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'At Least You're the Right Colour': Identity and Social Inclusion of Bosnian Refugees in Australia

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This paper explores the Australian resettlement of the largest recent refugee group, Bosnians. It is argued that Bosnians (and other ex-Yugoslavs) were Australia's preferred humanitarian immigrants during the 1990s because of their European background (based on social-cohesion and 'resettlement-potential' arguments) and because of the presence of ex-Yugoslav communities in Australia which were expected to support newly arrived refugees during their early resettlement (the 'community argument'). The 'whiteness'/'Europeanness' of Bosnians enabled them to remain largely 'invisible' in the country they perceived as 'white Australia' and to initially claim an 'insider status'. For many people, however, this self-inclusion is thwarted in the second stage of resettlement when they are expected to find jobs and 'acculturate', as the language barrier and their non-English-speaking background become a basis of difference and potential exclusion. Their economic and social inclusion thus appears to be determined by factors beyond visibility and remains limited almost a decade after the largest wave of Bosnians arrived in Australia.

Keywords: Bosnian Refugees; Australia; Identity; Race; Social Inclusion

Introduction

The beginning of my research on Bosnian refugees[1] coincided with an important affair in Australian politics, the so-called 'Tampa crisis',[2] which brought the issue of refugee admission into the focus of public attention. Only weeks after the Tampa incident, the September 11 terrorist attack on the US put an unexpected spin on the issue: refugees were now associated with terrorists by high-ranking Australian officials. The two events reinforced the fear of many Australians that aliens aspiring to

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an Australian visa could endanger 'our security' and 'our way of life'. According to the opinion polls, a large majority of Australians supported the consequent Conservative government's restrictive policies on asylum-seekers.[3] The most contentious and debated elements of the Australian refugee policy—supported by both major Australian parties—have been mandatory detention and temporary protection.

The political developments of late 2001 made me see the resettlement of Bosnians in Australia in a new light. Bosnians suffered terribly in the early 1990s when war ravaged their country, interrupting millions of lives and dispersing hundreds of thousands of people across Europe and overseas. Bosnians were traumatised by war, forced migration and often also by a period spent in a limbo of temporary protection in European countries, the largest number in Germany. Some successfully settled in European countries and hoped to be able to stay there, but they eventually had to leave. Many of these people came to Australia.

I was in daily contact with the plight of Bosnians from 1996, first as an interpreter and later in the role of researcher, and was inevitably touched and often shaken by the stories I heard. However, compared to the status of Australia's asylum-seekers spending years in detention, they seemed like a 'refugee elite'. Bosnians were the largest single component of Australian humanitarian immigration in the 1990s; the statistics indicate that they were granted the largest number of Australian permanent protection visas in the 1990s (DIMIA 2002, 2003a). Some 30,000–35,000 Bosnians arrived in the period 1992–2001 (Misic 2001). In the financial year 1993–94 the Australian government increased its humanitarian quota by 2,000 visas to accommodate refugees from Bosnia (Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia 1996). Unlike in the case of the much smaller number of refugees rescued by the Tampa, the Australian public gracefully accepted the additional thousands of Bosnians: filling the refugee quota with white Europeans seemed politically expedient for the Australian government.

Many authors argued that the plight of Bosnians inspired more compassion in the West than the plight of other war-affected nations and minorities around the globe. The Forced Migration Review [4] quotes that in 1999 donor governments 'gave US$207 for every person in need in the former Yugoslavia and only US$8 per head for those in need in the Democratic Republic of Congo'. It also states that 'European Union emergency assistance to the former Yugoslavia in 1999 was four times the amount given to the seventy Africa/Caribbean/Pacific states'. Farwell (2001) estimated that the UNHCR-allocated aid was 11 times greater for Balkan refugees than for those from African countries. Pittaway and Bartolomei (2002: 22–3) argued that Australia and the Western world in general perceive the experiences of white people differently from the experiences of others: the international community was outraged in the face of reports from the Bosnian war because 'raped women and killed men were Caucasian and the villages and towns were obviously those of a developed country'. They also argued that measures to deter the entry of asylum-seekers have been implemented to a large extent because the majority of those seeking entry have come from non-European countries (Pittaway and Bartolomei 2002: 24).

Australia's proactive response to the plight of Kosovars in 1998–99, in striking contrast to the strictly reactive response to the Afghan refugee crisis, may also illustrate the 'European bias'.[5] Barnett (2002): 15) cited an international refugee official as saying that 'the perception is that we owe more to Yugoslavia—this is a population that is white like us and has a similar history'. Barnett stated that 'into the 1980s and 1990s Africans never received the same publicity as refugees from the [European] East' who were considered 'easier to integrate into their new society' (Barnett 2002: 14). During the 1990s non-Europeans—Iraqis, Iranians, Sudanese, Ethiopians, Eritreans and Afghanis—also arrived in Australia as 'quota refugees',[6] but in considerably smaller numbers. As Jupp (2002: 12) pointed out, 'there are very powerful "pushes" out of Afghanistan, Africa and Iraq, but they do not produce major inflows into Australia'. The 'white' immigration bias, officially discarded in the early 1970s and today openly supported only by a small right-wing minority, is still likely, as Jupp (1995: 221) put it, to 'strike resonant chords in mass public opinion'.

Part of the justification for the preferential bias towards the resettlement of ex-Yugoslav refugees in Australia has lain in the 'community argument': there were large Croatian and Serbian communities in Australia that could provide assistance to the newcomers, and any family connection in Australia was significant in the process of assessment of visa applications. This applies less to Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks)[7]—who constituted about half of the 1990s Bosnian refugee intake—as they were present in Australia in small numbers before the 1990s refugee wave (Jupp 2001). However, the other half of the Bosnian intake was composed of so-called 'mixed marriages' among Bosnian Croats, Serbs and Muslims. All three communities lobbied the Australian authorities through regular channels (community consultations with the minister) as well as via informal actions (petitions, rallies, media releases) to grant more humanitarian visas to ex-Yugoslavs.[8]

This article explores whether the apparent 'entry advantage' of Bosnians extends beyond the granting of permanent visas, and into their resettlement, on the basis of their 'whiteness' and thus 'invisibility' in a country still perceived as a 'white nation' (Hage 1998). On the basis of my empirical data, I analyse how the social and ideological backdrop of the 'white nation', often implied and only occasionally explicit in Australian politics,[9] has influenced the resettlement of Bosnians, in terms of identity as well as social inclusion. The data were collected in the period 2001–03 in two major Australian cities, Sydney and Perth, through a total of 54 semi-structured interviews of around 1.5 hours duration with refugees (28), community leaders and activists (6), bilingual resettlement workers and interpreters (12), and Australian service providers—community nurses, language teachers, counsellors, refugee advocates, and social workers (8)—who assisted refugees through the government-funded resettlement programme. My research targeted refugees who had been in Australia for at least two years at the time of interview (the average length of residence among respondents was 5.5 years). It should be noted that six out of 10 bilingual workers and three out of six community leaders were themselves refugees. I found the insights of these respondents, who were at the same time refugees and

refugee helpers or 'community leaders', and who knew and worked with many other Bosnians, especially valuable. I also conducted four focus groups, two with refugees (a group of potentially marginalised women, mainly widows over 50 years of age, and a group of people looking for jobs), one with bilingual settlement workers, and one with Australian professionals working in the resettlement programme. About two-thirds of refugee respondents were Bosniaks, and the rest were Bosnian Croats and Serbs. Half of the refugee sample were people from ethnically mixed families. My experience of professional interpreting for this refugee group (1996–2001) significantly informed my perspective on the issues I tackle in this paper, as it allowed me to observe the early stage of resettlement of Bosnians and to engage in hundreds of informal conversations.

My research started with a relatively broad focus: I looked at the discursive and practical strategies refugees use to overcome difficulties, emotional as well as practical, which they face during resettlement into another language and culture. In this paper I focus on the (re)construction of refugees' identities in the new environment during the early stage of resettlement (which largely coincides with the time when they are provided with government-funded resettlement services, i.e. about a year) and the difficulties they face in the 'second stage' of resettlement when they fully encounter the competitive, and for most people rather alien, Australian labour market and society in general.

'Settlement Potential' for Australia

Although refugees are admitted to Australia as part of humanitarian immigration, they are nevertheless subjected to a selection process on the basis of immigration officials' perception of their 'assimilability'. The pool of applicants for humanitarian visas is huge compared to the Australian quota, so it is possible to 'pick and choose' those who will be granted Australia's protection. As a result, people who eventually avail themselves of it are not necessarily those in most desperate need: they are selected with their 'settlement potential' or their 'suitability' to resettle in Australia in mind (Iredale *et al*. 1996: 5; Jupp 1994: 15, 55). Cox (1979: 11) argued that 'accepting those who will experience difficulty in integrating *can be presented* as not in the refugees' interest [rather than] that it can lead to resentment from the host population and it may not be politically desirable' (my emphasis). The 'criteria for refugee selection . . . are basically an assessment of the individual's ability to integrate . . . the same principle applies as in migrant selection with perhaps a higher proportion of exceptions . . . it is based on Australia's needs more than that of the refugees' (Cox 1979: 10–11).

What constitutes 'settlement potential' for Australia? In ethnic and cultural terms, Australia is still a predominantly white, Christian and 'Anglo' country, less cosmopolitan than comparable countries such as the US and Canada (Jupp 1995: 212). In 1947, Australia was 99 per cent white and 96 per cent Anglo-Celtic (Jupp 1998: 132). In the early 1990s, English was still the native tongue of 82 per cent of the

population (Jupp 1995: 211). Price (2000) calculated the 'ethnic strength' of the Australian population, taking into account possible different ancestries of any particular individual, and found that in 1999 about 89 per cent of Australians claimed European descent. The shift from Anglo-centric to Euro-centric Australian identity started happening in the 1950s and 1960s when large numbers of continental Europeans (Italians, Greeks, Poles, Yugoslavs and others) arrived in Australia. Their inclusion into the mainstream Australian identity has been 'in progress': people who speak English with foreign accents do not easily claim their Australian identity and are often conscious of their perceived otherness. The claim to belonging and 'feeling Australian' seems to come more easily to English-speaking immigrants, although they can also feel like 'others' in relation to Australian-born 'Anglos' (Colic-Peisker 2002).[10] However, Europeans from non-English-speaking backgrounds do not face their own racial 'visibility' as a barrier to inclusion these days, which works to the advantage of the 'accent-less' generation of their children.[11] Projections of the future ethnic composition of Australia indicate that in the year 2025 people of European ancestry will comprise 77.6 per cent of the Australian population, and those with Asian ancestry about 15.5 per cent (Price 2000). Apparently, the considerably increased intake of non-Europeans since the 1970s is not likely to challenge the reality of a predominately white Australia in the foreseeable future.

The ethnic and racial profile of the Australian population informs political concerns about social cohesion, which in turn influence Australia's immigration and refugee policy. This may be the case even more under the current right-of-centre government which has, according to some commentators, led Australia into the era of 'post-multiculturalism'.

In popular and political perceptions, cultural proximity and 'assimilability' are often inferred from people's phenotypical characteristics. Most refugees who seek to resettle in Australia are 'visible' and thus perceived as culturally distant. Most of them are non-Europeans and of non-English-speaking backgrounds. Many are not Christians. Their difference from the hosts makes humanitarian immigration the most contentious immigration category. September 11 and the ensuing 'war on terrorism' added a new dimension to the perception of Muslim immigrants and refugees who are considered suspicious and consequently less desirable.

The idea of 'settlement potential' also has its economic and demographic aspects. Over the postwar decades, Australia shifted from being a country that imported unskilled labour for manufacturing and public works, towards becoming a service and information economy which nowadays bases its immigration policies on a selective 'human capital' approach (Iredale 2001; Jupp 2002: 35). Australia is not a country of nearly full employment as it was in the 1950s and 1960s, which increases the pressure for selectivity in immigration. In addition, in recent years the country faces the problem of an ageing population. These factors make skilled people and young families the most desirable immigrants. Since 1996, the programme planning level set by the current government has ensured that the skilled component of the immigration intake has continued to grow—at the expense of family and

humanitarian components, kept tightly under control and effectively reduced in recent years[12]—with 'at least 58 per cent of new migrants selected from the Skill Stream' (DIMIA 2003b: 2).

The resettlement of refugees is generally seen as more problematic than that of carefully selected and points-tested 'voluntary' immigrants (IOM 2000).[13] An estimated 35 per cent of migrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds are over-educated for their jobs and underpaid for their skill level, compared with 11.6 per cent of Australian-born (Federal Race Discrimination Commissioner 1997: 11). Refugees are over-represented in this group of the overqualified and underpaid, as well as among the unemployed (Colic-Peisker and Walker 2003; Jupp 2002: 156). Following the human capital approach, younger refugees with employable skills are more likely to be admitted.[14] This fact works to the advantage of Bosnians, 60 per cent of whom have 12 or more years of schooling (Bosnia-Herzegovina Project 1999). According to the 2001 Census, the Bosnia-born in Australia have higher educational qualifications than the Australian population in general (DIMIA 2004). However, the human capital of Bosnians and other refugees is often devalued as their qualifications are not recognised or are only partly recognised in Australia and other Western countries (cf. Bloch 2002). In the case of Bosnians in Australia, the language and culture barriers often preclude fast and/or satisfactory labour market integration (Colic-Peisker 2003). This is analysed in more detail in the last section of this article.

A Mechanism of Self-Inclusion: Bosnians as a 'White Refugee Elite'?

The title of this article features a quote from an interview with 'Ivan', a GP from Sarajevo who arrived in Perth, Western Australia, in 1996, at the age of 39, with his wife, also a medical doctor, and a young child. At the time of interview he worked as a taxi driver but was 'happy about it'. His wife passed the Australian Medical Association (AMA) exam and worked as a registrar in a Perth hospital. Ivan told me that he 'won all the chess tournaments in the area, but there was no money in it' so he turned to taxi driving. He assessed the AMA's exam for overseas-trained doctors as 'too much for him, given his age' and did not even try. He passed the English exam for medical professionals and assessed his current English as 'very good' ('4 out of 5'). Ivan described his current job as a 'no-stress job that you can leave behind when you come home' and an 'interesting job, because you meet different people and see and hear all sorts of things'. While discussing the issue of prejudice and racism in Australia, something he claimed he never experienced himself, he told me the following anecdote:

> One day a mature lady entered my cab in South Perth and said: 'I always only call "Black and White Taxis" [a smaller taxi company in Perth] because in "Swan Taxis" they're all strangers, Arabs, whoever. . . . You cannot talk to them, they speak poor English.' I said 'Well, my English is not the best either.' She gave me a look sideways and said: 'At least you're the right colour'.

During interviews with refugees and refugee helpers, the issue of race, 'whiteness' and 'otherness' was deemed to be relevant on different levels. My data indicate that the mainstream perception of Bosnians as white Europeans and their own self-perception as 'whites in a white country' impact on their early identity reconstruction, as well as on the practical aspect of their resettlement. In everyday encounters, being white means being 'invisible' and thus less likely to experience one's own otherness through being exposed to prejudicial gazes in shops, public transport and on the street. Being 'invisible' is an advantage in relevant social interactions such as gaining employment and housing and establishing social networks.

There was consensus among interviewed refugee professionals about the impact of race on the practical aspect of refugee resettlement: all of them claimed that Bosnians—'white and Western-dressed refugees', as a community nurse put it—are likely to encounter fewer obstacles in their early Australian life than people whose physical features and dress indicate their 'otherness'. Refugee helpers presented much anecdotal evidence to support their claims about the persistence of racial prejudice and discrimination. The following quote comes from an Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) coordinator with 15 years experience in teaching humanitarian entrants:

> Whether Africans would be more exposed to prejudice and discrimination? . . . Oh yeah, they would for sure . . . absolutely . . . absolutely . . . because if someone from ex-Yugoslavia walks down the street, or applies for rental accommodation . . . they are closer in their colour and they cannot be picked out . . . some people refuse to rent out a place to Africans . . . some agencies . . . so we [refugee service-providers] do not deal with them [agencies] any more. Obviously they [Africans] experience much more racism, I would say. And people from the Middle East with all these political things going on, they have a terrible time at the moment, perhaps even worse than Africans.

A general counsellor with 11 years experience at AMEP provided the following account:

> You can be subtly excluded even if you have the slightest accent, but this may not have any practical importance. . . . There has been a huge movement towards multiculturalism in Australia in the last 40 years but there is still a little bit of reserve about different people.
>
>   It would be much worse for people from Africa and Asia . . . much worse. I didn't realise how bad it can get until I heard a story about a recent multicultural event with music, dance and food, at the end of which some local people turned nasty and started throwing stones, yelling obscenities, and abusing women . . . to the point that the organiser had to call the police. . . . They [the organisers] apologised to the women, but they [the women] were very phlegmatic apparently, and said 'Oh, it happens all the time . . .' They get abused in shops, at bus stations . . . because they look different . . . they wear the *hejab* . . . that's a hard one. One Muslim woman complained to me that her son did not want to walk with her down the street because she wore a *hejab*. . . . Black but Western-looking people would be much better accepted. . . . Black Americans are extremely popular.

Some of the refugee service-providers observed that the visible difference may have more impact on the life of refugees in the early stages of their resettlement, when they, as recent arrivals, often lacked the language skills, local knowledge and cultural and material resources which could make them more accepted in social interaction with locals. Clearly, whiteness is not just about the skin colour, but also about class, status, language and other features of the individual that can be discerned in social interaction. Thus fluent English and middle-class status (through employment for example) and appearance (through attire and certain behavioural practices) bring a person closer to the 'white' and 'Western' 'standard Australian self' (Hage 1998; Jakubowicz *et al.* 1994), regardless of their skin colour and other physical features. Conversely, low-status and poorly presented 'whites' may experience 'racist' prejudice similar to visibly different immigrants.

The experience of whiteness of Bosnian refugees apparently impacted on their feeling of identity and the early process of identity reconstruction. Forced migration often strips off the props of identity, temporarily reducing people to the title of 'refugee' and sometimes to no more than their physical selves (cf. Rajaram 2002: 251). The issue of identity loss and reconstruction often featured in the refugee narratives (cf. Colic-Peisker and Walker 2003). Many Bosnians emphasised their 'Europeanness' beyond its meaning of whiteness: they saw it as a cultural identity they deemed prestigious in Australia. Some claimed 'being European' was more prestigious than 'being Australian'. This seemed to feature as an emotional compensation for the loss of status they experienced through forced migration.

A number of my Bosnian respondents implied, and some openly claimed, that they were more able and willing to integrate into Australian society than non-European refugees and migrants. When asked to explain their view, they normally offered a vague claim that they are Europeans and therefore 'more similar'. If asked in what way were they 'more similar', the visual similarity (the 'same race') was 'naturally' connected with the idea of 'cultural similarity'.

When asked about their experience of prejudice and discrimination in Australia because they were 'strangers', 'refugees' and 'people from a non-English-speaking background', my respondents regularly answered with a quick and adamant 'No, I never experienced prejudice or discrimination in Australia'. Although I did not expect to hear much evidence of mistreatment, I did not expect to repeatedly hear the determined 'no, never' either. After all, a considerable proportion of them were welfare-dependent and many received assistance from various charities and resettlement agencies which placed them in a vulnerable position, open to intrusion and the expression of prejudice. Most spoke Bosnian in public and many needed interpreters on formal occasions, or had limited and strongly accented English. Thus, there were many signs of their otherness, regardless of their racial 'invisibility'. In addition, their expectations about their 'public' treatment were relatively high. Why then were they so quick to assert their complete satisfaction with the treatment they received from Australian professionals and people in the street? Is Australia really such a perfect place?

The accounts of bilingual settlement workers who accompanied recently arrived Bosnians to various public places indicate that this is not the case. For example, Bosnians were warned to speak English in a bank queue; they were treated dismissively and unhelpfully in a housing commission office; they were not properly briefed in a doctor's surgery. While working as a Bosnian interpreter, I witnessed a few occasions when the treatment of Bosnian clients was definitely substandard. For example, a large group of recently arrived Bosnian refugees was used in a public health research project at a Western Australian university without full explanation that their involvement was about collecting data and not about dental treatment; on several occasions, upon disclosure that they were refugees on welfare, newly arrived Bosnians were treated with suspicion by Telstra operators while connecting the phone line in their houses, and asked to pay a $500 bond if they wanted a long-distance service, a condition not placed on other clients.

Upon careful analysis of my interview data I found several instances where my interviewees, after initially claiming they never experienced prejudice or discrimination, actually described such instances later in the course of the interview without ever associating them with the idea of prejudice or discrimination. For example, a woman who asserted that she never encountered prejudice or discrimination from Australians later in the interview described being treated dismissively by, and enduring racist comments from, a doctor in a maternity hospital. A medical student of Bosnian origin who was in attendance translated the comments to her.

Bosnians apparently repressed their experience of racism through their self-perception as white Europeans in a country that they saw as being of European culture and origin. In the minds of my interviewees, the ideas of prejudice and discrimination were, first and foremost, connected with the idea of racial discrimination against the visibly different. Bosnians come from a racially homogeneous country and the racial difference thus loomed large in their minds. One young man told me he had only ever seen a black African or Asian person on television before he came to Australia. In this context, they saw themselves as 'whites in a white country', that is, where they rightfully belonged; consequently, there was no reason for them to suffer discrimination and they replied to my question about prejudice and discrimination with a quick and adamant 'no'. This answer was deduced from the premise that there was no reason for them to be exposed to prejudice and discrimination, rather than induced from their absolutely positive experience of Australia. By disclaiming any prejudice and discrimination they implied that such occurrences would not make sense, and thus claimed an 'insider status' for themselves. They identified the existence of institutional and discursive structures that reproduce whiteness as a hegemonic narrative of identity in their host environment, and consequently they 'read themselves into' the dominant whiteness (cf. Schech and Haggis 2000). As whiteness is 'invisible', and white people are a group that 'thrives on invisibility' (Gale 2000: 258), they saw their whiteness as an advantage and a shield against prejudice and discrimination.

The emphasis on race as the basis for discrimination may seem surprising among Bosnians who come from a country where people were persecuted and killed during the war on the basis of ethnicity/religion that had nothing to do with racial visibility. The explanation for this apparent paradox may lie in the fact that none of the three main Bosnian ethnic groups—Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats—has ever claimed any 'natural superiority' over others in the way the white vs. non-white has been historically construed as hierarchical.[15] There was no basis in the social reality of Bosnia for the establishment of an ethnic hierarchy among the three groups: no difference in education, income, or any other aspect of social status has been established among them, and none of the three groups internalised the feeling of inferiority. Unlike this, the racial hierarchy of 'whites' vs. 'non-whites' has been justified by various historical and social 'facts', thus imposing an inferior status on non-whites and consequently creating an expectation of being a target of prejudice and discrimination. Once members of three Bosnian ethnic groups found themselves outside their unsettled homeland, they perceived their ethnicity/religion to be irrelevant as a basis of potential prejudice or discrimination. A large part of the reason for this lies in the peculiar fact that their 'ethnic features'—primarily religion—were entirely inconsequential in their day-to-day lives in secular communism and thus were for the most part 'imagined' on the basis of history and its (mis)interpretations.[16]

Choosing to identify primarily as white Europeans and claiming inclusion in the Australian identity on that basis can be seen as a socio-psychological mechanism of 'advantageous self-identification' or 'self-inclusion'. The fact that Bosnians did not identify with other refugee groups—who were non-Europeans as well as stigmatised as refugees—can be seen as part of this mechanism. Indeed, I identified a tendency among my respondents to distance themselves, explicitly or implicitly, from other refugee groups. Some felt insulted when their European cultural 'know-how' was not sufficiently acknowledged by their sponsors or refugee helpers, and when they were treated the same as refugees who came from Third-World countries. A Bosnian medical specialist offered the following comment:

> Volunteers helping refugees should be better informed about where the people they are helping came from. ... They were all nice, well-intended and helpful people, but perhaps they could have known that we came from Europe and did not need explaining how to use a stove or a fridge, instructions that, I understand, some African refugees may have needed. Or that, coming from a large city, we are able to cross the street or buy a train ticket from the machine.[17]

Apart from being a discursive avenue of inclusion into 'white Australia', the emphasis on European cultural belonging and whiteness as its visible symbol seems to be partly compensating for two elements that 'devalue' the Bosnian identity: one is its firm link with the unwanted refugee status, and the other is its embeddedness in the notorious 'Balkan identity'. As to the first element, my respondents showed an acute

awareness of the inevitable loss of status, disadvantage and stigma associated with the refugee identity. An engineer and Bosnian community leader said:

> When I say I'm from there [Bosnia] everyone looks at me ... ooooh, the problem country, bombs, war, trouble ... they [Australians] did not see anything else about us, just problems, but this is starting to change.

A 73-year-old woman referred to her recent doctor's appointment:

> As soon as you tell them that you are a refugee they think you're stupid. She [the doctor] was explaining to me at length that smoking is unhealthy.

Other researchers also found that refugees were aware of being perceived as needy and culturally distant 'others' and because of this many prefer not to be associated with the refugee identity (see Colic-Peisker and Walker 2003; Queensland Health Department 2002). Among my respondents, the awareness of the low status of refugees was even more acute for 'middle-class' professionals. A man who used to be a director of a large bank in Sarajevo gave the following comment which draws together the two negative aspects of the Bosnian identity:

> Many Australians regard us, *refugees from the Balkans*, as if we never saw a computer or dishwasher before we came to Australia.

This brings us to the second element that may have contributed to the white European identification of Bosnians in Australia: the fact that this is a way of avoiding the identification of Bosnia (and surrounding new countries) with the Balkans as a notoriously unsettled and violent 'periphery of Europe' (Ramet 1999). The perception of the Balkans as not-quite-Europe was strengthened during the war in the 1990s. The term 'balkanisation' became more established during that time; I recently heard an Australian academic referring to the 'balkanisation of Ethiopia'. The discussion about the need for 'debalkanisation' and 'joining Europe', which started during the terminal crisis of communism in the late 1980s, intensified in the Yugoslav successor states after the war.[18]

The 'white European' identification, however, may only be salient at an early stage of identity reconstruction in Australia, as the first and perhaps the most obvious resort in the process of shedding the unwanted refugee identity. Later on, as discussed in the last section of this paper, practical difficulties of resettlement may diminish this 'prestigious' identification for many people, and bring other aspects of identity to the fore.

The Muslim Identity in the Context of Australian Resettlement

The issue of religious and ethnic identification of Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) and its relation to the white European identification is complex and would warrant a separate paper; in the context of this article, however, the most remarkable point is

probably that most Bosniak refugees do not identify with Australian Muslims and tend to see themselves in the cultural context of Europe rather in the context of Islamic *Umma*. One of the leaders of the Bosnian community in Sydney put it this way:

> Muslims from Bosnia and Herzegovina . . . [that] has nothing to do with Islam . . . they never had a religious platform. . . . Bosnian Muslims are people of European civilisation, they are Europeans, they understand religion differently from those you can see around here [in Sydney] as belonging to Islam. A person from Bosnia-Herzegovina understands religion in the same way as someone in Mannheim, Berlin, Vienna, New York or Paris. . . . I mean they are not people who are prone to tie their every failure, or success, to God.

A young Bosniak man from Sarajevo who arrived to Australia in 1993, and is now a practising lawyer in Sydney, said:

> Let's make this clear: Muslims in Bosnia haven't got a clue about Islam; I have direct first-hand experience from Bosnia and then from living in an Arab country—in Syria, as a refugee, as my father is of Syrian origin. So while in Syria, I learned more about Islam, but beforehand I didn't have a clue either.

During my Australian research, however, I met several Bosnian Muslims who placed high value on their religious identity. In 2004, I attended a community celebration of Bosnian Independence Day where the Muslim aspect of Bosnian identity had a prominent place. The people who advocated Islam as significant or even paramount in the life of Bosniaks in 'diaspora' were community leaders and activists. The following quote from a local radio programme broadcast by a pronouncedly Muslim-oriented group of Bosnians illustrates this: 'We need culture and sport but what we need most of all is Islam; this is the essence of our being and what is needed for our children to succeed' (my translation from Bosnian). The programme was heavily sprinkled with Arabic words and references to Islamic religious customs; it was also announced that the community (110 families, as stated in the programme) collects money to build a mosque in Perth.[19]

Outside the circle of 'leaders' and activists who present Islam as their ideological standpoint and may also see it as an avenue of developing business ties,[20] the religious aspect of Islam is subdued in the community. Some people—according to most of my informants, a small minority—attend a mosque and pray regularly, and there is a Muslim prayer room in the Bosnian community centre in Perth, but the overall picture drawn from interviews and observation is that Bosniaks in Australia are a predominately secular community. Islamic cultural practices, such as an extremely modest female dress code and the general ban on alcohol, are virtually insignificant. Only a tiny minority of rural Bosnian Muslim women wear traditional dress with a scarf that covers their hair, which makes them visible in Australian suburbs. The only Muslim cultural practice adopted *en masse* is celebrating the end of Ramadan (Muslim holy month of fasting) in the community setting, through family and

community gatherings and attending a mosque during the festivities of *Bajram* (Eid). According to bilingual settlement workers and community activists, the rule of fasting beforehand is not commonly followed.

This split of the Bosniak community in Perth into a secular and a religious 'faction' may only be significant for a small number of people, the 'leaderships' of the two factions.[21] Among Bosniaks in Sydney and Melbourne,[22] there seem to be Islamic 'core groups' consisting of imams and other (mainly informal) community leaders who tend to see themselves as guardians of the 'true' Bosnian identity.[23] My view is that the majority of their 'constituency' does not share their strong emphasis on Islam, although the strengthening of religious identification among Bosniaks (and other ex-Yugoslav nationalities) as a result of the inter-ethnic war and the end of communism has been well documented in previous research (Eastmond 1998; Ramet 1999). A Bosniak man explained:

> When the war started, people were persecuted and killed because they were Muslims. . . . If someone beats you up telling you you're a Muslim, you start to think about it and start to develop belonging to that group.

Another Bosniak man, who lost his arm in the war, commented on his understanding of Islam before and after the war and migration:

> I am a Bosnian Muslim but never went to a mosque. . . . I did not know what it meant really. . . . I worked in a state firm, I was a member of the [Communist] Party so I wasn't religious. But [here in Australia] perhaps I would expect that our imam visits people . . . that he knocks on my door in the same way the Catholic priest knocks on my neighbour Franjo's door. Croatian priests have good standing in their communities, they help people out with practical problems. They are more engaged in the community's welfare than our imams.

Before the war, Bosnians lived in a communist regime which did not ban religion and its cultural manifestations, but clearly suppressed and discouraged them. This meant that for most Bosniaks—with the exception of their religious and intellectual elite— Islam and its cultural heritage remained marginal or completely alien. The religious elite had to keep a low profile in order not to be persecuted by the authorities for 'fostering nationalism' or even accused of 'Muslim fundamentalism' (Ramet 1999). For the majority of Bosniaks, and especially those in larger cities, their Muslim identity was an ethnic and secular one.

In 1968 in Yugoslavia, being Muslim became an official ethnic ('national') identification and Bosniaks were encouraged to declare themselves as Muslims in a national sense in the 1971 Census, in the spirit of Tito's policy of 'national equality' (Lopasic 1996; Ramet 1999). This emphasised their distinctiveness from Croatians and Serbs—who have both tried to absorb them into their national bodies and claim the territory on which Muslims lived—in the Bosnian three-ethnic context. For many Bosniaks, indeed, their Muslim identity has been a way to signify that they were neither Croatians nor Serbs, and their Muslim-ness has mostly been in name only.

The latter point can be understood quite literally, as explained earlier (see endnote 16). In the context of communist Yugoslavia, Islam did not represent a strong basis for cultural or political identification with other Muslim communities and countries around the world.[24] Attending mosques, praying and observing religious rules in everyday life have apparently been on the increase among Bosnian Muslims in their homeland since the late 1980s (Ramet 1999). A bilingual settlement worker in Sydney, himself a recent refugee, described the process in the following terms:

> In smaller towns where the population was not so [ethnically] mixed, and religious customs and traditions were part of everyday culture, people started turning towards their 'ethnic identity' and religion several years before the war ... discovering religion as part of one's identity was a new concept. ... People would go to a church or a mosque, but in our rather secular way ... they'd still want to drink alcohol. [Here in Australia] some people go to the mosque on *Bajram*, perhaps people who didn't do it before, but ... our culture does not allow great depths in that.

The end of communism was a general backdrop to the reclaiming of national, religion-based identities across Eastern Europe: in ex-Yugoslavia the process took more extreme forms and unfolded in the circumstances of war, dissolution of the country and the formation of new nation-states (Pavkovic 2001). In Bosnia, during the 1990s civil war, the religious aspect of Muslim identity was strengthened as a main pillar of ethnic identity and thus also a means of further differentiation from Catholic Croatians and Orthodox Serbs, who featured as 'ethnic enemies' (Eastmond 1998; Rusinow 1995).[25]

During the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the war of the early 1990s, and in its still unsettled aftermath, being Bosniak also meant not having a homeland other than Bosnia, unlike Bosnian Croats and Serbs who could turn to neighbouring Croatia and Serbia. In the mind of a significant number of people this fact translated into the attitude that Bosniaks are the *real* Bosnians and the only ones who could rightfully claim to be 'Bosnian': the only ones who have a sincere wish to keep Bosnia as an independent state, while Croats and Serbs are seen as potential irredentists (Rusinow 1995). This also meant that Bosniaks were seen as the main victims of the civil war.

In the Australian context, the Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim) identity has more 'internal' than 'external' significance: it is a means of differentiation of this group from the other two Bosnian ethnic groups, Serbs and Croatians, but it remains subdued and largely invisible 'externally', in the context of mainstream Australia. After September 11 many Westerners, and Australians among them, have seen Islam and the Muslim identity as problematic and potentially dangerous. Consequently, the Muslim identity is pushed further into the realm of otherness and has become (even more) socially disadvantageous in the West. Bosniaks are well aware of this but because they are also 'invisible' Muslims they do not seem to feel endangered by these developments.

Not a Visible, but an Audible Minority: Linguistic and Cultural Barriers to Successful Resettlement

Upon arrival in Australia, refugees mostly communicate with resettlement agencies, community advocates and professionals who are culturally sensitive and ready to help, or with other sponsors. At this early stage they learn the language and become aware of cultural differences, receive medical and mental health assistance and live in subsidised accommodation or with relatives. Once they venture out into the job market, Bosnians may encounter less prejudice from Australian employers than the more visible non-European refugees. There is anecdotal evidence that African refugees encounter much prejudice from Australian employers. Research and official data on African refugee communities indicate high levels, or even 'endemic' unemployment (45 per cent among Ethiopians in Melbourne, for example, based on the 1996 Census), which may be partly due to discrimination; Ethiopians reported a 'feeling of discrimination at many levels' (Jupp 2001: 348). The 1996 Census showed that unemployment in other recently arrived refugee communities was also high: the Afghanistan-born had a rate of 42 per cent and the Iraq-born 40 per cent, compared to 9 per cent for the general population. The rate was somewhat lower among Europeans, but still high: for the Bosnia-born 31 per cent and the Russia-born about 20 per cent (Jupp 2002: 156). More recent data based on the 2001 Census indicate a drop in the Bosnian unemployment rate as they settle into Australia (17 per cent compared to 7 per cent for the general population, see DIMIA 2004).

Even though Bosnian refugees may be in a somewhat more favourable situation than the visibly different groups, their resettlement is far from smooth. Limited English makes gaining adequate employment difficult for many Bosnians. Most Bosnian schools used to teach Russian, German or French before the war, and many of my respondents reported that they were fluent in German, having spent years in Germany or other European countries before coming to Australia. On top of the practical difficulties caused by limited English, the fact that their qualifications were often not—or were only partly—recognised inevitably defined them as 'cultural outsiders' in Australia. The lack of language and recognised formal skills often combined with more specific refugee problems, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), to create poor employment outcomes, at least at the relatively early stages of resettlement. Many Bosnians—according to my key informants, an overwhelming majority—have jobs considerably below their qualifications. The occupational structure of the Bosnia-born (based on the 2001 Census) was very unfavourable compared to the total Australian population: 60 per cent of the employed Bosnia-born held semi-skilled and unskilled jobs in spite of their educational level which was better than that of the total population (DIMIA 2004). People who strived to achieve their previous job status often experienced high personal and family stress in the process, as well as 'ethnic community' pressure to 'down-adjust' (Bloch 2002; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2003). A bilingual resettlement worker in his 30s explained:

> My aunt, who had lived here [in Sydney] for 30 years, sponsored me to come in 1997, and sent me off to work straight away, to the factory where my uncle also worked. I hadn't worked since 1992 [when the war started], I didn't speak much English and I thought, well, I do not have much choice, do I, so I accepted the manual job, and after two years I broke my back . . . then I went back to school, and studied, and now I'm doing this. . . . There is this push from the community: get a job, go to the building [industry], do Gyprock [plastering], money's good there, you can buy a house.

The highly qualified who accept menial jobs were often frustrated and, being unused to physically demanding work, had a high rate of work injuries. However, few options existed, as the Bosnian job-seekers usually looked for employment in the secondary labour market, through the ethnic community, and often in jobs not requiring a high level of English proficiency (Waxman 2001: 491). In this respect Bosnians did not seem to stand out from refugees in general, who are likely to experience poorer integration and social promotion in the Australian community than voluntary migrants, and who are often forced to take the worst jobs (IOM 2000: 276–7).

My respondents sometimes perceived their difficulties in finding adequate or at least full-time employment as a rejection from the initially friendly host society, or as its 'hypocrisy'. A 30-year-old Bosnian woman told me:

> This country's no good . . . Germany was much, much better. . . . We [my husband and I] had jobs there . . . here, they [Australian employers] smile at you and give promises to ring you back but they never do; it's all false. We've been here for more than a year and we do not have jobs. We're leaving for Port Hedland [a mining centre in the north of Western Australia] in a few weeks. He'll have a job there and I also hope to find one.

For a significant minority of people, the difficulties they encounter on the labour market may lead to relative social isolation or even withdrawal into the 'sick role' (White 2002), the latter 'coping mechanism' being reinforced by the emphasis on PTSD and mental health among refugee researchers and helpers (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2003; Ward *et al*. 2001). A Bosnian woman in her early 40s described her husband's 'case':

> He would not want any visits [when asked to be interviewed] . . . he is depressed and does not want to see anyone. He took a manual job and had a work injury, and is now stuck at home, and that's terrible for him. You know . . . a man has to go out and provide for the family, and the fact that he's not able to do it is a terrible blow for him.

Comparable to refugees who had high-status jobs at home and thus have more difficulties coping with the low-status occupations available to them in the country of resettlement (Ward *et al*. 2001: 236), European refugees may have high expectations ('unrealistically high', as a handbook for refugee volunteers claims, see DIEA 1989: 28; see also Karger and Levine 2000) about their prospects in Australia. This may lead to disillusionment upon the realisation that their limited English and lack of local

expertise are serious (albeit for some only temporary) obstacles on the path of successful economic and social integration (cf. Mayadas and Segal 2000). A bilingual social worker from Wollongong near Sydney explained:

> I met a few of our people [Bosnians] who could not find jobs in their previous professions and after five, six or seven years are disillusioned and angry ... [they] reject Australia completely ... but linger on here because going back is equally impossible and they hope their children will do well in Australia.

Ivan, the GP-turned-taxi-driver, described the experience of his 'de-skilled' compatriots:

> I can tell you that, unfortunately, such people—I know 15–20 Bosnians with university degrees who drive cabs—are quite unsatisfied with their lot, and with Australia in general ... nothing's good for them. But I avoid such conversations, because I'm definitely different from them. I prefer to read newspapers or listen to the news. . . . I think Australia is a great country. . . . They cannot understand why I like cricket and 'Australian Rules' [football]. . . . I switched over, so to speak. . . . I do not want to ruminate over what I've lost. . . . When I start talking to them it always comes to the same topic, so I avoid it.

A Bosnian man, who worked as a resettlement worker in Sydney from 1994–2001, assessed that 'no more than 10 per cent of professional people had jobs at the level of their qualifications', while one of the community leaders, himself in a job below his qualifications, estimated it to be 'no more than 5 per cent'. A female resettlement worker (a lawyer back in Bosnia) in Liverpool, a suburb of Sydney with the largest concentration of Bosnians, described how the loss of professional and social status affects Bosnian families:

> Mothers lead these monotonous lives ... women who used to have nice creative jobs before [in Bosnia]. Fathers are never at home, they work hard, the children are upset because they hardly ever see the father, and the mother is depressed.

Formation of social networks outside the ethnic community seems to be another difficulty that most Bosnians face. Madjar and Humpage (2000): 34) reported that Bosnian refugees had limited and superficial contact with New Zealanders and mostly associated with fellow Bosnians. My respondents did not describe this as a difficulty and appreciated the support the Bosnian community provided. The traumatic experience of forced migration, and often broken ties with the home country and the place of origin, may increase the importance of social support provided through ethnic networks (cf. Ward *et al*. 2001: 228). Mixing primarily with the ethnic community is also a way of coping with the 'cultural bereavement' caused by the imposed loss of the home culture. In many cases, however, the relative isolation from mainstream society slows down acculturation and thus decreases the opportunities to achieve social rewards such as good income and high-status jobs, and to experience social promotion. In this respect Bosnian refugees seem to fare considerably worse

than recent voluntary, mostly highly skilled migrants from ex-Yugoslav republics (Colic-Peisker 2002). The language barrier seems to be the single most important reason: the 'original obstacle' that hampers all aspects of social inclusion.

Therefore, although the early stage of resettlement brings safety, permanence and considerable assistance through the government-sponsored resettlement programme, the second stage of economic and social integration, when Bosnians face linguistic and cultural challenges to inclusion in the Australian mainstream, seems to be rather problematic. Contrary to expectations, skilled people and professionals may in relative terms fare worse than low-skilled people from rural areas: they had more to lose in terms of job satisfaction, status and professional identity, and indeed, many did.[26] A longitudinal study may be able to establish whether their situation improves in the later stages of their resettlement in Australia.

Conclusion

Within the social cohesion and 'resettlement potential' discourses, cultural proximity and 'assimilability' are often deduced from a group's visible similarity to the 'normal Australian self', while 'visible difference' is understood as potentially problematic. This view is likely to have been implicit in the privileged access for Bosnians to Australian humanitarian visas during the 1990s, compared to non-European refugee groups.

Since the 1970s, the idea of the 'normal Australian self'—in other words, those 'naturally' included in the Australian identity—became broader. The Anglo-Celtic core of the Australian identity softened and became more inclusive, but the European origin of modern Australia—its 'whiteness' and Anglo cultural predominance—has remained the main prop of the process of political and psychological nation-building. Australia remains an imagined community of white people where non-Europeans are still often perceived as 'others'. In recent decades this has only been implicit, until political developments such as the Tampa affair or a vocal right-wing party such as 'One Nation' brought it back into political focus in the late 1990s–early 2000s. The idea of social cohesion partly embedded in whiteness lingers on decades after the White Australia Policy was abolished.

My Bosnian respondents' white-European identification in Australia reflects and follows the assumption that the European identity is advantageous in the Australian setting. The argument of cultural proximity of Europeans to 'white Australia' should perhaps not be altogether discarded, but it should be viewed with extreme caution. Within the current immigration intake, highly qualified and English-speaking urban Sri-Lankan, Indian or Taiwanese migrants for example—as bearers of a dominant culture which can nowadays be described as global, middle-class, English-speaking, computerised and 'cyberspaced'—are culturally closer to urban Australians than Bosnian villagers (cf. Jupp 1995: 212–13). In spite of the early claim for inclusion through 'being European', the social interaction of most Bosnians with the English-speaking community was limited, as was their economic and social inclusion in

mainstream Australia. Community leaders, activists and bilingual settlement support workers among my interviewees confirmed that a majority of skilled and highly-skilled Bosnians experienced occupational down-adjustment in Australia, and that the majority of Bosnians stayed within their 'ethnic' precinct. Therefore the advantage of whiteness is political, discursive and perhaps psychological in the early stages of resettlement, but largely insubstantial in the everyday reality of resettlement past this early sheltered stage. Of course, the 'otherness' based on race and/or cultural background is not a 'black and white' issue; it comes in shades of grey and in different degrees, depending on one's socio-economic background, financial resources, education, age and gender, as well as other, less immediately apparent social markers.

'Whiteness' may well mean experiencing less prejudice and discrimination in comparison to other, visibly different, refugees. The initial positive self-perception of Bosnians as belonging to 'white Australia' may facilitate cross-cultural interaction in the early stages of resettlement (see Ward *et al*. 2001: 220–45). However, the positive self-concept can be undermined at the later stage of resettlement when Bosnian refugees have to venture into the competitive Australian labour market. The successful transition from the early resettlement stage of 'self-inclusion' to the second stage, when real social inclusion on the basis of satisfactory employment and social interaction beyond the ethnic community should be achieved, seems crucial, but for a considerable number of people it may be experienced as a rude awakening. The language barrier makes many Bosnians painfully aware of their otherness. Many Bosnians perceive obstacles to reaching their pre-migration job status and lifestyle to be too high, which creates frustration and nostalgia for the 'old country'. A vast majority of my interviewees described the employment assistance they received as inadequate. Not one of them found a job through government employment assistance. While time may work in favour of some of the highly skilled in reaching their potential in Australia, this is not at all certain.

In terms of Australian settlement policy, I join a number of researchers who emphasise the importance of satisfactory economic integration for the overall successful social inclusion of migrants and refugees in Australian society (Ager 1999; Auckland University of Technology Refugee Research Group 2002; Jupp 2002: 156). It has been established that it is 'in the economic interest of Australia to have all migrants working to their full potential as quickly as possible' (National Multicultural Advisory Council 1999). In the case of Bosnians this means that the bases for disadvantage beyond visibility, such as inadequate English, unrecognised formal qualifications, inexperience on the local job market and inadequate employment assistance, need to be tackled in the government resettlement programme, and beyond, more efficiently than is currently the case. The early stage of political welcome to refugees and other migrants needs to be succeeded by their economic and social inclusion, as this is indeed a litmus test of Australia's welcome and the success of its resettlement policies; indeed, the ultimate test of Australia's multiculturalism and economic self-interest.

Acknowledgements

Notes

[1] The full name of the country is Bosnia and Herzegovina (often referred to as Bosnia-Herzegovina). In this paper I use the abbreviated form 'Bosnia'. By Bosnians I mean refugees who came from Bosnia-Herzegovina regardless of their ethnicity—Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims), Serbs and Croats being the largest groups. Bosnians accounted for a large majority of refugees from ex-Yugoslavia during the 1990s, and 95 per cent of my refugee respondents were Bosnians.

[2] In August 2001, 433 people were rescued from a leaking boat by the Norwegian freighter 'Tampa' off the North-Western Australian coast. The Australian government did not allow the Tampa to berth in Australia and the asylum-seekers were instead transported to several Pacific island countries to be 'processed' for refugee status. Those who were eventually found to be 'genuine refugees' were initially entitled to a three-year temporary protection visa (TPV). Processing asylum-seekers outside Australia came to be called the 'Pacific solution'. Soon after the Tampa incident, northern offshore islands and reefs were legally excised from the Australian immigration zone in order to prevent 'boat people' from claiming Australian asylum when they arrived there. Detention of asylum-seekers, sometimes for years if their refugee status cannot be established, is the most contentious aspect of the Australian refugee policy.

[3] This is also the case in the USA and the EU. As Joppke (1999: 5) put it while discussing the tension between popular sovereignty and states' mandate to protect human rights, 'democracy is a threat to migrants'.

[4] www.fmreview.org/pdf/didyouknow.pdf

[5] It should be noted, however, that Kosovars were only granted temporary protection in Australia in the late 1990s and later most of them were repatriated in spite of their loud protests. Sending Kosovars back home can be attributed to the generally harsh approach and introduction of restrictions to humanitarian immigration by the Howard government that has been in office since 1996. This government, for example, immediately abolished the Special Assistance category within humanitarian immigration under which most Bosnians arrived in the mid-1990s, which resulted in a considerable drop in Bosnian arrivals in 1997–98.

[6] Since 1992, the Australian humanitarian quota varied from 11,800 to 15,052, averaging about 12,000, but the actual intake often falls short of the quota (IOM 2000: 270). This is mainly due to the fact that a number of places are kept for on-shore asylum-seekers but are rarely filled. The actual annual humanitarian intake varied between 8,700 and 13,800 over the past decade (IOM 2000: 270). In 2004, Howard's government announced an increase in the refugee quota (UNHCR-registered offshore refugees) from 4,000 to 6,000 and justified this increase by the government's successful prevention of boat-people arrivals (on-shore asylum claimants). Additional places will mostly be filled by African refugee groups.

[7] Bosniaks (Bošnjaci) is today a preferred and politically correct name for Bosnian Muslims, as it avoids the confusing merging of ethnic and religious identification, also reflecting the fact that some Bosniaks may not be religious. The Bosnian Constitution (1995), in its preamble,

defines 'Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks' as the 'constituent nations of Bosnia and Herzegovina'. Therefore I use 'Bosniak' instead of 'Bosnian Muslim'.

[8]   This information was supplied through interviews with Bosniak and Bosnian-Croatian community leaders and activists in Sydney and Perth.

[9]   It was explicit at the time of the appearance and relative success of Pauline Hanson's 'One Nation' party in the period 1996–2001, for example.

[10] I use the term 'Anglo' as an antithesis to 'ethnic'. The Macquarie Dictionary (University of Macquarie 1989: 605) defines 'ethnic' as 'of or pertaining to members of the community who are migrants or the descendants of migrants and whose native language is not English'.

[11] The idea of who is visible by being 'non-white' has changed during Australian history: in the 1910s Greeks and Maltese were seen as 'cheap black labour' (Murphy 1993: 46).

[12] Under the current government, on-shore applicants (asylum-seekers) are included in the total number of humanitarian visas, whereas earlier they were not considered in the 12,000 quota. As already mentioned, the first increase in the humanitarian quota in a decade was announced in 2004.

[13] As a result, only about 5 per cent of the UNHCR-registered refugees eventually resettle in the West (Ager 1999; Westin 1999).

[14] In 1997, one Iraqi man explained to me that he and his wife, as well as many other people, were chosen by an Australian official from a Saudi refugee camp 'because they had university degrees'.

[15] There were some attempts to establish a sense of hierarchy among Bosnian ethnicities in the late 1980s, on the eve of war, where Bosnian Muslims were referred to as 'quasi-Arabs' in the Serbian press, apparently on the basis of a perception of European (Christian) superiority over non-European Arabs. This title also denounced Slavic Muslims as 'quasi' or a derived identity of 'traitors' who converted to Islam during the centuries of Turkish rule over Bosnia.

[16] Internally, Bosnians can, in most cases, tell each other's ethnicity by the name: most Muslim names are conspicuously different from Slavic names, and there are also 'typically Serbian' and 'typically Croatian' names. However, the tradition of naming children appropriate to the ethnicity of the parents was not absolute before the war, especially not in the cities, where many families were ethnically mixed.

[17] On the basis of similar accounts, New Zealand researchers Madjar and Humpage (2000: 145–6) suggested that the post-arrival orientation programme should approach the 'new' refugees (those from Third-World countries) differently from the 'traditional' refugees coming from Europe.

[18] For example, the internet conference entitled 'Debalkanisation of the Balkans', 12–16 May 1999, Podgorica, Montenegro; an interview with the Croatian political scientist and Speaker of the Croatian Parliament, Zdravko Tomac, in the Zagreb daily *Vjesnik*, 29 November 2000; social psychologist Ivan Siber talking at a public forum in Zagreb (broadcast on an Australian SBS radio programme in Croatian, January 2003). However, in a section of the Bosnian refugee community in Sydney, 'the Balkans' has been reclaimed as a neutral supra-ethnic denominator for ex-Yugoslav refugee groups, after the '(ex)Yugoslav' identity has been discarded.

[19] There are several mosques in Perth metropolitan area but none of them is specifically Bosnian.

[20] The Bosniak Islamic Community (Bošnjacka Islamska Zajednica) in Perth seems to have developed such ties with the Malay community.

[21] Similar 'factions' can be found in other migrant communities from the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere. Although ideologically based, such intra-ethnic divisions often reflect the pragmatic interests and ambitions of their leaders.

[22] According to the 2001 Census, the Bosnian community in Melbourne is the largest in Australia—8,570 people or 36 per cent of the Bosnia-born total (DIMIA 2004).

[23]   The leadership of the Bosnian-Australian umbrella organisation (Australian Council of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Organisations) consists solely of Bosniaks. The President of the Council advised the Second Congress of the Council (October 2003) that '80 per cent of all member organisations are of Bosniak [Muslim] affiliation, and 20 per cent are Bosnian-Herzegovinian communities which have people from the other two nations [Croats and Serbs] on their boards' (http://ausbhcouncil.org/congres/zapisnik_II.php).

[24]   Some contacts existed in the context of good political relations and the economic collaboration of Tito's regime with Muslim countries through the 'non-aligned' movement during the Cold War, starting from the 1960s (see Lopasic 1996; Ramet 1999).

[25]   To different degrees, however: for Bosniaks, Serbs were 'total enemies' during the war, while the relationship with Croatians fluctuated from uneasy alliance against Serbs to open hostilities.

[26]   The Specialist Migrant Placement Officer Program in the state of New South Wales provides employment assistance to highly skilled migrants. It seems that there are good reasons for such programmes to be further funded and extended.

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