why are you not doing it.

To us, we tell ourselves as Lost Boys, is that the only way out of our hardship is through education. When we become educated that is what will liberate us from all of our suffering we have gone through. So that has been the hope among us and it has been a thing that has given us a strength to keep going on with education, no matter what. Some couldn't make it and dropped out from the school up until the time when we went to the high school. Others finished our high school and we were just waiting and nothing was being done, until the resettlement program came into the western world. Former American President Jimmy Carter came to Sudan, not Kenya, and he was talking to and people were narrating their life history, of the hardship we have gone through. So he said it is okay and what he would do is open up the resettlement program. He went back to America and then there was some opening up of the resettlement program among the 3,000 or so Lost Boys. Not all of them have come to the western world. Some are still in Kakuma, some have gone to Canada, others have gone to America and some of us have come here to Australia.

During that time, we did our selection interview and they took 5 students to bring them first to Australia to see how the life was in Australia, and then they started bringing in more people. I arrived in Perth in 2002. That was my first place, first location under the resettlement program. For me, my first thoughts was that Australia was alright and the life for many of us was getting on well, except for maybe some people where there were difficulties of communication, say literacy, and for us that had a little bit of English by that time, it was not a difficult thing to communicate or to get along from place to place. But the rest that did not know much about English They had a tough time to get along in communicating, or when they went for a job interview or anything like that.

So, the experience in Australia as a Sudanese differs from person to person, because it will depend on what you encounter and who you encounter. Some of us say it was "good", others would say "no" it has never been good, others

would say it was "50/50". The majority of Sudanese, the way I see them, are that they are into integration issues, even though people say, 'oh, the government say the Sudanese are not integrating migrants'. I ask myself what is integration? We are at work, we pay taxes - that is part of integration. We are at a school, we are doing education with the rest of the Australian students - that is integration. We have some of our people in the army, that is part of integration as a defender of country, and we socialise with Australians, in public places, or having friends one to one, or visiting some friends house to house, and they visit us and that is part of integration. Those that do not know English are learning English in the school, and that is part of integration for easy communication. So, I don't see the way why people say that Sudanese are not integrating well. They are at all levels of integration and they are doing all that they can do to get along with the society but things that come out about Sudanese as causing trouble and not integrating in Australia worry me.

Okay in every community there is some kind of crime - there is no community that is crime free. But any crime that happens in one community, either by one person or two, is starting to generalise the whole community. So it makes it very hard for one to understand why our lives are described like that.

In all, life in Australia has been difficult for some, and been relatively easier for others: depending on what and who you have encountered along the way. And that is what I think - how life goes in everywhere you go. It is not always a smooth thing - you will get some ups and downs everywhere you go. And that is it, if there is anything that is needed to clarify or to add on you can let me know and I will talk more about it. Thanks.

Appendix B

Survey instrument: Sudanese Australians' Interactions with the Queensland criminal justice system

Sudanese Australians' Interactions with the Queensland criminal justice system

Please note that you are not required to identify yourself at any time. Please do not put your name or any other details which might reveal your identity.

Part 1: Personal Details

1. Are you male or female? (tick one)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Male
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female
2. How old are you (years)? (enter number)	<input type="text"/>	Years old
3. What is your marital status? (tick one)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Single
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Married
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Divorced
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Widowed
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other
4. How many people currently live in your household? (enter number)	<input type="text"/>	People
5. Which of the following languages do you speak? (tick all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/>	English
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dinka
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Arabic
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nuer
6. How would you describe your level of English fluency? (tick one)	<input type="checkbox"/>	No English spoken
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some English
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Good English
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent
7. What is your religion? (tick one)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Muslim
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Christian
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

Part 2: Life in Sudan

8. Which part of Sudan are you from? (enter city or region)	<input type="text"/>
9. When you left Sudan what was your last profession/job (e.g., student, construction worker, Doctor)?	<input type="text"/>
10. How old were you when you left Sudan?	<input type="text"/> Years

(enter number)		
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11. Did you leave Sudan as a migrant or as a refugee?		Migrant
		Refugee

12. How many members of your family left Sudan with you? (e.g., zero, one, two)		Family members
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13. In Sudan, did you ever have any contact with police officers in connection with criminal investigations? This includes being either a victim, witness or suspect in a crime.		No
		Yes

Part 3: Life in Australia

14. When you first arrived in Australia, in which town (e.g., Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane) did you initially reside? (Name of town)	
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15. In Australia have you ever been a victim of a crime? (tick one) If <u>Yes</u> , Please state the type of crime(s):		Yes
		No

16. Did you report the crime to the police? If <u>No</u> , why didn't you report it?		Yes
		No

17. In Australia have you ever been questioned by the police (e.g., in the street, at work, at home, or in a police station)?		Yes
		No

18. Do you think that the Australian police treat Sudanese people in a similar way to other migrants and refugees?		Yes
		No

	Do you think that Sudanese people are more likely to be suspected of committing a crime than:		
19. Other African migrants and refugees		Yes	
		No	
20. Other non-African minority groups		Yes	
		No	
21. Other Australians		Yes	
		No	

22. Do you have any comments to make about how Sudanese people in Australia are treated by the criminal justice system; or your experiences with the police in Sudan?

Thank you for you cooperation