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"Citizenship from below" among "non-white" minorities in Australia: Intergroup relations in a northern suburb of Adelaide

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Abstract

The recent scholarship on citizenship has highlighted the significance of horizontal citizenship, which states how an individual's eligibility for membership is determined by a social system formed by equal peers and the development of a community that shares a citizen's sense of belonging. However, researchers have paid scant attention to the sense of citizenship evinced by marginalised ethnic minorities. The present investigation examines citizenship in Australia by exploring intergroup relations. It attempts to determine the feeling of belonging that connects the Indigenous people of Australia to other "non-white" groups considered "un-Australian" by the mainstream society. A qualitative case study is conducted on Indigenous people as well as African and Vietnamese refugees and their descendants residing in a northern suburb of Adelaide. The findings demonstrate the existence of a vague sense of belonging triggered by shared, cross-group feelings of being non-white and common experiences of colonialism, racism, and derogation, along with the sense of pride and strength emanating from overcoming challenging circumstances and other adversities. Such a sense of belonging can transcend the differences between collective identities, facilitate multiculturalism, and offer an alternative to the extant forms of vertical citizenship that are state-imposed upon minorities whose national affiliation is frequently questioned.

KEYWORDS: citizenship, sense of belonging, "non-white" minorities, intergroup relations, Australia

Introduction

The question of who belongs to a nation has become an issue throughout the world as the cultural diversity of nations intensifies with an influx of migrants and refugees. Questions of national belonging can be interpreted as questions of citizenship. According to Lazar (2013), citizenship is not only membership in a community as defined by Marshall (1983), but also a means of claiming membership, and commenting on the quality of that membership. Furthermore, citizenship is also concerned with the problem of how human beings live with others. This article examines the sense of belonging as citizens that connects Indigenous people and "non-white" groups in Australia who are considered "un-Australian" by a predominantly white nation, focusing on these groups' lived experiences and everyday intergroup relations.

Recent scholarship on citizenship in anthropology and adjacent fields has shown that legal terms, as well as emotional or empirical terms, determine the inclusion or exclusion of people from national membership (Conlon, 2011; Staeheli et al., 2012; Sullivan, 2017). Staeheli et al. (2012) argue that legal norms and boundaries of citizenship are continuously challenged and reinterpreted by everyday practice, because *citizenship* as a legal status and *citizenship* as an everyday experience are intertwined. Sullivan (2017) shows that citizenship as a formal and informal process of learned and experienced practice can be classified into three categories: 1) exclusive citizenship; 2) sub-citizenship; 3) subordinate citizenship.

Citizenship can be further categorised as vertical or horizontal citizenship, depending on the relationship between the state and individuals. The former determines eligibility for membership according to the its criteria while the latter is determined by citizens of equal social relations (Kabeer, 2005; Paz, 2019). Previous studies show that horizontal citizenship plays an important role in the full development of a citizen's sense of belonging. Horizontal citizenship can involve solidarity among those who are marginalised or subjugated within a nation. In such cases, solidarity can range from a narrow form, immediate circles of family, kin, lineage or neighbourhood, to a wide form by transcending difference through shared identities and experiences of oppression (Wheeler, 2005).

In Australia, where social mobility is constant, national membership is frequently discussed in academic and national discourses. The criteria for citizenship has long been situated in "whiteness" and "Britishness", defined by skin colour, language, religion and Western culture and values (Elder, 2007; Hage, 1998; Vasta, 1998). According to Hage, an Arab-Australian anthropologist, whiteness is an ideal for bearing Western civilisation. Whiteness is accumulated by those who yearn to be white, although no one is fully

white. Thus, whiteness itself is a fantasy position and a field for accumulating whiteness (Hage, 1998, p. 58). In this sense, Australian citizenship is vertical, because one's Australian-ness or whiteness is determined by culturally dominant groups who see themselves as possessing whiteness and are thus authorised to manage the national space.

While whiteness is not a homogeneous entity, it was constructed concurrently with "blackness", which was originally assigned to Indigenous people, and since the early 2000s, to African refugees who have been accepted in Australia under humanitarian programmes. The category of blackness was assigned negative connotations, such as primitiveness, laziness, and violence, and was considered deviant from Western norms. Furthermore, considering that restrictive immigration laws targeted non-white groups until the early 1970s, it may be fair to say that whiteness may have been formed not only in opposition to blackness but also in opposition to "non-whiteness". Since Asia was a site of anxiety for Australia due to past conflicts, Asians, in particular, were considered non-white and were not considered Australian (Elder, 2007, p. 12).

There are many studies on the ways in which "black" or non-white citizenry (including Indigenous people, migrants and refugees) construct their sense of belonging as citizens in relation to the Australia state. Indigenous people were denied full membership of Australian society before the 1960s (Peterson & Sanders, 1998, p. 1) and they have occasionally redefined blackness and its negative connotations to invoke positive meanings and a sense of belonging, such as pride and strength, in Aboriginal solidarity (Green, 1970; Schwab, 1991). Some Aboriginal people have consciously performed blackness in everyday practice as a sign of resistance to white authority (Cowlishaw, 1988).

Hage (2002) contends that the belonging-related issues of non-white newcomers to Australia, including refugees and migrants, do not pertain to doubts about their access to citizenship as a right; rather, they involve the modalities of retrieving such a right. Put differently, non-white migrants desire to belong to their place of citizenship with dignity. The state does pose certain difficulties of inequality and discrimination for such newcomers. However, according to Hage (ibid.), the problems of participation and belonging may also be exacerbated by intrinsic elements within non-white migrants who may consider themselves unworthy as new citizens.

Such a view may be applicable to refugees who arrived in Australia relatively recently and are more physically visible within the populace. African refugees, for example, tend to view their blackness as a burden that prevents them from being full citizens and participants in society (Majavu, 2017; Mapedzahama & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017). In contrast, most Vietnamese refugees, who have lived in Australia for four decades, have accumu-

lated but rejected a sense of belonging premised on whiteness and have chosen to create their own identity based on multicultural discourse (Nunn, 2017).

The sense of citizenship amongst marginalised ethnic minorities has received little attention. Rather—as some have argued—Indigenous people and ethnic groups composed of migrants and refugees are competitive over identity politics under multiculturalism, which prevents them from forming a cross-group sense of belonging (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2008; Moreton-Robinson, 2003). While one study indicates that Indigenous people and new migrants and refugees in a disadvantaged urban area are forming identities along lines of pride and shame, the study does not thoroughly examine how these groups develop and experience these identities in relation to a sense of legal citizenship (Greenop & Memmott, 2013). To address the gap, this article examines how African and Vietnamese refugees and descendants and Indigenous people experience citizenship within a shared social space. This article also highlights a growing sense of belonging based on shared experiences of social exclusion, namely, a sense of horizontal citizenship, with a case study of a northern suburb in Adelaide where the population of Indigenous people and non-white groups is relatively concentrated.

Although the Indigenous, African, and Vietnamese populations only account for 3.5%, 0.2%, and 1.5%, respectively, of the total population in Adelaide's northern suburb, they are the most visible ethnic minorities, and are thus more likely to experience social disadvantage in a predominately white community. Indigenous people gained citizenship in the 1960s, but they still suffer from greater economic disparities compared to non-Indigenous populations. Their unemployment rate was approximately 15% in South Australia, which is three times higher than that of non-Indigenous people (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011).

Vietnamese and African descendants of refugees were accepted by the Australian government on humanitarian grounds in the 1970s and 2000s, respectively. Although most refugees acquired citizenship several years after arrival, their descendants remain marginalised socioeconomically. The unemployment rate among South Australians from North Africa (including Sudan) was 16% in 2013, whereas the overall unemployment rate was 7.1% (Mwalusi, 2013). Likewise, the unemployment rate among Australians born in Vietnam was 9.1% in 2014, whereas the overall unemployment rate was 6% (Department of Employment, 2014).

Methodology

The present study's findings were attained through five months of intermittent fieldwork conducted between 2013 and 2018 in the northern suburb of Adelaide in Australia. This investigation probed intergroup relations between the Indigenous people of Australia and the country's African and Vietnamese refugees and descendants. Data collected through a previous 12-month field study on identity construction among Indigenous people conducted between 2008 and 2010 in the same geographic area in Adelaide were used as a supplemental resource informing the outcomes of the current study.

The author of this article interviewed 25 people during the course of the field investigations for the current study: 10 Indigenous Australians, 10 African, and two Vietnamese individuals; and three social workers, two Anglo-Australian and one Chinese-Australian. The 22 individual respondents were asked to describe the sense of belonging they felt as Australians on the basis of their everyday experiences; the three social workers were queried about their experiences with the ethnic minorities in their community. After a fundamental relationship was built with the participants through several prior visits and preliminary chats over tea, the interviews were finally conducted at the homes of the respondents or at community centres where some of the informants gathered on occasions.

Furthermore, despite being intermittently conducted, the longitudinal fieldwork of the current investigation enabled the author to apprehend the changes in the attitudes and ideas of the respondents that occurred over time with regard to the topic of the research and thus yielded more information that could be ascertained by short-term field studies. Unstructured conversations were also undertaken in addition to the structured interviews as some of the participants preferred to narrate their experiences from their own perspectives. The researcher believed that more objectivity could be added to the data by allowing participants to relate their personal accounts in their preferred manner.

The Indigenous participants were recruited through personal networks, taking advantage of the relationships and rapport the author of this article had been able to build during the course of a previous investigation on identity negotiation among urban Aboriginal people in multicultural Australia. The snowball sampling method was used, initiating inquiries through personal contacts in the Aboriginal community, and organisations such as an Aboriginal community college. Indigenous people with some level of interaction with African and Vietnamese refugees were encouraged to participate. Consequently, two Vietnamese respondents engaged in this study were spouses of two Indigenous participants.

The participating African refugees were initially contacted and subsequently recruited via African community organisations in Adelaide (such as the South Sudanese Community Association of Australia, South Australia branch), organisations that assist refugees (e.g., the Migrant Resource Centre of Australia), and churches. As with the Indigenous respondents, the snowball sampling method was also used to expand the complement of participants for this study.

The present investigation is somewhat limited by the inadequate representation of Vietnamese refugees and their descendants due to the small number of participants. This insufficiency is mitigated to a certain extent through references to life stories described in autobiographies and personal histories reported by individuals belonging to this ethnic group. Also, the representation of Sudanese informants in this study was limited to participants who spoke English and most of the Sudanese respondents of this study were university graduates. Thus, the schooling level of the Sudanese respondents for this study was higher than the average educational qualifications earned by people of African origin in Australia. Therefore, the findings of the current investigation cannot be generalised to the characteristic populations of these two groups.

During the fieldwork, the author complied primarily with the Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. In this article, participants are referred to by pseudonyms.

Sense of belonging amongst Indigenous and non-white groups

Since colonisation, Indigenous people and non-whites migrants have been regarded as not belonging to the nation. This attitude intensified alongside a rise of racism and nationalism in Australia (Hollinsworth, 1988). The mainstream media played a significant role in reinforcing the perception of "unbelonging" by describing these groups as deviant. Given that the media continues to associate Indigenous and non-white youth with gang activity ("Death-chase," 2007; "Apex gang," 2018; Teo, 2000), Indigenous people, Sudanese refugees and Vietnamese refugees are likely to experience social exclusion even today, and thus lack a sense of belonging as Australians.

The Sudanese youth has experienced intensified police surveillance and public racism ever since the media increased reporting on a Sudanese gang called the *Apex Gang* (Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, 2008). A young Sudanese Christian woman who is currently a university student spoke about how it feels to be an

Australian in light of the ill and unjust treatment towards her Sudanese relatives and friends by the Australian police and court system:

> Indigenous people and any black people, African or wherever you are from, if you are black, it is crazy here … Even though we become citizens, we don't actually think that we can actually live really like our own country. We appreciate we are living here, and yes we are citizens, but we don't feel it's our country. I can never say … I know that I'm an Australian citizen, but I can't say that I'm an Australian-Australian, I can't because I don't feel like that. (Interview, September 18, 2015)

Although this woman has accumulated whiteness by speaking English and being Christian, she is constantly reminded by the events around her that she will never meet the criteria for full citizenship and will remain a "hyphenated Australian".

In contrast, a Sudanese man who works in administration for a government organisation in Adelaide firmly rejects a black identity and refuses to identify himself by race:

> Being a professional, I don't even think … don't need for me to refer myself according to race because there is no need for race. I'm a human, I'm not a coloured person. Though I know my colour is black, there is no need to refer myself as a black because I'm a human from Africa, South Sudan … I don't turn to refer people with their race because I don't see how it's relevant. (Interview, September 16, 2015)

Some Vietnamese-Australians of refugee descent lack a sense of belonging as Australians. However, many Vietnamese, particularly those of the "1.5" and second generation, engage in politics of belonging within both Vietnamese and Australian spheres; they reject a white sense of belonging for reasons of discrimination. There are even cases of Vietnamese-Australians affirming the superiority of Vietnamese-ness within certain aspects of culture. Furthermore, since the boundary between Vietnamese and Australian is less clear for them, while they reproduced the cultural categories naturalised in the discourse of multiculturalism, they also traversed or refused their borders and instead constituted their own identities, based neither on whiteness nor conventional notions of multiculturalism (Nunn, 2017; Vo, 2014).

Identity negotiations between Indigenous and Australian citizens were observed in "mixed-blood" Indigenous youth (Kurita, 2015), but a lack of Australian belonging was noted amongst Indigenous people overall. An Indigenous woman, who grew up in Abo-

riginal community and now works as a system administrator, describes her sense of unbelonging and what it means for her to be Aboriginal in Australia:

> I feel like a second-class citizen of my own country. And it doesn't make me feel any less of a person. It makes me wanna be stronger in who I am because of the way politics have ruined our culture. (Interview, September 5, 2008)

Another Indigenous woman, who works for an organisation that provides services to Indigenous people with alcohol and drug-related problems, linked being black to her sense of belonging as an Aboriginal person:

> I feel strength and I have a feeling of belonging. It's like I relate to the culture and the people in the Aboriginal community, and it gives me strength and gives me a feeling of knowing, belonging, all those things again. (Interview, March 24, 2018)

Although these women attribute their lack of belonging in Australia to racism and poverty, it is also important to not overlook their reinterpretation of blackness as a symbol of strength rooted in Aboriginal solidarity.

It is clear from these findings that while belonging premised on whiteness or Britishness has limited Indigenous and non-white people's sense of belonging as Australian, not all accepted such criteria of belonging or blackness or non-whiteness as a deviation from an Australian-ness norm, as it were. Rather, some people expressed resistance, distance or alternatively forged their own sense of belonging by reinterpreting the concept of normal within an existing vertical citizenship.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that while Indigenous people actively constructed and asserted their collective black identity to resist the power of the state, people of refugee descent constituted their identity at an individual level. Their contrasting responses can be attributed to political reasons; refugees, who are expected to appreciate Australian acceptance and assistance, are hesitant to express otherwise in order to avoid being perceived by mainstream society as problematic.

Denial of multiculturalism by Indigenous people

As indicated earlier, some studies on inter-ethnic relations in Australia argue that Indigenous people and ethnic groups have critical attitudes towards one another due to a lack of knowledge about the other's background. A case study in Perth, for example, indicated that some Indigenous people perceived the arrival of black Africans as a further formal dispossession, because they believed that 'these people are getting special treat-

ment and us poor original owners of the land are getting nothing' (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2008, p. 45). Similar misunderstandings were also found in Adelaide. A social worker who had served both Indigenous and Sudanese clients explained that Indigenous people viewed the Sudanese as 'being given free house and cars from the government,' whereas some Sudanese people had negative perceptions of Indigenous people, saying: 'Why don't they go and get their jobs? There is plenty of jobs' (Interview, September 16, 2016).

It is significant to note that some Indigenous people lament the "inferior" status of Indigenous people to migrants and refugees within multiculturalism's ethnic stratification. For instance, Daniel, an Indigenous community worker in his seventies attributed the disadvantaged situation of Aboriginal youth to their lack of confidence as well as prejudice towards Indigenous people by mainstream society. Daniel went on to compare the status of Aboriginal groups to other ethnic groups in his suburb:

> At Foodland, I see Greek ladies, white ladies serving in the same place. I go to Hungry Jacks. I see Africans, very seldom I see Asian people. But I never see Aborigines. Never. Because they don't trust Aborigines. Or Aborigines don't want to work alongside whitefellas. See the Africans and Indians. They can assimilate because they got confidence. They come from a country in one sense where no discrimination. Because they never suffered the consequences back home … When they live in their own community, they are strong. Strong mind, strong will. They bring that with them. But when you've been constantly nearly 200 years of oppression, you lose your confidence. (Interview, March 26, 2018)

Another Indigenous woman made similar comments about African refugees who live in her neighbourhood:

> They've got much support from places like Red Cross, they've got immigration department, and get handouts. Yet, the government complains about us. Our handout has stopped. We need housing, health and education services like everybody else. Our culture is lost to multicultural society. (Interview, February 21, 2013)

A local community development officer denied her claims, making it clear that the local council does not assign subsidies for Indigenous people to African people or other ethnic groups. These examples highlight certain misconceptions by Indigenous people towards the African-Australian experience. It also shows that some Indigenous people

perceive themselves outside of a multicultural society, which implies that, for them, the terms of multiculturalism refer only to migrants and refugees.

Awareness of commonalities among "non-white" groups

Commonalities in the experience of suffering and hardship

Fighting occasionally occurs among different racial or ethnic groups in the northern suburb of Adelaide, stemming from further misconceptions. According to a community development officer at a local community centre that provides cross-cultural programmes and congregational space for ethnic minorities, tensions sometimes arise between Aboriginal and African youth within the community, with girls being the main reason behind the tension (Interview, September 24, 2015).

In order to resolve aggression between groups, the local council brought the groups together for cross-cultural understanding. A local football club invited youth from both groups to participate in its programme. The club used the game to teach 'social interaction, respect for people from another community, and what it means to be a part of community' (Interview, March 12, 2017).

The former president of the club, who is Indigenous, emphasised the similarities rather than the differences between the two groups: 'We are two different cultural groups struggling for jobs and stable housing, and looking for [a] positive role model, positive social connection and engage[ment] in the sports' (Interview, March 12, 2017). According to the president, the programme aims to reverse negative perceptions between the two groups and build intercultural relationships. The programme has led to a decrease in fighting and a noticeable improvement in group relations.

Local organisations held cross-cultural programmes aimed to dispel misconceptions between groups, highlighting commonalities between group experiences. For instance, Kelly, an unemployed Indigenous woman in her thirties, complained that after the influx of African refugees, it became difficult for her to get an appointment for her children with an Indigenous healthcare service, because it had been 'taken over' by Africans (Interview February 21, 2013).

Four years later, Kelly's attitude towards African refugees has changed. After separating from her partner, she enrolled in a community service course at an Aboriginal community college. She learned about culturally appropriate ways to serve ethnic and Indigenous communities. Through the course, she spent time with a group of African refugee women. They began cooking together and sharing their experiences. The Indigenous

woman heard the life story of an African woman who fled to Australia from a war-torn country to protect her children. After listening to this woman, Kelly stated, 'Now I feel sorry for them. If I were in the same situation as her, I would do every possible thing to save my children's lives' (Interview, September 11, 2017).

These women bonded over the common social situation they were placed in: they were both socioeconomically disadvantaged and were able to rely on each other. They also bonded over motherhood and their commitment to their children. Recognition of commonality can alleviate misconceptions between people in different groups. Moreover, mutual help through community service can form a new sense of belonging rooted in shared experiences of alienation and exclusion from mainstream society and a will to overcome difficulties.

Commonalities in being classified "deviant"

Members of Indigenous and non-white groups share their public space, interacting with each other at schools, parks, stations, and local shopping centres. Their encounters can lead to friendly relationship as well as hostile ones. John, an Indigenous man in his thirties and a part-time teacher, was constantly reminded of his "difference" by his white colleagues and students. John spoke "Aboriginal English" instead of standard Australian English. He refers to himself as "multicultural", explaining that he had interacted with ethnic groups since childhood. At primary school, he befriended international students from Thailand after helping them as a peer volunteer. In high school, though, some Aboriginal students, including himself, had problems when they tried associating with the Vietnamese. He said the following about his experience:

> When I got into high school, we had a bit of trouble with some Vietnamese, Vietnamese guys. They didn't really like Aboriginal people. So, they didn't really like us. That's why we end up leaving the school just to keep the peace.… My mum told us 'You let them be who they wanna be. If they can't live with multiculturalism, then don't worry about them'. (Interview, February 6, 2008)

John's narrative shows that he and his mother positioned themselves within multiculturalism. His mother utilised a discourse of multiculturalism to persuade her son to distance himself from trouble-making Vietnamese students.

Despite having problems with some of the Vietnamese boys, he met a Vietnamese girl, Kate, from the same suburb and high school, who would later become his wife. Kate also interacted with other ethnic groups, including Indigenous people, since primary

school. She explains that in her multicultural studies class, she was originally placed in a Vietnamese class but was later placed in a *ngarrindjeri* (Aboriginal) class because she was too "naughty". Kate's narrative implies that naughty students, or those with behavioural problems, were placed in Aboriginal classes. Given the media's association of Vietnamese and Aboriginal groups with violence and crime, students from both groups are equally likely to be labelled *deviant* in contrast to the school's expected norms of order and self-control.

Although both groups share the deviant status allocated by mainstream society, Kate explains that she herself believed in negative stereotypes about Aboriginal people before meeting John:

> At first, I knew this. You have the people that like to go and work and learn and that, and you got people that don't just like every culture. But I think a lot of (Aboriginal) people I looked at more as people don't wanna learn to go to school and all that. My view was sort of that they are just the same as everybody else but they probably got more health issues, and with drinking and that. But like everybody else, they got all different good people like John. He is a really good person of his culture. (Interview, June 8, 2010)

As can be noted in the narrative above, some Vietnamese people seemed to internalise the stereotypes about Aboriginal people permeated by mainstream society. What united Kate and John ultimately, though, could be their common experience of being perceived as "problems" or "deviations" from the normalcy expected by mainstream society. The alleviation of Kate's prejudice towards Aboriginal people after personal interaction with John and his family also strengthened their bond.

There are cases of members of deviant groups trying to break away from the deviant status by acting as per "normalcy" that then motivates members of other deviant groups to do the same. For instance, Daniel, the Indigenous elder mentioned earlier, was not initially pleased with one of his daughters marrying Teng, the son of Vietnamese refugees. Daniel's attitude towards Teng and the Vietnamese in general slightly changed after he established a relationship with Teng. Teng's parents spoke little English when they arrived in Australia. Teng dropped out of high school because he had difficulties keeping up with his classes and was racially discriminated against at school. Teng then started working at a local tire shop. With a lot hard work, he became the manager of several tire shops. Teng has many Aboriginal friends, and today he finances an Aboriginal sports team, providing the children with uniforms (Interview, September 7, 2019). Daniel views Teng as a role model for the Aboriginal youth:

> My son-in-law, he comes from Vietnam. He was changing tires. That's all he has done. He is really a good businessman. He owns a tire shop as a manager. I use him as a role model to tell a story to Aboriginal kids. This fella comes from war. And yet, he has got his own house, his own car, his own van, looks after his kids, three little children, he looks after his wife, and he is managing tire place. I've sent all the black fellas there to get tires. He makes lot of money that way, you know [Laughs]. He won two awards for the best salesman. And he came from Vietnam. If he can do it, why can't Aborigines do it? (Interview, 26 March 2018)

Initially, Daniel believed that migrants have a "superior" status over Indigenous people in a multicultural society. He then saw the commonality of dispossession and suffering between Indigenous people and refugees. He respected his son-in-law for overcoming his adverse situation through effort and hard work. By expecting the Aboriginal youth to do the same as Teng, Daniel ascribes the deviant label with normalcy, and even pride.

Commonalities in "culture"

As Indigenous and non-white groups began to intentionally interact more often, some members started seeing commonalities between the cultures. For instance, Karen, a Sudanese woman and unemployed university graduate, befriended an Indigenous woman in her neighbourhood. She noted the following about the commonalities between their cultures:

> I think, more or less, the cultures of the Aboriginal and Sudanese people are almost the same. I mean basically they are Africans. They have similarities in their culture. Their culture is the same. The Aboriginal people love to stay together as family. It's not like the Western culture. When you are 18, you have to move and live alone. We don't have that culture. I think Aboriginal people don't have that culture. So, when they come together, it's like they have commonality. (Interview, September 16, 2015)

Furthermore, Amy, an Indigenous woman in her thirties, explained the commonalities she found between the Aboriginal and Vietnamese cultures after marrying a Vietnamese man from her suburb:

> Like in terms of family, Asian people, Vietnamese people are very family orientated. They get together and eat together. They all come together. I think that's common for Aboriginal people to do as well. With families, extended families. And also having a very rich culture like Vietnamese people have, they know

> their culture, and Aboriginal people, we know our culture. But say white Australians, they don't really have culture. (Interview, September 14, 2018)

Amy's narrative is similar to Karen's in that she saw a focus on family as a commonality that differentiated Aboriginal and Vietnamese cultures from the white Australian cultural norm. In this case, white Australian culture, which is hidden beneath the dialogue due to its normality, is counterposed with the visible and marked non-white cultures. Although these individuals do not explicitly mention a hierarchy in which culture is superior, their pride in cultural and family values is evident. The distinctions displayed by pride likely highlight the strongest bonds between members of these cultural groups.

Alternative sense of belonging among minority groups

Awareness of cross-group commonalities can lead to an alternative identity that is based on neither the whiteness of mainstream society nor the blackness constructed within certain ethnic groups. For example, Majavu, who examined different interpretations of blackness by Africans in Australia and New Zealand, noted that although most of his Sudanese informants lacked a sense of belonging as Australians, one of his informants held the view that 'the real Australians are black' (Majavu, 2017, p. 73). In this case, the colonial history of Australia provided this person with the confidence to claim commonality with the Indigenous people, and thus reinterpreted the meaning of being Australian in a way unlike that embraced by mainstream society.

Likewise, there is a case in which Indigenous people extend blackness to African refugees to include them in their racial category. For instance, a Sudanese man in his twenties, who worked as an intern at a migrant resource centre after university, befriended an Aboriginal colleague at his previous workplace:

> As soon as we met, the colleague called me 'brother.' When I asked him, 'Why do you call me brother? I'm from Sudan, and my parents are Sudanese,' the colleague said, 'Because we are both black,' pointing to my skin. (Interview, August 29, 2014).

Here, a provisional and loose bond formed between the two based on a sense of belonging due to their colour.

Instances in which this vague sense of belonging derived from blackness is put into action in everyday life may also be observed. A Sudanese woman living in a northern suburb where thefts and frauds occur frequently explained that some African and Indigenous residents try to protect each other from crimes and violence perpetrated on

them by local white gangs. For instance, an Indigenous man in a neighbourhood shop helped this female respondent find the criminal and recover her purse when this woman ran into that shop after her purse was stolen on her way home (Interview, September 17, 2018).

This sense of belonging can expand beyond blackness to non-whiteness, as John, an Indigenous man quoted earlier, explains circumstances in which Indigenous people and other ethnic minorities are placed in relation to white people in multicultural Australia:

> There is still white privilege in Australia. If you are not white, you are not right. … They talk about how multicultural Australia is. When it comes down to it, there are still Australians who think they are superior and say we did this, we did everything, we created this, and yours are still different. We are still a very racist country. But that is what it comes down to. I guess segregation…You see a classic example if you look at media in Australia. It's separated or segregated from the community between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal and all the other nationalities as well. They are all excluded. People of different backgrounds accept each other a lot better than the everyday Australian. (Interview, September 14, 2018)

The sense of belonging that binds all non-white groups based on non-whiteness is mediated by a shared experience of colonialism, exclusion and derogation. The bond is a form of horizontal citizenship because it developed voluntarily among those who are marginalised and without the mediation of the state. However, this alternative sense of belonging is not an essentialised collective identity such as "Black", which united coloured people against racism in 1970s Britain (Hall, 1991a, 1991b). Rather, it is based on a temporary sense of solidarity derived from vague perceptions of commonality in "not being white", and emerges in ad hoc situations in which members of non-white groups experience racism and feel alienated from the formal sense of belonging as Australians in daily life. Therefore, the sense of belonging based on horizontal citizenship can serve as an alternative sense of belonging that people can use to supplement the deficiencies of vertical citizenship when they are denied full citizenship based upon whiteness.

Discussion

This article demonstrates that the concept of blackness or non-whiteness as deviant compared to white normalcy continues to affect public perception about Indigenous and

non-white groups. As a result of negative media representation of these groups and the internalisation of prescribed stereotypes by some members of ethnic minorities, the people of these groups experience "othering" on a daily basis and lack a complete sense of belonging as Australians. Meanwhile, it should be noted that some people of Indigenous and non-white backgrounds do not accept the criteria of citizenship imposed on them by mainstream society; they deny the criteria, distance themselves from them or reinterpret them. While challenges to the criteria of vertical citizenship were originally seen at an individual level within ethnic groups, the mind-set has the potential to spread throughout and beyond groups by traversing differences in the legal status and collective identities of identity politics.

Indigenous people and non-white refugees inevitably coexist within a shared suburb and multicultural society because of their disadvantaged socioeconomic situation. Although sharing a social space sparks dialogue and interaction between groups at an individual level, simple coexistence is not enough to alleviate internalised misconceptions or prejudice towards other groups. In this respect, the intervention of local councils and organisations played a significant role by enhancing cross-group interaction, discussion, and cultural exchange.

Cross-group interactions mediated by local organisations provide an opportunity for individuals to review any misconceptions about other groups and notice commonalities rather than differences. Commonalities include experiences of suffering, hardships rooted in colonialism and social exclusion and experiences of being labelled deviant and culturally different. Here, culture is defined by elements in opposition to Western culture, which is unmarked and invisible. The sense of belonging as non-white, both in physical and cultural terms, has grown among these groups. The terms are ways to differentiate themselves from white citizens who are "normal" and thus impose their own cultural values on them.

Out of varying degrees of interaction among these groups, intermarriage, in particular, enables members to gain deep insights into another group's culture and commonalities. As seen in the case of an Aboriginal man who embraced a Vietnamese man as family and saw him as a role model for the Aboriginal youth, shared experiences of suffering and strength can form bonds that create a new sense of belonging not premised on whiteness. The new sense of belonging is an alternative to existing modes of vertical citizenship which impose Anglo–Australian values on ethnic minorities to sustain white privilege.

Horizontal citizenship or "citizenship from below" is not overtly political or aimed at mobilising and uniting minorities for resistance against social exclusion. Nevertheless, the provisional or vague sense of belonging shared by ethnic minorities could potentially develop into a unique community network that promotes mutual help across minority groups, rather than each group claiming separate rights within the identity politics of multiculturalism. In this way, horizontal citizenship amongst non-white groups, while coexisting with vertical citizenship, can compensate for what vertical citizenship fails to offer: an essential sense of belonging here and now for people whose citizenship is frequently questioned.

Conclusion

This study examined the sense of belonging among non-white people, specifically Indigenous people and African and Vietnamese descendants, to blackness or non-whiteness, as it encompasses minority groups in white-dominant Australia. Under vertical citizenship, which is premised on whiteness or Britishness, Indigenous, African and Vietnamese people were perceived as "other". Their blackness or non-whiteness, which is considered deviant, continues to prevent some members of these groups from having a complete sense of belonging as Australian citizens. On the contrary, a shared a social space and programmes by local organisations facilitated interactions between groups that alleviated misconceptions about each other and raised awareness of commonalities across groups, such as experiences of social exclusion, colonialism, and suffering. The study indicated that a growing sense of belonging amongst these groups, based not only on shared experiences of exclusion but also on a sense of strength and pride in challenging adversity, has the potential of developing into horizontal citizenship as an alternative to the existing hierarchical form of citizenship.

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Povzetek

Sodobne študije o državljanstvu poudarjajo pomen horizontalnega državljanstva, ki kaže, da upravičenost posameznika do članstva določata socialni sistem, ki ga tvorijo enakovredni člani in razvoj skupnosti, ki državljanu daje občutek pripadnosti. Zelo malo pozornosti pa je bilo namenjene občutku državljanstva, ki so ga izpostavile marginalizirane etnične manjšine. Ta analiza obravnava avstralsko državljanstvo z raziskovanjem medskupinskih odnosov. Poskuša ugotoviti občutek pripadnosti, ki avtohtono prebivalstvo Avstralije povezuje z drugimi "nebelskimi" skupinami, ki jih v splošni družbi štejejo za "neavstralske". Temelji na kvalitativni študiji primerov avtohtonih prebivalcev, pa tudi afriških in vietnamskih beguncev in njihovih potomcev, ki prebivajo v severnem predmestju Adelaide. Ugotovitve dokazujejo obstoj nejasnega občutka pripadnosti, ki ga sprožajo skupni občutki nebelosti in skupne izkušnje kolonializma, rasizma in brezpravnosti skupaj z občutkom ponosa in moči, ki izhaja iz premagovanja težkih okoliščin in drugih stisk. Takšen občutek pripadnosti lahko preseže razlike med kolektivnimi identitetami, olajša multikulturalizem in ponudi alternativo obstoječim oblikam vertikalnega državljanstva, ki jih države vsiljujejo manjšinam, katerih nacionalna pripadnost je pogosto negotova.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: državljanstvo, občutek pripadnosti, "nebelske" manjšine, medskupinski odnosi, Avstralija

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