

Employment Niches for Recent Refugees: Segmented Labour Market in Twenty-first Century Australia

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A survey of three refugee groups (ex-Yugoslavs, black Africans and people from the Middle East) in Western Australia indicates that the recent humanitarian arrivals are concentrated in labour market niches such as cleaning services, care of the aged, meat processing, taxi driving, security and building. Apart from the building industry, these employment niches are situated in the 'secondary labour market' comprising low-status and low-paid jobs that locals avoid. This article identifies several interrelated mechanisms through which the recent Australian refugee intake has been relegated to undesirable jobs: non-recognition of qualifications as a systemic barrier, discrimination on the basis of race and cultural difference by employers, 'ethnic-path integration' and the lack of mainstream social networks that could assist in the job search, and the recent 'regional sponsored migration scheme' through which the government tries to address the shortage of low-skilled labour in depopulating country areas. The data show massive loss of occupational status among our respondents and confirm the existence of the segmented labour market, where racially and culturally visible migrants are allocated the bottom jobs regardless of their 'human capital'. Changes in the nature of the segmented labour market in the increasingly mobile global workforce are analysed. Some of these insights are drawn from two other research projects on Bosnian and Afghan refugees in Australia undertaken by the authors.

Keywords: refugees, labour market discrimination, Australia

Introduction

Over the past decade of Australia's economic prosperity and stability under the Coalition Government,¹ senior government officials have often emphasized that the rate of unemployment has been steadily decreasing and is currently (December 2005) under five per cent, at its lowest level in 25 years. It has also

been reported that the country's economy is threatened by labour shortages, especially in the area of 'skilled employment' (trades) and low-skilled labour (Shine 2005). A debate recently started about bringing 'guest workers' on temporary visas to fill the labour shortages (Colman and Bockmann 2005).² It seems that the short supply of workers mainly pertains to the low-status section of the job market, or the so-called 'secondary labour market'. In industrialized Western countries, immigrants have filled this section of the segmented labour market for more than a century (Castles and Miller 2003; Collins 1991). The shrinking of the manufacturing sector in these countries since the 1970s diminished somewhat the need for low-skilled labour, but many low-skilled service occupations, such as retail, domestic help, care of the aged, catering and cleaning, have expanded in metropolitan areas, often in the context of the informal economy (Sassen 1991, 1994). In the EU and the US, much of the secondary labour market has been filled by undocumented intakes (Baldwin-Edwards and Arango 1999; *The Economist* 2003; Marcelli 2005). *Business Week* described this as 'the flood of illegal immigrants into labour markets in Western Europe and around the world' (2000: 108). In the US, the fact that 'employers are desperately in need of unskilled workers' is considered by many the main reason for the continuing presence of millions of illegal immigrants, in spite of the dissatisfaction of the public over the failure to control borders and bipartisan calls for immigration reform (Palakow 2005: 1). In Australia, where unauthorized intakes are much lower for obvious geographical reasons, humanitarian entrants have been directed to the bottom jobs ever since the first large refugee intake reached Australia in the late 1940s (Jupp 2002). Over the past 15 years, Australian 'humanitarian intake' has varied from 12,000–15,000 annually, out of which 4,000–6,000 are UNHCR-nominated 'refugees'. In this article, 'refugee' refers to everyone who came to Australia on a humanitarian visa. In metropolitan areas, where the majority of recent refugees have settled, they seem to be significantly concentrated in certain low-skilled service 'niches' such as cleaning services, care of the aged, transport (especially taxi driving), and the security and building industries.

A specifically Australian problem is depopulation of country areas,³ where farms, orchards, cattle and sheep stations and 'processing centres' (abattoirs) face serious labour shortages. Local populations shun such jobs and steadily 'drain' into large cities (Lennon 2001). Immigrants overwhelmingly settle in metropolitan areas because job vacancies are more plentiful and diverse there; in addition, this is where new arrivals can find their 'ethnic communities' as a primary settlement support (Birrell and Rapson 2002). Since the 1970s Australian immigrants have been increasingly selected on the basis of the human capital principle and this makes them more likely to settle in the cities where skilled and highly skilled jobs are concentrated (Jupp 2002: 213–214). These developments led some academics and politicians to declare an urban–rural population imbalance crisis and try to devise strategies for attracting more migrants into regional areas. For example, a long-standing Labor premier of New South Wales (NSW), Bob Carr, repeatedly warned about

the overpopulated Sydney metropolitan area (Priest 2004), backed by the influential sociologist Bob Birrell, who stated that Sydney and Melbourne, due to high immigrant intakes, are the 'multicultural heartland of Australia, whilst the rest of the country lacks ethnic diversity' (Birrell and Rapson 2002). The warnings about the need to redirect more migrants to regional areas have recently found expression in government policies. Changes in the immigration regulations have been introduced to encourage new arrivals to settle in regional areas and to enable regional employers who face labour shortages to nominate and 'sponsor' immigrants (DIMIA 2005a). These policy developments specifically target refugees: a recent (2003) government initiative encourages refugees, especially those from 'emerging' African and Middle Eastern communities, to settle in country areas (DIMIA 2005d). This conscious attempt to create a pool of labour for unattractive jobs in depopulating areas has had some success so far, as reported in the media (e.g. Horsburgh 2005; Steketee 2004).

According to the census and other available unemployment figures, humanitarian-stream immigrants (along with the indigenous population) are a category that has not reaped the benefits of the historically low unemployment in recent years. The fact that unemployment remains high in all predominantly refugee communities⁴ (see Table 4 below) provides an obvious justification for the regional resettlement initiative. The movement to resettle refugees in regional and rural Australia started in 2002 when a group of Afghan 'boat people' (asylum seekers or 'on-shore claimants' in Australian immigration terminology) were released from mandatory detention on temporary protection visas (TPV) and recruited for work in regional abattoirs and farms across Australia. In February 2003 several Australian newspapers published stories about the growing support for refugees in the small NSW town of Young. A number of country towns declared themselves 'refugee-welcome zones'. In February 2003 a Sydney academic reported that refugees had injected A\$2.5 million into the local economy of Young and saved the federal government A\$1.5 million by paying income tax and not claiming welfare benefits (*Canberra Times* 2003: 8). A new grassroots national initiative emerged called 'Rural Australians for Refugees' (www.ruralaustraliansforrefugees.org), which by February 2004 comprised 68 local groups. Some rural local governments started lobbying the federal government to grant permanent protection to TPV holders. Not surprisingly, pro-refugee arguments expressed in dollars and cents seem to have had more effect on politicians and government bureaucrats than the humanitarian rhetoric coming from refugee advocates. These days African and Middle Eastern (predominantly refugee) community groups and associations are exposed to the government campaign to resettle in regional areas where jobs are 'guaranteed'. Needless to say, these are low-status, low-paid and often also unhealthy jobs, such as abattoir and farm work.

This article looks at refugees as job seekers and employees and their concentration in certain industries in an ethnically segmented labour market, concentrations that do not fit into the idea of an ethnic niche where an immigrant group, through economic agency, entrepreneurship and on the basis of

specific skills, establishes itself within the economy of the host society (e.g. in Australia, Japanese pearl divers in the nineteenth century; Indian IT professionals in recent years). The concept of ethnic or immigrant niche, or the 'enclave economy', has been created to describe the concentrations of immigrant-owned businesses in a geographical space, predominately employing their co-ethnics and usually also serving 'ethnic' clientele (Light 1979; Barth 1994). An intense presence of particular ethnic groups in certain industries, regardless of the spatial concentration, has also been theorized as 'middlemen minorities' (Bonacich 1973, 1979). Both types of concentrations have partly been a response to exclusion from the mainstream labour market. In this paper we focus on niches that are created primarily as a consequence of labour market constraints placed on recently arrived refugees who have little choice but to accept low-status jobs as a way out of marginalization created by unemployment and welfare dependency (cf. Valtonen 2001). As these communities grow, increase their Australian cultural know-how and accumulate social as well as economic capital, they too may develop their ethnic entrepreneurship, as well as occupational or professional niches in the mainstream labour market, as other groups did before them, and in the process improve their economic status.

The disadvantaged economic position of certain categories of immigrants compared to the native population in countries with regular immigrant intakes has been well documented in research (McAllister *et al.* 1995). Labour market segmentation theory, which claims that social and institutional forces reduce opportunities for certain social groups, for example women and immigrants, and relegate them to the 'second division' of the labour market, was created by political economists in the 1970s and 1980s (Flatau and Lewis 1991; Doerington and Piore 1972; Reich 1984; Dickens and Lang 1988). This theory has been applied, explicitly or implicitly, in the writings of migration scholars ever since and labour market segmentation has been seen as a basis of social disadvantage of immigrant groups and the formation of ethnic minorities (Castles and Miller 2003, Ch. 8). In the Australian context, labour market segmentation adversely affects immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds (NESB), these days usually referred to as 'culturally and linguistically diverse' (CALD) communities, who at the same time come from economically and culturally distant countries.⁵ Some authors see their labour market disadvantage as a consequence of the competitive labour market being 'blind to ethnicity' and the inevitable loss of human capital in the process of migration, often associated with the lack of English proficiency, at least temporarily (see Evans and Kelley 1991; McAllister *et al.* 1995). Others see it as largely due to ethnic and racial discrimination leading to the segmented labour market, which is functional for the capitalist economy at a societal level as well as for individual employers, as it provides a constant supply of cheap labour ready to take on the bottom jobs (Collins 1991; Harris 1995; Castles and Miller 2003; Ho and Alcorso 2004). Valtonen (2001, 2004: 79), describing the Finnish segmented labour market, sees the emphasis on language proficiency as a 'monopoly'-like

mechanism of labour market exclusion of immigrants and refugees and their relegation to the secondary labour market, a mechanism which is at work even when the job tasks involved do not require high language competence. Rydgren's (2004) research confirms the existence of ethnic discrimination in the Swedish labour market where 'visible' immigrants (from 'non-European' backgrounds) are occupationally segregated and over-represented among low-skill, low-status jobs. Lamba (2003) found that refugees' human capital, and previously acquired educational qualifications and skills as its main component, has little value in the Canadian labour market and that refugees consequently experience significant downward occupational mobility. He also found that the additional human capital acquired in Canada makes little difference to the quality of their employment.

Method

The data central to this paper were collected in 2004 through a survey of 150 refugees resettled in Perth, Western Australia on a permanent basis. This paper also draws from data collected in the course of two other sociological research projects: a three-year (2001–2004) project conducted by the first author, focusing on the resettlement of ex-Yugoslav refugees (predominantly Bosnians); and a project conducted by the second author (2004–2005), exploring the resettlement in regional Western Australia of initially temporarily (and later in most cases permanently) protected Hazara refugees from Afghanistan. The 2004 refugee survey was conducted through questionnaire-based face-to-face interviews with 50 respondents from each of three broadly conceived refugee groups: ex-Yugoslavs, black Africans and people from the Middle East.⁶ The interviews were conducted by six bilingual assistants from these groups. Five out of six assistants were themselves refugees. The assistants were instructed to target skilled and professional people of working age with at least a working knowledge of English who were either looking for work or were employed. They approached people from their communities through a snowball technique starting from their own networks. The sample was purposive rather than representative of the immigrant groups involved: it was indeed deliberately skewed towards people with high 'human capital' in order to provide data on job search, employment outcomes and possible discrimination in the labour market on the basis of visibility of the three groups. Table 1 shows the education level of respondents.

In terms of age, sex and country of origin, the sample partly reflected the demographic profile of our bilingual assistants. Among ex-Yugoslavs, a large majority of respondents came from Bosnia; the Middle Eastern group mainly consisted of Iraqis; and most Africans came from Somalia, Eritrea and Ethiopia. The age and gender of respondents is shown in Tables 2 and 3 below. The ex-Yugoslav sample was somewhat older and mostly female, while the other two samples were predominantly men and younger on average. This also reflected the cultural background of these groups: Bosnians came

Table 1

Highest Education Level of Respondents (%; N = 150)				
	Ex-Yugoslav	African	Middle Eastern	Total
Primary School	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
10 years	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Trade qualification	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
High School 12 years	28.0	10.0	2.0	13.3
TAFE* diploma	38.0	22.0	32.0	30.7
University degree	26.0	42.0	46.0	38.0
Post-grad qualification	6.0	26.0	20.0	17.3
No answer	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.7

*Technical and further education.

Table 2

Gender of Respondents (%; N = 150)				
	Ex-Yugoslav	African	Middle Eastern	Total
Women	58	28	28	38
Men	42	72	72	62

Table 3

Age of Respondents (%; N = 150)				
	Ex-Yugoslav	African	Middle Eastern	Total
under 20		2.0		0.7
21–35	16.0	42.0	36.0	31.3
36–50	58.0	40.0	58.0	52.0
51–65	26.0	8.0	6.0	13.3
66 and over		2.0		0.7

from a country where it was the norm for women to be in the workforce, whereas among Iraqis and Africans men were more often in charge of bread-winning and they were also typically the spokespeople for the family and therefore more likely to agree to be interviewed. More women in the mother/homemaker role in the latter two groups also reflected a considerably larger average family size compared to the ex-Yugoslav group. These gender and age differences put an interesting spin on the findings about employment outcomes, financial status and other gender-influenced social outcomes when the three groups were compared.

The questionnaire consisted of three sections: (1) demographic information, (2) employment and (3) general satisfaction with resettlement in Australia. Among the demographic information collected, the emphasis was on factors relevant in the labour market and those, such as religion and ethnicity, which can potentially cause prejudice and discrimination in the labour market. In section two of the questionnaire respondents were asked about their expectations of, and experiences in, the Australian job market: job-seeking practices, job-search assistance they received, their formal qualifications, the recognition of qualifications in Australia, previous employment experience and current job status. They were also asked to self-assess their English language proficiency. The self-assessment of writing and reading skills was 'controlled' by two additional questions: 'Can you make a phone call in English (e.g. to make a doctor's appointment or connect a phone)?' and 'Can you fill in a form without assistance (e.g. could you fill in this questionnaire)?' The last part of the questionnaire focused on general satisfaction and experience of life in Australia, as well as health, financial status, family, ethnic community and acculturation as elements of resettlement success and satisfaction. In a number of questions, many respondents took the opportunity to provide written comments, thus providing additional valuable qualitative data. We also conducted 40 semi-structured interviews with Australian mainstream employers, focusing on their attitudes and experiences in employing racially and culturally 'visible' people. Three focus groups were conducted with bilingual interviewers on the project, key informants from the African community and migrant employment officers working in metropolitan 'migrant resource centres'. After the initial analysis of the survey data, we conducted six, in-depth, follow-up interviews with bilingual settlement workers from Iraqi (2) and black African backgrounds (4) in order to further clarify some of the issues. Our research combines quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis.

Loss of Occupational Status

The tiny minority of the world refugee population who nowadays resettle in the West is rather different from the widespread post-Cold War perception of the 'Third World' refugee as 'poor and uneducated'. Conversely, only those better educated and better off may have the networks needed to access the relevant information and successfully negotiate the complex immigration procedures of refugee-receiving countries. In order to reach Australia, for example, they need to access internet-based information and forms, be selected for an interview, and sometimes bribe local staff in refugee camps or other refugee-processing posts in countries of 'first asylum'. Therefore, 'middle-class' refugees are more likely to be admitted to Australia. The way Australian immigration authorities choose refugees for resettlement clearly combines the principle of 'integration potential' (where those with higher human capital are preferred) and the humanitarian principle of 'greatest need'. Immigration officials tend to deny that the 'integration potential' principle is at work in refugee admission and in

Table 4

Rates of Higher Qualifications and Unemployment for Selected Recent Refugee Communities in Australia

Country of origin	Higher qualifications (%)	Unemployment rate(%)
Bosnia	17.0	16.8
Sudan	26.2	27.6
Ethiopia	22.4	18.9
Eritrea	21.7	28.5
Somalia	13.6	46.8
Iraq	19.8	34.2

Source: ABS 2002; DIMIA 2005b.

turn emphasize the humanitarian principle or ‘greatest need’ (e.g. Bicket 2005; see also DIMIA 2005e), but our respondents’ accounts, and the demographic composition of refugee communities, indicate otherwise. Combination of the two principles (cf. Valtonen 2001: 424) results in a great heterogeneity of refugee communities, which comprise many highly educated urban middle-class people but also illiterate people from rural areas, many of whom spent years in refugee camps, or even grew up there, which severely limited their ability to acquire education and skills.

According to the 2001 Australian Census, most of the recently arrived, predominantly refugee communities—those born in Bosnia, Iraq, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sudan—have a greater proportion of people with higher education (university, TAFE and other post-school qualifications) than the Australian-born (see Table 4 above). The education and middle-class background of recent refugees may be perceived by Australian authorities, concerned about ‘social cohesion’, as a guarantee that they are, to a degree at least, ‘people like us’, socialized into urban Western cultural practices and therefore able to ‘fit in’. How these social endowments, and notably their high skills, are used or wasted in Australia, is another matter altogether (see also Constable *et al.* 2004); they do not seem to guarantee that these immigrants will have a fair chance of securing appropriate jobs and be able to reach their pre-migration status. Instead, most experience unemployment, underemployment and/or dramatic loss of occupational and social status (cf. Valtonen 2001, 2004).

In comparison, the rate of higher qualification among the Australia-born is 18 per cent according to the 2001 Census (ABS 2002). At that time, a large proportion of the Somalia-born and the Sudan-born were very recent arrivals and therefore, not surprisingly, had high unemployment rates. However, unemployment among refugees remains high later on, as high as 43 per cent 18 months after arrival, much higher than in other immigrant categories, as shown in the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia (LSIA)⁷ (DIMIA 2005c; Richardson *et al.* 2004b).

Alongside unemployment, a massive loss of occupational status seems to be endemic among refugees who were resettled in the West during the 1990s. Lamba (2003) reported virtually identical findings from his Canadian research conducted on a larger sample and using multiple regression analysis. His research found that 70 per cent of refugees were not satisfied with their jobs and 60 per cent of them were over-qualified for their current job. Table 5 shows that about half of our respondents were working below their qualifications at the time of interview, with considerable variation between the three subsamples. Valtonen's (2001, 2004) account of a dramatic labour market exclusion of the visibly different in Finland is perhaps less surprising given that, unlike Canada and Australia, this is not a settler society and only recently became a country of immigration.

Our African respondents described the difficulty of getting highly-skilled jobs even when their qualifications were achieved or updated in Australia. In most cases, they saw it as direct discrimination on the basis of a lack of Australian work experience (they argued that their overseas experience, however impressive, was utterly disregarded), their general 'cultural difference' from the 'beer drinking, sausage eating' Australians (what employers often described as 'organizational fit' and 'personality match') and sometimes to direct racism.⁸ Some people reported frustration at being told they were overqualified for jobs they applied for, but not being considered for an interview when applying for a job at a higher level. After a number of job applications a highly qualified African civil engineer with professional experience in a multinational construction company was told by an employment agent that he could not get a professional job simply because he was 'black'.

A migrant employment officer communicated her experience:

[...]Trying to place people into work experience [volunteer work] to do jobs like policy officer or in human resources, then we had an agriculturalist... even getting them a work experience was difficult. We tried with Quarantine, airport, Department of Immigration even, [we] sent letters, selection criteria, followed up with phone calls... nothing. [...] This guy from the Middle East... qualified... experienced... he had an extensive experience with the Red Cross, blood donations... I mean, he had a fantastic resumé, but we could not even get him work experience. Whether that's discrimination I could not really say... and of course I do not think employers would actually name that as an issue... so... but we were quite persistent [for three months] and we had no result.

Tables 6 and 7 present a comparison of our respondents' occupational status in their home country with their entry level employment in Australia (the first job they held upon arrival) and the job they currently have. At the time of survey, the average length of residence for our respondents from all three groups was about seven years, but there were higher concentrations of more recent arrivals among the Middle Easterners and Africans.⁹ Statistical analysis of our data shows that the employment status (being unemployed/employed part-time/employed full-time) improved over time, but employment level (reaching a

Table 5

Work by Qualification (%; N = 150)*				
	Ex-Yugoslav	African	Middle-Eastern	Total
Appropriate	18.0	20.0	34.0	24.0
Above skill level	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Below skill level	80.0	44.0	24.0	49.3
No response	2.0	36.0	42.0	26.6

*High percentages of 'no response', especially among Africans and Middle Easterners, reflect high levels of unemployment among these groups (32 and 38 per cent respectively in our sample). It may also reflect different ways in which bilingual assistants administered this question, so some of the unemployed chose the 'working below qualification level' answer, especially in the ex-Yugoslav sample, where only one person did not respond although seven people (14 per cent) reported being unemployed.

Table 6

Employment Status in Home Country											
	Unskilled		Semi-skill/trade		Para-profess.		Professional		No response		Total
Ex-Yugoslav	5	10%	10	20%	11	22%	21	42%	3	6%	50
African	1	2%	11	22%	8	16%	12	24%	18	36%	50
Middle East	0	0%	9	18%	5	10%	30	60%	6	12%	50

job commensurate with one's qualifications or pre-migration work experience) did not improve.¹⁰

Table 7 shows that entry-level occupations are heavily clustered in the unskilled category (more specifically, mainly cleaning and factory work), especially among ex-Yugoslavs (88 per cent). Unskilled-level entry into the Australian job market is also common among Africans (44 per cent) and the Middle Eastern respondents (22 per cent), compared to the fact that no Middle Easterners and only one African respondent worked in such jobs in their home country. When the highest-level employment is taken into account, there is a more even spread across the various skills categories for the three groups. It should be noted that numbers for African and Middle Eastern respondents are skewed because of the high number of 'no response' to questions about type of occupation. This may reflect the fact that a number of African and Middle Eastern respondents remain unemployed for longer, rather than taking unskilled jobs in large numbers the way ex-Yugoslavs did, as indicated by our previous research among Bosnian refugees (see Colic-Peisker 2003, 2005; Colic-Peisker and Waxman 2005). The data from our survey, where 32 per cent of Africans and 38 per cent of Middle Eastern respondents stated they were unemployed, as well as the 2001 Australian Census unemployment data for these migrant groups also supports this explanation.

Table 7

Employment Status in Australia

	Unskilled	Semi-skill/trade	Para-profess.	Professional	No response	Total
Entry level employment in Australia						
Ex-Yugoslav	44 88%	3 6%	3 6%	0 0%	0 0%	50
African	22 44%	3 6%	12 24%	5 10%	8 16%	50
Middle East	11 22%	5 10%	5 10%	8 16%	21 42%	50
Highest level employment in Australia						
Ex-Yugoslav	17 34%	23 46%	5 10%	5 10%	0 0%	50
African	17 34%	5 10%	13 26%	7 14%	8 16%	50
Middle East	10 20%	4 8%	6 12%	9 18%	21 42%	50

While 64 per cent of ex-Yugoslavs and 70 per cent of respondents from the Middle East held para-professional and professional jobs in their home country, in Australia this is the case with 20 per cent of Yugoslavs and 30 per cent of Middle Eastern respondents. The data show some progression into higher level jobs (when data on ‘entry-level jobs’ and ‘highest-level jobs’ are compared), especially among ex-Yugoslavs moving from unskilled to semi-skilled and trade jobs. This progression is very low for para-professional and professional jobs (again, the highest number of ex-Yugoslavs progressed to professional jobs: five respondents or 10 per cent). Without exception, those who eventually reached their previous professional status did this by upgrading their qualifications in Australia or undertaking difficult and time-consuming professional accreditation such as the Australian Medical Association exam. In addition, among 40 per cent of Africans who stated they had held a para-professional or professional job, there are a high number of people who held such a job for a brief period of time on a casual basis. At the same time, 44 per cent of African respondents stated that they were working below their qualification level (see Table 5). Our composite data confirm that working below qualifications is endemic among black Africans and that even people who upgraded their qualifications in Australia could not find jobs at an appropriate level.

The loss of occupational status among refugee arrivals in reality means that doctors and engineers drive taxis, previous lecturers work as teacher’s assistants, a sociologist works as an underground miner, a helicopter pilot becomes a courier, economists, accountants and teachers work as cleaners and an engineer holds a semi-skilled job in the building industry. After several years in a low-skilled job, professional skills are likely to degenerate, a ‘gap’ in the curriculum vitae appears, and the likelihood of ever acquiring a job at the previous skill level decreases (Constable *et al.* 2004). In addition, being stuck in a low-skilled job means that communicating and networking with

peers, crucial for keeping one's professional skills up to date, as well as for learning about better job opportunities, is almost impossible.

Refugee Occupational Niches

Being driven in a taxi by a highly-skilled NESB immigrant is nowadays part of Australian urban folklore. A 2004 Sydney report by Constable *et al.* is titled: 'Doctors Become Taxi Drivers: Recognizing Skills not as Easy as it Sounds'. The loss of skills is regrettable not only as a loss for individual migrants and families but also as a loss for both sending and receiving countries, and refugees seem to be especially susceptible. Our data show that the largest single industry where ex-Yugoslav and African respondents are concentrated is transport, 16 and 20 per cent respectively, which in fact usually means driving taxis and courier work. A Bosnian man, himself a general practitioner before migration to Australia, told us he knew '15–20 Bosnians with university degrees who drive cabs' (Colic-Peisker 2005). Although taxi-driving usually means self-employment, and can, according to our respondents, secure a reasonable income, it also involves working long hours and night shifts—in other words, considerable self-exploitation, on top of being exposed to safety risks.

Industrial and domestic cleaning is the most significant labour market niche for ex-Yugoslav refugees who arrived in the 1990s. Eighty per cent of ex-Yugoslav respondents stated they either had worked or still work as part-time or casual cleaners. This percentage was even higher in our 2002 survey of Bosnian refugees.¹¹ A Bosnian community leader in Perth remarked that unemployment among Bosnians was lower than the official figures showed because 'they all work, they all clean'. Many of these part-time and casual cleaning jobs seem to take place in the context of the informal economy and provide 'cash in hand' income. Sometimes the worker is registered for fewer hours than s/he actually works, thus enabling the worker to keep the welfare benefit, while the employer 'saves' on tax and overhead expenses. Needless to say, these are poorly paid and insecure jobs. Some people gradually moved to better jobs but kept several hours of cleaning per week for extra income, as cleaning work can be easily combined with conventional working hours in another job. While both sexes and often also teenagers who still attend school work in industrial cleaning, domestic cleaning among ex-Yugoslavs is an exclusive domain of women and regarded as an inappropriate job for a man. Women, most of whom have families to care for, often stated flexibility of working hours and cash-in-hand payment as important advantages of domestic cleaning. The overwhelming majority of refugees from the former Yugoslavia settled in large cities where such low-skilled service jobs are in rising demand. Australian economists Flatau and Lewis (1991: 27) argued that cleaning is an 'occupation which lies on its own at the bottom of the secondary sector', with a 'significant over-representation of immigrants from a non-English-speaking background and of women'.

An African bilingual interviewer from our study remarked that ‘Yugoslavs had a monopoly in the cleaning industry so Africans cannot get there’. Of course, this is not literally the case, but a heavy presence of ex-Yugoslav and Middle Eastern recent arrivals (and, therefore, in the majority of cases, refugees) in industrial cleaning in Western Australia was also confirmed from the employers’ side of the story. A human resource manager of a cleaning company with over 1,000 staff (mostly part-time workers) explained that ‘cleaning is traditionally an ethnic market’. Another interviewee, a manager of a cleaning, hospitality and aged-care business, confirmed that they have ‘unbelievable amounts’ (*sic*) of migrants in these jobs. ‘A couple of years ago I would’ve told you they were mostly Slavs [Yugoslavs]. Now, they are probably mostly Muslims and [people from] Middle East [...]’.

Africans seem to be heavily concentrated in food processing, the security industry and aged-care jobs. In the aging Australian society, aged care is a booming industry, but not one that offers attractive jobs. This ‘naturally’ creates a labour market segment staffed by immigrants, and especially those assigned a subordinate position in society on the basis of race, ethnicity and ‘culture’. This applies to most refugees, usually coming from socio-economically and culturally ‘distant’ countries and therefore perceived as ‘Others’ in the context of the predominantly white, English-speaking Australia.¹² In addition, refugee status is often associated with lack of resources, health problems and other types of disadvantage. According to our focus group of key informants from the African Community Association in Perth, a significant number of both men and women provide low-skilled health services in nursing homes, where they are also ‘regularly exposed to swearing abuse by elderly Australians’ referring to their ‘blackness’. This fits well into the idea, confirmed by large surveys, that racist attitudes are more widespread among the older population (Dunn 2003) who, in the nursing home situation, can indulge their prejudices and vent their frustrations with impunity.¹³ We were told that Africans also suffer abuse from their white co-workers: ‘The work is hard and not well paid, and the “white workers” find relief in abusing the Africans’. This situation exposes the impotence of Australia’s stringent anti-discrimination legislation: as we were told, Africans who suffer racial abuse do not lodge complaints. Setting the slow wheels of anti-racist and anti-discrimination bureaucracies in motion does not seem an attractive option, and is certainly not perceived as something that would improve their work or life situation. A similar attitude of resignation was expressed by Iraqi women who have experienced abuse in the street because of their headdress.

The security industry, where a number of Africans had also found jobs, was described as ‘dangerous’: ‘We [black Africans] can have these jobs because Australians do not want them’, commented an African man. The focus group of employment officers from metropolitan migrant resource centres also identified cleaning, aged care, security and taxi driving as current [non-English-speaking] migrant niches in the labour market. ‘It’s quick... a five-day security course... and taxi driving, as long as you have

\$1,500 [to pay for exam and license fees] . . . in a couple of weeks you can be on the road.' Another employment officer explained:

I had quite a bit of success in placing people as carers, in aged care. There is a whole swag of people from Africa who have done training in that area . . . it's very easy and quick to get training, and then you have to get employment . . . but it's a growing industry so it's not too hard [. . .] In job placements, a couple of times I told people 'look they are from Africa, so they are going to be black so do not be surprised when they rock up', because I do not want . . . you know . . . I do not want that reaction. [. . .] We have a lot of clients wanting to do a security guard course . . . they are very keen to start working and earning money. They are not so concerned about themselves, but for their children . . . they want to secure a stable home for the second generation [. . .]

A significant employment niche for refugee professionals has been created by the settlement and educational needs of their own communities: settlement services and cross-cultural social work and assistance, as well as teaching in Muslim schools, are in many cases staffed by bilingual people from refugee communities. Casual interpreting for the Department of Immigration is another significant niche for refugee professionals. The problem with these jobs is that they are often part-time or casual, modestly paid and insecure; as our interviewees in the follow-up interviews explained, funding for settlement services has to be applied for on a yearly basis, and the 'ongoing need' for them has to be documented over and over again. In spite of this, most bilingual settlement workers expressed satisfaction with their job and the sense of purpose it gave them.

Another refugee niche has been created through the government's regional resettlement initiative, prompted by labour shortages in the meat processing and agricultural sectors. Abattoir and poultry plant work is not something local residents generally consider acceptable employment. Harris (1995) argued that there is an 'unwritten social contract' in developed countries which spares (even unemployed) locals from the expectation that they should accept the bottom jobs; in turn, these jobs are allocated to immigrants. Since 2002, when they were released from immigration detention on TPVs, large groups of Hazara refugees from Afghanistan have worked in regional abattoirs across Australia and were praised by the Australian media for their 'contribution to the local communities' and described as 'hardworking people who want to get ahead' and should be 'given a chance'. A focus on economic benefit has been used to argue for the value of encouraging refugees to move to regional areas. An economic analysis of the impact of refugees on a rural town was undertaken and it was found that their contributions are significant and have the potential to breathe life into depressed regional areas (Stilwell 2003). The situation is complex, however, and some see the reality as one of exploitation. One resident of the Western Australian regional town of Albany, a white Australian who has worked at the abattoir, described it thus:

Because ever since I've come here [the abattoir] is always short of workers. You have to face it, working in an abattoir is not the world's most glamorous job.

And even if you do get an ethnic group who will do the work that no-one else wants, they will look for something else eventually. [...] they work horrendous hours. They work shifts and overtime and all that stuff and that makes the money reasonably good, but a slaughterman's wage is not that much. And it has been a perennial problem for ever finding labour [...]. So for them [the abattoir] it may have been convenient to have a group of people that were marginalized in the workplace...

Some people worked on hay farms and as fruit-pickers, and a competition developed among local employers to lure the available labour. The nature of work, working conditions (some men suffered work injuries) and wages in the abattoirs were apparently such that a slow drain of workers started once they were granted permanent visas. The employers' reaction, implying ingratitude on the part of workers who left (*West Australian* 2005a: 57), indicates that the refugees are perceived as essentially different from the locals, as no-one would expect a local to be grateful for an abattoir job.

Apparently, the segments of the Australian labour market staffed by recent refugees are typical low-status, low-paid, dead-end, insecure jobs and, in many cases, also physically taxing and unhealthy. By racializing and 'othering' these populations, such labour market allocation appears fair and 'natural'.

Ethnic Networks: Reinforcing Niche Employment

Ethnic-path integration, that is, the considerable reliance on ethnic networks for practical help and socializing, has an impact on the socio-economic outcomes in the process of immigrant settlement. As Morawska (2004: 1378) observed in recent research on Poles and Russians in Philadelphia, those with limited human capital and those facing language and cultural barriers in their new country are likely to rely on their ethnic networks and consequently to settle in residential concentrations. In contrast, their better-endowed compatriots with higher socio-economic status tend to disperse (see Bauder and Sharpe 2002 for the Canadian case). In regard to employment outcomes, using ethnic networks in securing a job contributes to directing people into 'ethnic niches'. This happens through the obvious mechanism of sharing information on job vacancies through 'word of mouth' and other community channels, but also through the community perception of what can be expected in the labour market and what are appropriate financial and social goals and the best way to achieve them.

A majority of our respondents (59 per cent) reported they used ethnic community networks in looking for a job, while 47 per cent of people actually found jobs through these networks. The reliance on ethnic networks and finding jobs through them was highest among ex-Yugoslavs, 72 and 66 per cent respectively, somewhat lower for Iraqis (68 and 48 per cent respectively) and the lowest for Africans (38 and 26 per cent respectively). 'Other networks' (with people outside the ethnic community) were only used by 18 per cent of respondents across the three groups and only 11 per cent secured a job through them. Reliance on community networks created a high community concentration in the cleaning

industry among ex-Yugoslavs: most of the 88 per cent of our sample who entered the Australian job market as unskilled workers first worked as cleaners.

A human resource manager of a large cleaning company told us:

[Migrants] are very good, we usually don't have too many problems [with the language], but they're also a very tight-knit community... I've found through experience [that] a lot of it is a word of mouth. When you've got a thousand staff, they become your advertising network themselves. We fill a lot of our positions through people who know people. [...] [If] they come at the door looking for work, they're generally associated with somebody who's already working for us.

Employers tend to rely on the reputation of ethnic communities and if a group is considered 'hardworking'—this is the reputation that ex-Yugoslav communities have had in Australia for decades—community clustering at work is encouraged. Another employer explained how they help people with language difficulties:

Perhaps it's a long-term employee that we have and they've sponsored a member of their family to come over here [...] If they commit themselves to an English course [...] we will put them on what we call a 'buddy system' where they work with someone who is able to understand their language [...] but they must work together. So, yeh, we've found ways around it.

The high reliance of ex-Yugoslav refugees on community networks is not surprising: they arrived in large numbers during a relatively short time period during the 1990s and formed tight-knit communities. Many arrived on a 'special humanitarian' visa category, which means they were sponsored by their relatives in Australia or community organizations. The community settlement assistance is assumed in this type of entry visa, and help in finding work is a logical extension of this chain migration pattern (on chain migration, see Colic-Peisker 2002). They also found a large number of longer-term migrants of their ethnic or at least similar linguistic background in Australian metropolitan cities—large Croatian, Serbian and Macedonian ethnic communities—and within them 'ethnic businesses' which could provide jobs. The existence of established ex-Yugoslav ethnic communities was probably one of the reasons why 78 per cent of ex-Yugoslavs in our survey said they would not move to country areas, while this was the case with only 38 per cent of Africans and 46 per cent of people from the Middle East, who are classified by Australian government bureaucracies as 'new and emerging communities'.¹⁴ In Sydney, for example, many ex-Yugoslavs found jobs in 'ethnic businesses' in the building industry, or at least found jobs through ethnic networks. A Bosnian community leader in Sydney explained:

There are many older immigrants who came in the 1960s or earlier... Croatsians, Macedonians who have businesses or can help find work [...] Our people work on building sites... Gyrock [plastering], demolition, bricklaying, cement rendering, landscaping, form work, concrete... hard manual labour where people can earn quite a bit of money... they can work overtime... one can earn \$280 a day working on bulldozer or excavator, more than a teacher...

Ethnic firms are likely to be small and middle-size businesses in retail, construction and low-skilled services such as cleaning, which as a rule employ labourers, tradespeople and, only occasionally, office workers and professionals. Therefore, they present little employment opportunity for the highly skilled (see Lamba 2003: 48 for the comparable Canadian situation). Ethnic entrepreneurs often consciously employ newly arrived compatriots expecting them to be cheap, flexible and pliable labour. The following quotation comes from a manager of a Perth construction firm owned and largely staffed by ex-Yugoslavs, which usually provides job contracts of three, six or twelve months duration:

Immigrants of Croatian and Bosnian background often look for jobs [here]. They hear about the firm from others in the community, then ring us, and we ask them to fill in the recruitment form [...] The owner considers the same-background immigrants to be hard workers who rarely complain about working conditions as long as they feel they can earn enough. The conditions are harsh [in the north of Western Australia]...outdoors in the dust, in 50 degrees [centigrade] temperature...

In the context of job searching, ethnic community networks are therefore enabling as well as constraining (cf. Lamba 2003). They influence job and wider social expectations in two mutually connected ways. First, there is an expectation that a community member will accept a prevailing community standard of employment regardless of their personal characteristics and ambitions ('What's good for us is good for you'/'What's good for them is good for me'). This community conformism creates a pressure towards 'downwards adjustment' for younger, more ambitious and better educated people (Bloch 2002; Colic-Peisker 2003). This effect is most visible among ex-Yugoslavs in our sample, who found a large ethnic community in Australia. Due to the availability of informal assistance in job searching, ex-Yugoslavs have the lowest unemployment but highest occupational downgrading of the three groups. A Sydney-based, Bosnian bilingual resettlement worker in his early thirties explained:

There is a push from the community: get a job, go to the building, do Gyprock, money's good there, you can buy a house... you do not wait for a long time to buy a house, wasting money on rent. [...] They [Bosnians] work a lot, from the daybreak to nightfall [...] When I came to Australia [in 1997, as a refugee], my aunt who had lived here for 30 years sent me off to work straight away, to the factory where my uncle worked. [...] I didn't speak much English and I thought, well, I do not have much choice, do I, so I accepted the physical job, and after two years broke my back... then I went back to school, and studied, and now I'm doing this.

This mechanism of community conformism is connected with the second, subtler mechanism supporting downwards occupational adjustment: a community perception that looking for a good job is an uphill battle which involves high and insecure investment in the job search (cf. Fugazza 2003).

Consequently, due to mainstream prejudice and discrimination, accepting an easily achievable job in the secondary labour market, at least as a start, is considered a more rational course of action. A migrant employment officer described the situation among recently arrived Africans:

There's quite a widespread perception among Africans that discrimination is widespread . . . I cannot say for the whole community, but among people I worked with, most certainly, most certainly [. . .] 100 per cent of people we dealt with have at some stage identified discrimination, they all experienced discrimination one way or another . . . specifically they would say, 'It's all about the colour of my skin' [or] 'the way I speak'. It is about being different and experiencing it. These stories go around and are taken on board [. . .] People I worked with were entrenched into the negative [but] eventually when we moved on and got them a work experience they changed a bit . . .¹⁵

The nearly-exclusive reliance on the ethnic community may prevent the creation of non-ethnic 'bridging' social networks (Korac 2005) or what Granovetter (1974) called 'weak ties' in the mainstream community, which are instrumental in achieving a degree of upward occupational and social mobility. The lack of weak ties with people outside ethnic communities, which serve to link job seekers to information about job opportunities, diminishes immigrants' ability to circumvent the structural barriers and discrimination they face. Our data indeed indicate that respondents who had better weak ties in the mainstream community experienced less 'downskilling'.¹⁶

Discussion and Conclusion

Labour market segmentation is a product of interconnected institutional, intercultural, and economic flows between sending and receiving countries, as well as established global cultural and economic hierarchies. This transnational phenomenon is as old as mass migration itself, but it is also dynamic. Migrant labour is increasingly differentiated: according to Castles and Miller (2003: 184) 'immigrant workforces [are] increasingly bipolar'. One pole consists of highly skilled migrants, permanent as well as temporary, who represent a growing section of global mobility and also the most mobile demographic. In Australia and elsewhere, they often settle at the privileged end of the job market. At the other pole are migrants who are directed into the secondary labour market, the one increasingly associated with 'irregular' and humanitarian immigrants, in spite of the fact that many in the latter two categories possess higher education. Therefore, certain migrant groups and categories cluster in the low-status, difficult, unhealthy, insecure and exploitative jobs. The irregular migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, who normally come from socio-economically and culturally distant countries, are 'naturally' relegated to niches in the secondary labour market and to the informal economy. According to recent research, those skilled and highly skilled among them are almost equally affected (see Wood 1990; Lamba 2003; Ho and Alcorso 2004; Valtonen 2001, 2004; Colic-Peisker 2005).

Ethnicity and class combine in the segmentation of the labour market. Migrants from certain ethnic backgrounds and visa categories are channelled towards certain jobs, industries and (depressed) geographical localities. As formulated through the 'queuing theory' (Bauder 2003), some older migrant communities experience upward mobility in the second and subsequent generations and largely leave the low end of the labour market, while new disadvantaged groups take their place. In Australia, for example, Southern Europeans have become absorbed in the 'multicultural' mainstream and have largely lost their disadvantaged minority status, while some of the more recently arrived, non-European groups have taken their place at the bottom of the ethnic and class hierarchies. As an Italian fruit grower put it, 'They [Afghan refugees who worked for him] are like Italians of the 1950s' (Shine 2005). Wood (1990: 8) argued that the 'depreciation of new settlers' human capital will be larger the greater is the socio-economic "distance" separating the countries of origin and destination'; and this especially affects refugees.

The most vulnerable migrants—refugees and asylum seekers—are especially likely to end up locked in disadvantaged low-status and low-paying jobs. Interviews we conducted with a sample of 40 Australian employers, from small legal firms through schools and local government to large mining companies, confirmed that most mainstream employers outside the identified migrant employment 'niches' have little or no experience with employing 'visibly different' recent refugees from our three targeted groups.¹⁷

Structural constraints—the lack of qualification recognition and barriers erected by trade and professional associations—are mechanisms of institutional discrimination which have an important role in the preservation of the segmented labour market. Such barriers keep the racially and culturally different in underprivileged labour market segments and socially relegate them to a disadvantaged and disempowered minority status. Mainstream 'everyday' racism expressed through the prejudicial behaviour of employers prevents those with recognized or Australian qualifications from securing adequate jobs and represents another mechanism that reinforces labour market segmentation. In this context, racism is not simply an irrational prejudice, but a basis for rational, economically advantageous behaviour of employers: it keeps certain 'marked' groups out of the mainstream labour market and good jobs and thus ensures that undesirable job vacancies are filled. Those who have no other choice due to structural barriers and everyday racism take such jobs; Afghans on temporary visas working in Australian country areas are a case in point.

Our findings contradict the conclusion reached by Adhikari (1999: 203) that there are no separate labour market segments for NESB immigrants in Australia and that 'different socio-economic attainments among different workplace groups' can be attributed to 'differential possession of human capital and other variables'. In turn, our findings confirm Wood's (1990: 2) argument that there are 'high and sustained levels of occupational segregation,

particularly amongst migrants from NES countries' and the conclusion reached by Ho and Alcorso (2004) who challenge the Australian 'success story' about migrant employment. Our findings are not directly comparable with findings of the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia (LSIA), which looked at permanent settlers across visa categories and which sample is representative rather than purposive. Some general conclusions on the labour market experience of refugees are the same: they are the most disadvantaged group in the labour market with employment levels considerably below other migrant categories (Richardson 2004b). LSIA also found that refugees from Cohort 2 were worse off than refugees in the earlier cohort, largely due to lower labour market participation but also to unemployment. Between the mid- and late 1990s the predominately ex-Yugoslav humanitarian intake was gradually replaced by the intake of black Africans, who also in our research are shown to suffer a greater degree of disadvantage—higher unemployment, lower full-time employment and the highest underemployment (e.g. 52 per cent of Africans in our sample said they wanted to work more than is currently the case, compared to 34 per cent of ex-Yugoslavs and 16 per cent of people from the Middle East). LSIA data indicate that employed refugees have the lowest job satisfaction compared to other migrant categories (Richardson 2004b: 23) which suggests a response to the loss of occupational status and relegation to the secondary labour market. Using a randomized representative sample, LSIA assumes that refugees are not admitted on the basis of employability, and that their poor labour market outcomes therefore stem from the lack of human capital (language and general skills). In contrast, our purposive sample of refugees with high language proficiency and high skills shows that there are other factors at work that create poor employment outcomes for refugees.

In other words, the current allocation of certain ethnic groups and immigrant categories in certain industries and types of jobs in the secondary labour market does not necessarily reflect their specific skills or levels of human capital, but rather reflects what Valtonen (2004: 80) calls 'systemic oppression', resulting in structural marginalization and disadvantage. Apart from structural and systemic causes, this disadvantage also stems from everyday racism and discrimination, but is also reinforced by the nature of the 'ethnic-path' labour market integration, which, again, can be largely considered a consequence of, and reaction to, social exclusion. Developing bridging social networks and 'weak ties' with people outside the ethnic community can only happen in a substantial way through employment outside the disadvantaged labour market niches, and therefore many racially and culturally visible migrants remain locked in the vicious circle of disadvantage.

The interplay of ethnicity/race ('visible' and 'cultural' difference) and class works against refugees: although often highly skilled they are nonetheless perceived as the lowest class of immigrants. Of course, employers may not be aware of the visa type a person was granted as long as a job applicant is a permanent resident, but some nationalities are automatically associated with global trouble spots, violence, terrorism and poverty, and are therefore

unfavourably stereotyped. This is currently the case with the Middle Eastern Muslims, but also with Africans. In addition, refugee status implies dispossession, difficulties in obtaining reliable references from overseas employers and possible learning and behavioural difficulties associated with the trauma of forced migration and settlement in an alien environment. This may elicit a certain amount of sympathy in the community, but its practical result is charitable assistance (e.g. through volunteer helpers and donations) rather than a fairer treatment of refugees in the competitive job market or their inclusion in the informal bridging networks in the mainstream community. Refugees themselves are aware of the low status of the refugee label and dislike being placed in this category (Queensland Health 2003). While this categorization can be hidden as well as shed over time, their disadvantageous 'visibility' in the Australian environment, based on their physical appearance and accent, cannot be changed. It is clear that prejudices triggered by 'visibility' translate into discrimination in employment, although it is hard to establish the scope of this phenomenon hidden under the layers of 'politically correct' discourse by employers, as well as the unwillingness of most people to report discrimination. Racism is implicated in the fact that Africans and Middle Easterners in our sample reported consistently poorer financial and employment situations and satisfaction, in spite of the fact that the ex-Yugoslavs sample was older and predominantly female, which predisposes it for employment disadvantage and lower earnings. As Shih's (2002) American study showed, employers' racial stereotyping does influence their hiring decisions, and the latter are not made on purely economic grounds as neo-liberals tend to argue. Our research indicates that racism has more impact on one's labour market marginalization than sexism and ageism.

The 'visible' or the 'culturally different'—which, as some authors argue, is a new way of expressing racism—are often suspected to have characteristics that make them unpredictable and which are not conducive to the establishment of a relationship of mutual recognition and trust, which is important for any organization (Tomei 2003). Cultural homogeneity at work, based on the shared values and understanding of issues relevant in the work process, was often emphasized by employers through the ideas of 'organizational fit' and 'personality match', implying that the visibly and culturally different simply did not fit in. A recent survey of 8,000 Australian employers reported in the media found that the 'fit factor' is indeed important: 'Technical competence is not enough—potential employees are rated on how they might fit into an organization and progress through the hierarchy' (*Weekend Australian* 29–30 October 2005: 1+). It is clear that an African doctor or a Middle Eastern engineer may be adversely affected in such a context.

Current Australian immigration, settlement and labour market policies and initiatives have a role in maintaining the segmented labour market where certain categories of immigrants are allocated jobs that the locals refuse to take. The developments are reminiscent of the late 1940s–1950s policies around the reception of 'displaced persons' (DPs) from Eastern Europe. They were

required to sign pre-migration contracts in which they accepted whatever job they were allocated in the first two years in Australia. In this scheme, overseas skills were obliterated and highly qualified professionals registered as 'labourers' (men) and 'domestics' (women). Several factors contributed to this outcome. First, DPs were continental Europeans at a time when the Australian population was 97 per cent Anglo-Celtic (Jupp 2002). Australian authorities and the public had serious concerns about their assimilability and the 'culturally inferior' non-English-speaking aliens were expected to meet the then high demand for low-skilled labour. They were refugees and displaced persons, without financial means and social networks and therefore seriously constrained by their situation and with little choice in the new environment. Our research shows that a similar situation has occurred more than a half a century later. The demand for low-skilled labour may not be as high as it was back then, but the preparedness of the Australia-born to take the bottom jobs is lower still, as chronic shortages of labour in meat processing, farm work and the building industry indicate. Many DPs who arrived in the 1940s and 1950s never regained their professional status after the two compulsory labouring years elapsed (Martin 1965). The 'absence of upward occupational mobility' among subsequent waves of NESB immigrants was demonstrated by Wood (1990), who also quotes findings from the American research that migrant 'upward occupational mobility was observed during the first half-dozen years, after which occupational patterns stabilize' (1990: 6). Whether the impressive pool of skills among recent refugee arrivals in Australia will be wasted in the long term cannot be established now, but once five or more years in the new country have passed for the first immigrant generation, the hope of regaining pre-migration occupational and social status may grow fainter.

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1. The Prime Minister John Howard's conservative government (a coalition of Liberal and National parties) has been in office since 1996.
2. There has been a call from the National Farmers Federation to introduce tax incentives for backpackers to fill labour shortages for unskilled rural labour. The advantage of employing backpackers is that they are willing to go home once the need for their labour diminishes. At present, backpackers do these jobs, but usually leave before the job is finished, which reflects the unattractiveness of the job and pay. See ABC News Online, 6 July 2005 <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200507/s1408036.htm>. The government has repeatedly expressed a strong preference for permanent settlement as an 'Australian way', not least out of fear that temporary workers from developing countries would be unwilling to leave.

3. 'As decline and social disadvantage take hold of rural Australia, depopulation has escalated with up to 200 rural local government areas in Australia having lost population since the 1980s' (Alston 2002: 3).
4. These 'new and emerging communities' (in Australian bureaucratese) have been almost exclusively created through refugee intakes in the 1990s and 2000s. Only the Bosnian community contains a number of 'economic migrants' who arrived in the 1960s and 1970s (and who cannot be distinguished from a broader 'Yugoslav' intake of that time) but the bulk of the community (about 75 per cent) are refugees who arrived in the 1990s.
5. And does not pertain, for example, to migrants from the northwest of Europe (who are also from non-English-speaking backgrounds), North America and white South Africans; they indeed fare better in the labour market than the Australia-born (Jupp 2002).
6. These groups made the bulk of the refugee intake during the 1990s, whereas in the 2000s the intake of ex-Yugoslavs ceased and black Africans represent about 80 per cent of the current planned ('off-shore') intake. Iraqi intake has been drastically reduced compared to the 1990s.
7. LSIA, commissioned by DIMIA, started in 1994 and so far has surveyed 6,000–7,000 migrants from Cohort 1 (those who arrived 1993–1995) and 3,000–4,000 migrants from Cohort 2 (arrived 1999–2000), across different visa categories (humanitarian entrants represented 21 per cent of the sample in Cohort 1 and 12 per cent of the sample in Cohort 2, see http://www.immi.gov.au/research/lisia/lisia06_1.htm). Embedded in the economic paradigm dominant within government and society, it looks at various aspects of successful settlement such as qualifications, language proficiency, employment, financial status, health, housing, community participation and general satisfaction. A comparison of the two cohorts showed that the changes in immigration policy—a relative increase in strictly points-tested skilled intakes at the expense of family and humanitarian intakes, and the exclusion of all migrants except those on humanitarian visas from welfare in the first two years of settlement—improved settlement outcomes, that is, employment was higher and unemployment lower in Cohort 2 (Richardson 2004a; 2004b, see also <http://www.immi.gov.au/research/lisia/index.htm>).
8. In a newspaper article titled 'Black Lawyer out of the Race' (*Sunday Times*, Perth, 6 November 2005), a barrister from Sierra Leone is quoted as saying: '[. . .] these are the only places the mainstream wants us, in aged care, as cleaners and in security'. In the same newspaper article, the Western Australian Equal Opportunity Commissioner said, 'I have no doubt that people who are visibly different are having difficulty getting jobs, even when their qualifications are equal or better than people who are not visibly different'.
9. Length of residence in our sample in years: ex-Yugoslavs $M = 7.78$, $Mdn = 8.00$, $SD = 2.10$; Africans $M = 7.24$, $Mdn = 7.00$, $SD = 3.04$; Middle Easterners $M = 6.54$, $Mdn = 5.00$, $SD = 4.30$.
10. The correlation of 'length of residence' and 'employment status' is statistically significant ($r = .222^{**}$, $p = .006$) but there is no such relationship for the 'length of residence' and 'employment level' (below, appropriate or above the level of skills).
11. The survey was conducted in Perth in 2002. Forty-six interview packages were filled and returned in the mail. Each pack contained a three-page household questionnaire asking about household size, composition, income, home ownership, and

demographic data about members of the household, and a six-page individual questionnaire (two identical copies for two adults in the household). Eighty-seven people completed these questionnaires, which consisted of three sections: 1) demographic data; 2) assessment of resettlement services received; and 3) general questions on resettlement in Australia. The questionnaire inquired about resettlement outcomes and personal satisfaction with these outcomes.

12. The Australian media's interest in the current predominately black African refugee intake has been triggered by racist comments by a Sydney academic, associate professor of law Andrew Fraser, reported in dozens of print and electronic media, about 'sub-Saharan Africans' having 'lower IQ' and being 'crime-prone' (see e.g. *West Australian* 2005b: 10).
13. The 'normal' social reserve of elderly Australians may in some cases be diminished by dementia, chronic pain and other problems, but it is still worth noting that their abuse of staff has racial content.
14. This bureaucratic terminology (referring to immigrants from the same country of origin) and our own use of the term 'ethnic community network' when asking people about their job-search experience, does not mean that these people are a community in a sociologically meaningful sense, but simply that they share a language or some other common feature, and often also share problems based on that distinguishing feature. For example, although the 'African community' consists of people from many different countries and many different walks of life, they see their 'blackness' as a strong bonding feature within 'white' Australia. There is an 'African community association' in Perth although smaller ethnically- and nationally-based associations also exist.
15. Myles and Hou (2004) in their research on racial minorities in Toronto reported the highest perceived levels of discrimination and spatial segregation among black minorities.
16. Correlation between 'socializing with Australians' and 'employment level' is statistically significant in our sample: $r = .307^{**}$, $p = .001$ ($N = 106$).
17. During a semi-structured interview averaging one hour, the interviewees representing employers were asked about: 1) themselves (basic demographic data); 2) the business; 3) their staff composition and recruitment practices; and 4) their experience in employing people from CALD communities and three refugee groups. At the end of the interview they were asked to comment on three hypothetical cases of the 'visibly different' applying for a job with them. This data set is presented in Tilbury and Colic-Peisker (forthcoming).

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