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Positioning young refugees in Australia: Media discourse and social exclusion

The aim of this article is to examine how media attention affects the social exclusion of young refugees negotiating their way towards settlement in Australia. Emerging stereotypes and prejudices against young male refugees require new ways of understanding the impact of global, national and local issues on their social exclusion. The article brings together the impact of (a) the global politicisation and backlash against refugees, (b) Australians negative perception of refugees, and (c) the increased reporting of young African-Australian and Pasifika-Australians as the perpetrators of youth violence. The article recognises the overlapping dimensions of social exclusion for young refugees and considers their 'spatial', 'relational' and 'socio-political' exclusion. The examination of media reporting of a landmark legal case of discrimination and racial profiling reveals a discourse of media attention that has perpetuated the social exclusion of a group of young African-Australian refugees living on a Melbourne public housing estate. The sensationalist and prejudicial media connection of the landmark legal case, youth violence and young African-Australians living on the Flemington Estate demonstrates the challenges young male refugees face in negotiating their settlement in Australia. This article makes a contribution to understanding the multi-dimensional nature of youth exclusion in contemporary times.

Keywords: Youth, social exclusion, media, discrimination, refugees, gangs

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Introduction

Issues hindering the successful resettlement of young refugees in Australia are examined in this article. One Melbourne suburb has featured in media reports that follow a landmark legal case of discrimination and prejudice. An examination of Melbourne's newspapers demonstrates the challenges facing young male refugees in negotiating their way towards settlement and how perceptions about people from African nations have been jaundiced by sensationalist and prejudicial media reporting. This article contributes to what is known about how the media affects social exclusion by investigating media attention on one suburb and its effects.

Resettlement: Context and background

Cities play an increasingly significant role in resettling and supporting refugees and asylum seekers as work opportunities and educational facilities draw new arrivals to urban environments. While national governments are responsible for immigration policies, local authorities help with the social incorporation of newcomers and their resettlement. The global displacement crisis alongside increasing politicisation and backlash against immigration and multiculturalism has resulted in negative perceptions of refugees and asylum seekers. Merged with a nation's existing stereotypes and prejudices, these negative perceptions can result in

targeted discrimination, isolation and exclusion of new arrivals. For young refugees¹, the increased reporting of ethnic youth gangs as the perpetrators of public violence have merged with the ‘fear’ of refugees and asylum seekers, creating a complex landscape of social exclusion (Harris, 2013). The purpose of this article is to consider how this negative discourse is perpetuated by the media. Following discussion about some of the issues facing refugees, this article will focus on how African youth negotiate their resettlement in one Australian city and what hinders them.

Much has been written about the challenges facing the 21.3 million refugees around the world (UN Refugee Agency [UNHCR], 2015). While this is a global problem, half of the worlds’ refugees come from three war-torn countries – Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia. The nature of conflict and acts of extremist violence have raised concerns for many nations about the background of refugees they accept for resettlement. Driven to flee their home nations, all refugees are vulnerable but women, children and families are considered to be particularly vulnerable and are often prioritised for resettlement. Children present additional challenges for resettlement as disruption to education, language development, physical and psychological effects of trauma and poor overall health require specialist support and care in destination nations. In 2015 over half of the worlds’ refugees were under the age of 18 (UNHCR, 2015). While children are considered a priority for resettlement, refugee youth has emerged as a significant security concern because of previous military experience, radicalisation and the potential risk to national security. Youth violence has intensified concerns, as Harris (2013, p. 3) suggests, youth riots and:

¹In this article, I have chosen to use the term ‘refugee’ throughout although I acknowledge this term is problematic. The question of when people stop being refugees, or when asylum seekers become refugees, for example (Phillips, 2011).

The visibility of large and youthful immigrant populations in global cities have become constructed as interrelated problems that call into question the sustainability of diversity and the future of the nation as we know it.

Narrow stereotypes of young, male refugees as the perpetrators of public violence have emerged as nations have become more selective about who they welcome for resettlement. In 2015, the Canadian Government responded to concerns raised by citizens and announced that it would exclude single men from their Syrian refugee resettlement plan (The Guardian, 2015). In contemporary western societies, national and local concerns around youth violence and the formation of youth gangs have merged with global prejudices of refugees, creating new stereotypes of young male refugees as the key perpetrators of racial violence. This is particularly evident in Australia where the violence of ethnic youth gangs is considered more of a threat to public safety than extremist violence (Harris, 2013).

Resettlement in Australia

On a global scale, Australia's refugee intake is small yet our strict immigration policies have made decisions on refugees and asylum seekers highly visible. Australia has a long history of immigration, with waves of new arrivals from nations torn apart by war or drought, or the assisted passage migration scheme designed under Australia's 'populate or perish' policy. While the level of immigration hasn't changed dramatically in the past 40 years, what has changed is the country of origin of newly arrived refugees and their mode of transport. Australia's offshore detention centres for asylum seekers have been labelled a crime against humanity and widely challenged under international human rights laws. The increasing politicisation and backlash against refugees is evident in Australia with tight restrictions on refugee numbers. Negative perceptions of refugees have impacted on Australian's acceptance

of difference and refugees report incidents of discrimination, racism and xenophobia (Refugee Council of Australia, [RCOA] 2015).

Many refugees seek resettlement in urban locations because they are close to educational facilities and work. Australian cities play a significant role in supporting new arrivals in everyday negotiations of settlement. Our cities are finding themselves at the ‘heart of the complex relationships between globalization, the global economy, international migration, and the social incorporation of newcomers’ (Price & Chacko, 2012, p. 8). Recognising the increasing challenges for cities to support the social incorporation of newcomers and their resettlement, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) developed a framework to assist local authorities to welcome new arrivals and promote ‘supportive public attitudes’ (Taran, Neves de Lima & Kadyshva, 2016, p. 40). The report outlines a framework for success that includes inclusivity, equality, anti-discrimination, anti-racism and anti-xenophobia. The framework also stresses that a deliberate strategy from the media is essential. In contrast to this, the Australian media has cemented negative perceptions of young refugees by sensationalising the connection between youth violence and refugees from African and Pasifika² nations.

Young refugees report that negative community perceptions, racism and discrimination has had a significant impact on their sense of safety and resettlement in Australia. While local communities often articulate a strong commitment to young refugees—providing educational, sporting, social, religious and cultural programs and activities to assist them to negotiate a way towards resettlement—their acceptance by the

²Pasifika youth in this article refers to young people with familial lineage to the three major groups of islands in the Pacific Ocean.

broader Australian public is more complex. Young refugees in Australia are portrayed negatively, influenced by the highly-politicised nature of our immigration policies, increasing fear of refugees on a global scale and increasingly by media reports that link the behaviours of youth gangs with an inability to belong. The media has positioned these young people as the cause of breakdown of multiculturalism and the inability of others to negotiate their difference in line with Australian values and beliefs (Harris, 2013; Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network, [MYAN] 2016). As young refugees negotiate their way toward settlement they assert that the media is particularly negative towards them and emphasise the role that discrimination and racism play in their everyday negotiations of difference. Young refugees report incidents of feeling ‘socially isolated, disconnected, and lonely as a result of experiences of exclusion, rejection and mistrust’ (MYAN, 2016, p. 20).

The Gangs

Public perception of ethnic youth gangs has been widely challenged and there has been considerable debate around whether youth gangs are formed on the basis of ethnicity (Harris, 2016). Despite these debates, the image of young refugees as members of ethnic youth gangs and key perpetrators of public violence, has been widely promoted in Australia and it appears to have ‘taken hold in the public imagination’ (Harris, 2013, p. 68). In the Australian context, the notion that young refugees, particularly African-Australian and Pasifika-Australian youth, are the key perpetrators of crime in our cities is debunked by evidence that reveals crime is more likely to be committed by young people who are born in Australia than overseas (Williams, 2014). Statistically, in Australia, Canada and the UK, there is a disproportionate number of young black males on police gang lists (Farnsworth & Wright, 2016; Public Safety Canada, 2016; Williams, 2014). Anti-migration rhetoric continues to point the finger at our young new arrivals, particularly those from African and Pasifika nations (Farnsworth &

Wright, 2016). Many of whom are resettled in suburbs with other African-Australian and Pasifika-Australian refugees and their families.

Before I continue I would like to explain my use of hyphenated identities as I acknowledge concerns about the labelling of refugees (Phillips, 2011). Hyphenated identities are a common practice for young people, used as a cultural marker that acknowledges their family background and heritage. My reading of the stories of young African-Australians in the pages of the local newspaper—*Moonee Valley Leader*—reveals the significance of their African heritage to their negotiations of settlement. The hyphen also enables me to acknowledge that young refugees negotiate their settlement ‘on their own terms, as entitled hybrid subjects’, rather than by merely affiliating themselves with Australia’s cultural values (Harris, 2013, p. 22; see also, Sirin & Fine, 2008; Noble & Tabar, 2002). Media reporting of these young people—‘African youths’ (Silvester, 2013) or ‘African teens’ (Buttler, Argoon & White, 2016)—was also inadequate and adopting the hyphenated identity enabled me to acknowledge the complex nature of their negotiations towards settlement.

The Flemington Estate

The inner-city suburb of Flemington is a socially and culturally diverse suburb with a population of around 8000. Refugees and immigrants have been arriving in Flemington since the 1950s. More than 40% of Flemington residents speak a language other than English at home (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011). The suburb sits about 4 kilometres north of Melbourne’s central business district. Flemington is now home to many professionals and affluent middle class residents who live in high density housing, in detached single fronted homes, terrace houses and semi-detached houses that have been increasingly gentrified over the past 15 years.

Down the hill from this increasingly valuable real-estate live thousands of residents in four high-rise towers and ‘walk-up’ flats that form the Flemington Estate. Many former refugees live in the twenty-storey towers that were built to house the influx of immigrants and refugees in the post-World War II period (Flemington Heritage, 2017). While some residents on the Estate are longer-term Australian residents, many are newly arrived refugees. In earlier times, immigrants and refugees tended to remain for a short period of time on the Flemington Estate before being assisted to settle in Melbourne’s outer suburbs, with the promise of larger homes and gardens. Since the turn of the century, this has changed. Many families now choose to stay on the Estate, close to schools, work opportunities and the city. The Flemington Estate is the largest Victorian public housing estate housing about 2000 people (Museums Victoria, 2017). When newspapers report on youth from Flemington, it is widely understood that they are referring to the Flemington Estate and not the broader Flemington community. As Simons (2008) reflects:

The truth is that my suburb is divided, my part of Flemington is considered to be part of ‘Flemington’ or ‘Flemington Hill’ and is in most measurable ways, fortunate and above average ... then there is the bottom of the hill ... down there, life is much more public. There are no backyards, no private places to hang out.

The stigma of living on public housing estates around Australia is widely acknowledged. While suburbs may not have ‘the hill’ that defines the Flemington boundaries, the divide between private residents and those who live on public housing estates is clearly evident (Arthurson, 2010).

The arrival of African refugees in the 1990s added another demand on Flemington’s capacity to support refugees from diverse cultural heritage and religious practices, unfamiliar to many Australians. Their resettlement has been further impacted by ‘the politicisation of

refugee issues in Australia and the tenor of the current public debate, particularly with regard to the issue of boat arrivals' (RCOA, 2012, p. 5). The influx of young refugees from African nations has presented new challenges for this inner-city community:

Over the past few years, refugees from African countries such as Sudan (and the new nation of South Sudan), Somalia, Eritrea and Ethiopia have become a common sight in areas such as Footscray, Sunshine, Flemington and St Albans. What you've got is a large number of youth [who] are disengaged from their families, from the broader community, some of them have probably dropped out of school, they're having trouble getting employment, and so they're hanging around in large groups ... not all of them in groups are causing problems. ... The concern is that we've got an over-representation of people of African descent and also [Pacific] islander descent in some of the street offences that are occurring (Oakes, 2012a).

Support Offered to the Young

Despite the challenges of supporting the settlement of young refugees from African nations, the Flemington community and local organisations have worked towards creating an environment of support. My investigation began with a local newspaper—*Moonee Valley Leader*—which revealed a community committed to supporting the resettlement and social incorporation of young refugees. Multiple education programs that were designed to assist young refugees with their homework and English were advertised. Local youth workers were appointed to the Estate to provide additional support. Sporting opportunities were plentiful with sporting bodies inviting these young people to join in. However, there was growing evidence that members of the community felt uncomfortable by the presence of African-Australian youth in their suburb. As Simons (2008) reminds us, this is a suburb divided by whether you live up or down the hill.

The Haile-Michael Case

A high profile civil case known as the Haile-Michael case highlights the challenges facing this inner-city community. In 2010, six young African-Australian refugees from Flemington and nearby suburbs took legal action against the Victorian Police, claiming they were treated differently to non-Africans and targeted ‘on the basis of race or ethnicity, rather than a legitimate policing reason’ (Chadwick, 2013). The case brought to the fore the regular discrimination, racial comments, racial profiling, and incidents of assault against African-Australian youth and men living in Flemington and nearby. African-Australian youth reported being stopped up to six times a day and being questioned and taunted with racial comments. They also reported incidents of assault by police officers that led to formal complaints being lodged against the Police Force (Dolic, 2011; Haile-Michael & Issa, 2015). In the four year period between 2005 and 2009, the Flemington Kensington Community Legal Service (FKCLC) reported receiving 50 formal complaints against police including unlawful searches, unjustified use of capsicum spray and assaults from police. While many complaints were not upheld, in 2010 six young African-Australian men, supported by the FKCLC, lodged a civil case against the Victoria Police that is now widely known as the Haile-Michael case (Dolic, 2011; Haile-Michael & Issa, 2015). The Haile-Michael case was characterised as an ‘explosive compensation claim against Victoria Police and the state’ (Milovanovic, 2010).

The Victoria Police Force formally denied any engagement in discrimination or racial profiling but the case was settled out of court in 2013, in what was described as a ‘landmark’ agreement. The settlement did not apportion blame to the Victorian Police but they agreed to publicly review their training practices and relationships between officers and young people from diverse cultures. In settling the case, the question of whether these young men were

stopped 'because they were black or because they young' was not definitively answered (Silvester, 2013). Gaining the Victorian Police Force's agreement to review its training for officers and to examine the way they engaged with diverse cultural communities was seen as a positive outcome for all. Yet the case has had a 'deep and lasting impact' (Green, 2013) on the young refugees from the Flemington Estate. I now turn to consider the media's role in this.

Social Exclusion of Youth: Relational, Socio-political and Spatial

Social exclusion is premised on the idea that individuals are unable to exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens. While social exclusion has been most commonly discussed in relation to poverty, education and employment opportunities, recent research (see below) suggests the impact of multiculturalism and the incorporation of diverse cultures should be included. Fangen (2010) for example, highlights the multi-dimensional nature of social exclusion for young immigrants by adding 'spatial', 'relational' and 'socio-political' to educational and labour market exclusion. This is a helpful conception here because for the young refugees from the Flemington Estate, spatial exclusion is the stigma of living on the Estate. Similarly, relational exclusion was demonstrated by the Haile-Michael legal case. And thirdly, socio-political exclusion has been significantly influenced by global and national politicisation of refugees and youth gangs. We are reminded too that social exclusion is not just about unfortunate events that befall an individual, but are a fluid process that is 'historically situated in relation to circulating narratives of borders and security' (Dillabough, McLeod & Oliver, 2015, p. 660). Phillips' assertion that African-Australians are 'generally understood to be refugees' (2011, p. 64) is also relevant here as there is a presumption that these African-Australian and Pasifika-Australian youth are refugees or asylum seekers, with little regard for their immigration or citizenship status.

At this time and place in our history, the globalised nature of refugee movement and resettlement, border anxiety and risk contribute to social exclusion. Negotiations of difference are challenging for young refugees due to their life stage and histories. There is a strong expectation that they will actively engage in activities designed to assist them to achieve a sense of belonging and social inclusion. Our expectations are entrenched in our own societal values and we struggle when young people, refugees or Australian born, don't engage or appear to disregard our efforts, as Brendan Nelson, a prominent Australian politician declared 'basically if people don't want to support and accept and adopt and teach Australian values, then they should clear off' (The Age, 2005). Responding to Australia's cultural expectations can be challenging for young people who come from a 'from a culture of war and violence' and have 'seen worse things in their short lives than many of us will ever see' (Twentyman, 2011). Dillabough, McLeod & Oliver (2015) make a valuable contribution to this discussion by acknowledging the significance of time and place—enabling us to recognise the complex backgrounds of African-Australian refugees—in understanding the social exclusion of young refugees.

For many young refugees the stigma of living in Australia's public housing has been embellished by media reporting of Estates as the sites of crime and inter-ethnic conflict (Arthurson, 2010). In contemporary times debates about the reputation of Housing Commission Estates are increasingly complicated by the negative perceptions of cultural and racial difference discussed earlier. Community perceptions and public rhetoric have created links between the problems of youth gangs and the young refugees who live there. Experiences of social exclusion can be very different at the local and national level for these young refugees and any exploration of media impact 'must reach beyond the borders of the local community' (Fangen, 2010, p. 153). While social incorporation of young refugees in

local neighbourhoods appears well advanced, negative perceptions at a national level have been largely influenced by the politicisation of Australia's immigration programs and the global backlash against refugees.

Melbourne's Moomba Festival

Moomba is Australia's largest free community festival and is culturally significant as it has been held in Melbourne on the Labour Day public holiday weekend in March, for the past 60 years. Moomba regularly attracts over a million people into the city over the four days of the festival. Moomba is a significant community event and celebrates Australia's laid back lifestyle and people coming together to have fun. The Moomba community festival epitomises the spirit of Australian family values and sense of fun. In 2016 those Australian values of family time and community activities were confronted by the behaviour of some young people who took their aggression to Melbourne streets that were crowded with families:

Hundreds of hooligans, of African, Pacific Islander and other backgrounds, swarmed into the city on Saturday evening, intent on wreaking havoc ... people have been hurt and traumatised, after businesses have been wantonly damaged (The Age, 2016).

The Victorian Police were widely criticised for their response to the violent behaviours of young people at Moomba in 2016 and the media had a field day.

Media Reporting

Criticism of the Victorian Police actions during the Moomba ‘riots’ was unrestrained and Melbourne’s newspapers³ made persistent reference to the Haile-Michael legal case. The inference from the reports were that police responses to the violence were constrained by the threat that refugees would claim racial profiling or discrimination if they were apprehended.

Herald Sun reporters suggested that:

Questions have emerged about police failing to confront African teens for fear of racism complaints ... Police Association leader Ron Iddles said there was reluctance in some members to stop young Africans in the street because they could be subjected to racism complaints ... The force three years ago settled a civil action brought by African youths from the Flemington area (Buttler, Argoon & White, 2016).

Following this line of reporting, *The Age* claimed that:

Nothing about the handling of these riots gives us confidence that senior police are on top of the problem, that they understand the depth of gang activity and mobilisation and Melbourne, and that they can or will deploy timely or adequate response tactics ... Why is this? We suspect it is because Victoria police have swung too far in the direction of appeasement, especially after the force was sued over racial profiling in the Flemington and North Melbourne areas (The Age, 2016).

Further reports fed into the debate, suggesting that:

Saturday’s violence has fuelled debate about Victoria Police’s policy on racial profiling introduced last year, after the force settled a legal case with two [six]

³ Melbourne’s two major newspapers are the *Herald Sun*, a tabloid publication and *The Age*, which is a more respectable broadsheet.

African men who had been repeatedly discriminated against in Flemington and North Melbourne (Houston, Mills & Dow, 2016).

The media reporting of the allegedly young African and Pasifika perpetrators, the Haile-Michael case and the Flemington Estate troubled me. My readings of the riots suggested that the key perpetrators were from a well-known Melbourne street gang, the Apex gang. The Apex gang are located in Dandenong North, a suburb on Melbourne south-eastern fringe, almost 40 kilometres from the Flemington Estate (Two Apex gang members, 2017). The attacks on the Victorian Police Force's response were particularly concerning and prompted me to explore further, as the reporters alluded to a relationship between the alleged reluctance of police to intervene and young refugees from the Flemington Estate.

Connecting Moomba, Flemington, Police and the Haile-Michael Case

References to the Haile-Michael case and the Flemington Estate were evident in many of the articles reporting on the Moomba riots. At no stage though was there a suggestion that young refugees from the Flemington Estate were directly involved. Yet, the links were inferred and an involvement alluded to. So what, if any, are the impacts for the young, refugees who live on the Flemington Estate. As already outlined, young African-Australian refugees in the Flemington area have experienced very high levels of discrimination and racial profiling by the police since the 1990s. The ongoing connection and reference to the Haile-Michael case in newspaper reporting suggests enduring prejudice towards African-Australian youth.

I felt compelled to investigate this further, particularly as I live in Flemington. I decided to closely read newspaper reports from 2010-2016 to see if I was reading too much into it all. My justification for this time period is that the Haile-Michael case was lodged in 2010 and the Moomba riots occurred in 2016. My aim was to consider how the media reporting of the Haile-Michael case may have contributed to ongoing social exclusion for

African-Australian youth from the Flemington Estate. The Haile-Michael case was a suitable starting point as it enabled a demonstration of the impact of a prejudicial media discourse within one suburb. Further investigation is clearly needed but I am reporting here about my preliminary exploration.

My exploration into this issue took me further into the media's role, so I decided to more systematically read newspaper articles that referenced the Haile-Michael case and youth from the Flemington Estate. Newspaper reports in Melbourne's two daily newspapers, *The Age* with a daily distribution of 473,000 and the *Herald Sun*, with a distribution of 850,000 were examined. For the period 2010-2016, 31 articles that referenced 'African', 'youth' and 'Flemington', were identified in *The Age*, and 17 Articles in the *Herald Sun*. Reference to the inappropriate or violent behaviours of young African-Australian men was made in over 40% of these articles and incidents of police discrimination and racial profiling were discussed in just under 40%.

From 2010-2016 references to the Haile-Michael case and the Flemington Estate were made in fourteen articles. A civil case against the police in any jurisdiction would mean the case was widely reported:

Six young Africans have launched an explosive compensation claim against Victoria Police and the state in a case that will for the first time examine whether police engage in racial profiling and whether the practice is racially discriminatory (Milovanovic, 2010).

The language used by Milovanovic was typical of general newspaper reporting about the Haile-Michael case, suggesting that these young men were brave enough to have the 'courage to buck the system' (Silvester, 2013). There were also suggestions that the case wasted considerable police time and money 'the force three years ago settled a civil action brought

by African youths from the Flemington area, which consumed five years and \$3 million' (Buttler, Argoon & White, 2016). Supported by the FKCLC, the young men sought police officers being disciplined and compensation. But they were also determined to influence the Victorian Police to change their practices towards people from diverse cultural backgrounds (Milovanovic, 2010). As the case moved slowly through the legal system, there were few references to the Haile-Michael case, although the tension between African-Australian youth and the Victoria Police continued to be reported, often linking to the Flemington Estate. Settlement in 2013 prompted further reporting of that case, and again, connection with the Flemington Estate:

The area around Flemington has been bedevilled for years by hostility between police and youths whose families have emigrated from countries such as Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia, who claim they are stopped and searched by police simply because of their skin colour (Oakes, 2012b).

Perpetuating Social Exclusion for Young Refugees

How we understand youth exclusion in contemporary times is a troubling question taken up by Dillabough, McLeod and Oliver (2015, p. 660) who ask:

How might we conceptualise the varied, yet sometimes overlapping, dimensions of youth and exclusion in the city, and in particular, the convergences of institutionalised fear and threats thought to be posed by young people who are navigating the fringes of education and social life? How are different accounts of moral anxiety about such young people manifested in the public record, including oral histories and young people's own representations of exclusion in different contexts across time?

To understand the media's contribution to the multi-layered dimensions of youth exclusion I have deconstructed the layers of reporting.

Reports on youth violence across Melbourne's suburbs are prevalent in our newspapers, often with sensationalised headlines—*Secret Victoria Police crime maps show where in Melbourne youth gangs terrorise* (White, 2016) and *Youth crime on rise in most parts of Melbourne, new stats show* (Byrne, 2017). Reporting on the suburban locations of alleged youth gangs is common place. Reference to the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of young gang members is unmistakeable (Oakes, 2012b; Silvester, 2016; Twentyman, 2016; White, 2016). Yet, the statistics reveal a different picture of Melbourne's youth crime. While there has been an increase in some specific crimes—number of offences against the person, drug offences and justice procedures—the overall number of incidents for young people have decreased (Millsteed & Sutherland, 2016). As discussed earlier, the young—10-18 year-old—perpetrators of home invasions, car thefts and aggravated robberies are more likely to have been born in Australia than overseas (Farnsworth & Wright, 2016). If we dig a little deeper, the evidence shows that a small number of offenders are responsible for 'over a fifth of all criminal incidents' (Crime Statistics Agency, 2016).

Over the past two years, media reporting has perpetuated public perception that we are experiencing an upsurge in youth crime rates, an escalation of the level of violence and genuine threats to families and public safety. It would be remiss here not to acknowledge an additional layer of reporting that is compounding public perception of young people, although a full exploration of this reporting will not be undertaken for this article. Reports that Victoria's youth justice system is in chaos, that youth detention centres are inadequate, and there has been an increase in the 'boldness, the sense of impunity' displayed by young offenders have been reported alongside, and often merged, with reports on youth crime and Melbourne's youth gangs (McKenzie, Tomazin & Baker, 2017). It is not surprising that the public has developed a negative perception of youth gangs. Some have even decided to take

matters into their own hands to protect 'old-school Aussie values' and vigilante-style groups now run patrols to keep our streets safe (Vedelago & Houston, 2016). Yet, the media reporting of this violence has perpetuated a connection between Melbourne's youth violence and young African-Australian and Pasifika-Australians from the Flemington Estate that is not substantiated.

Young residents of the Flemington Estate already live with the reputation and stigma of living on an Australian public housing estate. While all residents are affected by this, young refugees who have come from 'broken countries or different hardships' can be particularly stigmatised (Twentyman, 2016). While an examination of a local newspaper revealed an environment of support and commitment to aiding the settlement of these young people, an exploration of media reporting to the wider Melbourne public revealed a prejudice against these young refugees. In addition to the stereotypes of being a young male African-Australian living on the Flemington Estate these young people have been burdened with the additional reporting of the Haile-Michael case. An examination of newspaper reporting from 2010-2016 reveals many examples of the propagation of the Haile-Michael case, its connection to the Flemington Estate, and by association, the young African-Australians who live there. Newspaper reporting of the 2016 Moomba Riots was particularly troubling. While the aim of media reporting of the Moomba riots may have been designed to condemn the inactions of the Victorian Police Force, 'there was a failure to dissuade or contain threats of violence and a spectacular failure to act with the full force of the law' (The Age, 2016), the continual reference to the Haile-Michael case and the Flemington Estate has created new prejudice for these young African-Australians. It is here perhaps, that the 'deep and lasting impact' of the case alluded to by Green (2013) is most pertinent.

It is difficult to overlook how the media consistently links the Flemington Estate and the Haile-Michael legal case to reports of Melbourne's youth crime. Exclusion for these young African-Australians is already affected by international politicisation and widespread fear. Perpetuating the connection between the legal case, the Estate and Australia's prejudice against young male refugees has added another complex dimension to public perception of these young people. Fangen's (2010) framework of spatial, relational and socio-political exclusion enables us to examine the impact of these. The spatial exclusion of these young African-Australians is continually reinforced by the constant reminder of their location at the base of the Flemington hill, on the Estate - the less fortunate location. The relational exclusion of being associated with 'that' legal case, where young, African-Australian refugees from Flemington and surrounding areas had the courage to successfully take on the system, adds an additional layer of exclusion. The socio-political exclusion is starkly portrayed in Australia – by opportunistic politicians. The continual linking of these young refugees to gang violence perpetuates another layer of socio-political exclusion that is largely unsubstantiated. In fact, the police investigations into the Moomba Riots ultimately revealed that the violent activity was not race related but motivated by a mob mentality and 'honour' and 'bravado'; attitudes that have a long association with 'gangs' regardless of their ethnicity in many western nations (The Age, 2016).

Conclusion

The aim of this article was to consider the challenges of social exclusion that confront young refugees negotiating their way to settlement in Australia. Undertaking an examination of the media reporting of a landmark legal case has revealed sensationalist and prejudicial reporting and damaging links to young African-Australians from the Flemington Estate. The article demonstrates how media discourse has perpetuated social exclusion for young,

African-Australian refugees in one location. Further investigation of the ‘overlapping dimension’ of youth exclusion, as discussed by Dillabough, McLeod and Oliver (2015, p. 659) is warranted, but the challenges confronting young male refugees in negotiating discrimination and exclusion at this time and place in history is evident.

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