CONTENTS

Sudanese Settlement: Employing Strategies of Intercultural Contact and Cultural Maintenance

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Abstract
This article examines acculturation strategies that accompany the experience of resettlement in Australia. The concept of contrapuntality is used to identify multiple actors and the loci of power to examine the complexities involved with cultural maintenance and inter-cultural contact in a new host society. This perspective provides a framework to examine what might be involved for resettled Sudanese men – beyond an individual decision to integrate – when crafting a new social existence in Australia.

Introduction
The challenges of forced migration are manifold as the resettlement experience is more complex than a simple transition of moving from one culture or geographic locale to another. The other articles in this special issue attest to the different social realities between home and host countries and numerous authors have discussed the complexities of accomplishing the politically loaded term of integration.[1] This article presents a research project with resettled Sudanese men to examine their opportunities for, and strategies of, cultural maintenance and intercultural contact. The participant comments and ensuing discussion on acculturation strategies highlight the challenges and numerous players involved when trying to realise the nebulous endeavour of integration within Australian society.

Acculturation Strategies and Social Capital
Berry's often cited strategies of acculturation address the migration process in which individuals and groups can adopt four primary

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[1] Roger Zetter et al., "Social Capital or Social Exclusion? The Impact of Asylum-Seeker Dispersal on UK Refugee Community Organizations," *Community Development Journal* 40:2 (2005): 169-181; Melinda McPherson, "'I Integrate, Therefore I Am': Contesting the Normalizing Discourse of Integrationism through Conversations with Refugee Women," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 23:4 (2010): 546-570; Geri Smyth et al., "Introduction: Critical Reflections on Refugee Integration: Lessons from International Perspectives," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 23:4 (2010):411-414; Alison Strang and Alastair Ager, "Refugee Integration: Emerging Trends and Remaining Agendas," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 23:4 (2010): 589-607.

acculturation orientations: integration; assimilation; separation; and marginalisation.[2] This model is based on the principles of *cultural maintenance* (the extent to which individuals value and wish to maintain their cultural identity) and *intercultural contact* (the extent to which individuals value and seek contact with those outside their own group and want to participate in daily life of the larger society).[3] For conceptual purposes, as illustrated in the table below, this model can be presented in a dichotomous way using yes/no responses between these two strategies. It is understood, however, that resettlement and acculturation dynamics are more complex as Dona and Berry acknowledge that there is a continuum of answers between whether one should maintain intercultural contact or cultural maintenance.[4] The arrows in the table are used to demonstrate a direction or tendency towards these strategies rather than as absolute orientations.

Table 1: The four orientations of acculturation, adapted from Berry[5]

	Cultural Maintenance →YES	**Cultural Maintenance→ NO**
Intercultural Contact → YES	Integration	Assimilation
Intercultural Contact → NO	Separation/Segregation	Marginalisation

Within this table, an *assimilationist* designation can mean diminishing the important histories that people carry with them, whereas, a *separation/segregation* orientation could limit a person's chances for employment, education and valuable networking opportunities in a new host society. *Marginalisation* results in isolation from one's cultural community and the broader society living around it. *Integration* is often seen as an adaptable strategy that allows for a person to honour their past history while at the same time remaining open to interacting with people from different backgrounds. Thus, adopting strategies of intercultural contact and cultural maintenance can theoretically create opportunities for migrants to participate more broadly in civil society whilst honouring

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[2] John Berry, "Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation," *Applied Psychology* 46:1 (1997): 5-34.

[3] John Berry, "Acculturation as Varieties of Adaptation," in A. Padilla, ed., *Acculturation: Theory, Models and Some New Findings* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1980).

[4] Giorgia Dona and John Berry, "Refugee Acculturation and Re-Acculturation," in Alastair Ager, ed. *Refugees: Perspectives on the Experience of Forced Migration*, (New York: Continuum, 1999).

[5] Berry, 1997, 5-34.

their past. However, the questions of integration: who does the integrating; what is non-negotiable; and how this process should be facilitated are complex and involve numerous actors both within and outside the Sudanese community. Whilst I agree with Ryan et al. that Berry's acculturation model presents an 'over culturalised' perspective which diminishes other important factors outside inter-cultural engagement, it must be acknowledged that this model provides a helpful perspective to consider the intricacies involved with resettlement.[6] Looking more broadly, Colic-Peisker and Walker emphasise the importance of an interactional perspective, maintaining that identity and acculturative processes are not only determined by the characteristics, hopes and values of the migrants themselves but also by the beliefs and actions of the host society.[7] It highlights the need to not only examine the settlement aspirations of the Sudanese community in this case but also those who live around them.

The emergence of social capital theory has been widely employed to examine how particular individuals and groups are able to mobilise resources within intra- and inter-community relationships. Arguably the most referenced theorist on social capital is Robert Putnam who presents two primary typologies of bridging and bonding social capital, which he summarises as:

> Bonding capital is good for under-girding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity… Bridging networks, by contrast, are better for linkage to external assets and for information diffusion… Bonding social capital constitutes a kind of sociological superglue, whereas bridging social capital provides a sociological WD-40.[8]

Bonding capital refers to when people who are similar to each other work

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[6] Dermot Ryan et al., "Theoretical Perspectives on Post-Migration Adaptation and Psychological Well-Being among Refugees: Towards a Resource-Based Model," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 21:1 (2008): 1-18. These authors argue that it can be misleading to use 'acculturative stress' as a way of understanding migrant adaptation. Rather, they present a framework that considers access and constraints to resources in terms of needs, personal goals and demands. This paper speaks to both models as opportunities to integrate and are entwined directly with resources (employment, education, housing, etc), broader societal dynamics and acculturative pressures.

[7] Val Colic-Peisker and Iain Walker, "Human Capital, Acculturation and Social Identity: Bosnian Refugees in Australia," *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology,* 13:5 (2003): 337-360.

[8] Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 22-23.

together and can facilitate strong and supportive community relationships. Putnam's 'sociological WD-40' or bridging capital arises when people different from each other interact together which can facilitate access to new resources and opportunities (employment, education, social networking and information).[9] Putnam maintains that bonding capital is good for 'getting by' and is characterised by strong relationships, whereas bridging capital is good for 'getting ahead', often through a network of weak ties.[10] The focus on bridging and bonding social capital provides a broader perspective for thinking about the challenges associated with refugee resettlement that often include: finding work, speaking a new language, adapting to new social and cultural norms, experiences of discrimination and simultaneously honouring one's past history alongside finding ways to participate in Australian society.

A Contrapuntal Analysis
As people from different backgrounds interact, a dynamic interaction between multiple actors and institutions arises. This interplay highlights the domains of power and the challenges of crafting one's existence within Australia's contrasting social, political, cultural and historical enivronments. Said's concept of contrapuntality provides an interrogative framework of interpreting these numerous perspectives together (some of which are often rendered invisible). The concept of contrapuntality is taken from Western classical music, in which it refers to the musical spaces whereby the interdependent harmonics associated with the melody and counter-melodies are shared between different instruments – in some respects competing for the listener's ear. Recognising the different harmonics, Said maintains that a contrapuntal analysis involves considering:

> Experiences that are discrepant, each with its particular agenda and pace of development, its own internal formations, its internal coherence and system of external relationships, all of them co-existing and interacting with others.[11]

To achieve this end, contrapuntality involves the examination of multiple actors performing together rather than in isolation. From a resettlement perspective, the competing melody and counter melodies may include the voices and perspectives from politicians, media representatives, the wider society and of course, the Sudanese community themselves. Sometimes the perspectives between different groupings of people are aligned and at

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[9] Putman, 22-23.

[10] Putman, 22-23.

[11] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1993), 36.

others, discordant. For example, a participant in the study that this article is informed notes the limited voice that the Sudanese community had to respond to the former immigration minister Kevin Andrews' comments that the Sudanese community was failing to adapt to Australian life:

> *Kevin Andrews's comments relate to a Sudanese saying that says, "While you are a crocodile in your country, when you go to another peoples' country, you will be a lizard." Can you see the difference between a lizard and a crocodile? That was what Kevin Andrews was doing. He said those things because it is his country.*[12]

This quote highlights the discrepancies of power and the importance of considering the voices of crocodiles and lizards together. It means recognising that crocodiles often are better able to reach the listener's ear (in this case the wider Australian society) than the Sudanese community itself who are often relegated as lizards who have little voice.

In response to such power dynamics, Eastmond notes the importance of considering both the narrator and audience when engaging people's narratives and the inevitable political contexts that these are told.[13] Said, thus, employs the concept of contrapuntality as a way of examining competing melodies/texts/discourses that enable consideration of multiple perspectives together.[14] As such, contrapuntality allows for a critical engagement with a number of dualities: past/present; us/them; insider/outsider; Orient/Occident; crocodiles/lizards; and north/south. This careful approach acknowledges the dynamic interplay between such polarities and helps move beyond the 'Orientalist' perspectives that construct people from the Global South as 'others', tribal, primitive or exotic. Orientalist designations often say more about those who have the power to construct particular discourses than the people these are supposedly about – an important consideration when recognising the current tenor and political debate about asylum, border protection and maintaining 'Australian' values'.[15] Said further maintains that

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[12] See Jay Marlowe, "Accessing Authentic Knowledge: Being and Doing with the Sudanese Community," *Australian Community Psychologist* 21(2009): 39.

[13] Marita Eastmond, "Stories as Lived Experience: Narratives in Forced Migration Research," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 20:2 (2007): 270.

[14] Said, 1993, 36.

[15] See Peter Gale, *The Politics of Fear: Lighting the Wik* (Frenchs Forest, NSW: Pearson Education Australia, 2005); Natascha Klocker, "Community Antagonism Towards Asylum Seekers in Port Augusta, South Australia," *Australian Geographical Studies* 42 (2004).

contrapuntal reading necessitates an analysis of what is not stated in the text or discourse, which requires:

> An understanding of what is involved when an author shows, for instance, that a colonial sugar plantation is seen as important to the process of maintaining a particular style of life in England… the point is that contrapuntal reading must take account of both processes, that of imperialism and that of resistance to it.[16]

The former immigration minister Kevin Andrews' supposed concerns about Sudanese people not integrating into the fabric of Australian life, an ABC documentary on the 'Lost Boys' or media based reporting about resettlement issues[17] are open to a contrapuntal exploration that provides a critical approach towards establishing the dynamics and intentions within these commentaries. This analysis includes what is not explicitly expressed in such statements and the Sudanese community's perspective of them. It highlights the need to look at both inter and intra-community based relations and interactions when considering acculturation strategies – the primary focus for the rest of this article.

Study Design
This research project involved documenting the in-depth narratives of 24 Sudanese men and an ethnographic engagement with their community.[18] The participants were accessed through purposive sampling procedures, were fluent in English and often held community leadership roles. The in-depth interviews documented participants' perspectives on, and experiences of, forced migration and resettlement. These interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. The qualitative software NVivo 8 was used to help sort, manage and code the data. Analysis was carried out through a process of initial and focused coding, writing memos, theoretical sampling and using the constant comparative method as per constructivist grounded theory.[19]   In total, 70 interviews with the 24 participants were conducted. This information was triangulated through the ethnographic field data from attending more than 20 community

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[16] Said, 1993, 66-67.
[17] Joel Windle, "Racialisation of African Youth in Australia," *Social Identities* 14:5 (2008): 553-566.
[18] See Jay Marlowe, "Accessing 'Authentic' Knowledge: Being and Doing with the Sudanese Community," *Australian Community Psychologist* 21:1 (2009): 39-49; Jay Marlowe, "Using a Narrative Approach of Double Listening in Research Contexts," *International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work* 3 (2010): 43-53.
[19] Kathy Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory* (London: Sage Publications, 2006).

events and numerous weekly informal meetings. The fieldwork was conducted from 2007 to 2009 and received ethics approval from the associated university's social and behavioural ethics committee.

Results: 'Having the concept' and strategies of acculturation
The participant comments from the in-depth interviews now introduce some of the complexities around resettlement through the previously discussed orientations of acculturation and social capital. Their statements represent common themes that emerged from the interviews and ethnographic engagements. It is also necessary to acknowledge that this article reports on the voices of English speaking Sudanese men and highlights the need to also consider the experiences of women, children and those who do not speak English which this article does not accommodate.

Cultural maintenance and Inter-cultural contact
Returning to Berry's acculturation model, the participants, almost without exception, emphasise the importance of both *cultural maintenance* and *inter-cultural contact.*[20] They speak about honouring their past histories and cultural backgrounds whilst at the same time emphasising the importance of contributing to, and participating in, Australian society. These comments suggest a tendency or desire towards *integration* within Berry's model. In fact, one of the most prevalent reasons that participants gave for being part of this study was the hope of creating a better understanding of their community to foster inter-community social relations. Whilst most participants speak about their goals for integration in which it is possible to have inter-cultural contact *and* cultural maintenance, many express the difficulties in realising such aims.

> *Sometimes people can abuse you, and the things like Kevin Andrews says, what brought us here to Australia is not because we are looking for something to eat, it is war. That is what brought us here. We ran there because we wanted the freedom. That is why we came here. To be safe. So, it affects us and it is a new place for us here now, we are not settled. It is hard for me and my children. (Participant 12)*

> *It is funny when Australia states that it needs to deliver its services in a culturally appropriate way [starts laughing]… And you wonder which culture is that! They always say that one. But*

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[20] Berry, 1980, 15.

which culture is appropriate here, is it the Sudanese or do they mean the Australian one? So it becomes a little difficult. (Participant 19)

As these comments illustrate, acculturation attitudes and strategies, compared with what is actually realised, can be very different things. Whilst participants note a desire for integrating within Australia, they often expressed barriers to such opportunities due to the difficulties of finding work and experiences of discrimination.

Highlighting the importance of inter- and intra-community relationships, a participant speaks about 'having the concept' when trying to integrate in resettlement contexts:

It may be simplistic for people you know to say, "It is not necessary to know the past." But I do believe strongly that if you don't really know where you are coming from, you will not know where you are going! Literally in a simple way, somebody who comes to the city but they don't know where they are coming from – they really are in trouble. It is always good if you know a little bit of your culture. It will enable you to even understand your new culture ... because [you will] **have the concept***. (Participant 14)*

Here, *having the concept* involves incorporating aspects of one's traditional cultural practices with new expectations and opportunities in Australia. This process entails that the members of the Sudanese community often having to rethink a number of familiar conceptions of family, work, gender relations and raising children. At the same time, they express a need to balance and maintain social relationships with family and friends still living in Sudan and elsewhere in diaspora. These ongoing relationships illustrate their transnational responsibilities and the challenges of reconciling the strategies of intercultural contact and cultural maintenance in a new host society. These simultaneous desires and responsibilities provide an important backdrop to examine bonding and bridging capital resources in Australia.

Integration and social capital – the 'bridgers' and the 'bonders'
The importance of bonding capital (characterised by strong ties and people who are alike one another) is unquestioned in the Sudanese community as evidenced at numerous church functions, mourning events and celebrations.

So problems become a shared kind of community problem so it is not an individual problem. When you take problem from an

individual problem to a community problem, you have lessened that effect of it. (Participant 24)

*I will take you back a bit for our society – we are being a community. **Being together**. So like, I think you witnessed it one day [referring to a mourning ceremony for a community member], and I think that now for most of your time when you go where there are Sudanese, you will see that they are together. So, we are... **we are being found with relationships and these relationships – this is the value for our lives**. (Participant 6)*

'Being together' and maintaining relationships with one's past can help construct particular spaces (both private and public) in a new society where traditional cultural and social practices can be honoured and valued. It creates a context where 'being together' fosters a sense of belonging and place where it is possible to celebrate one's past/present and also respond to concerns that emerge within the Sudanese community.

Bonding capital, however, is not always a positive resource. It can also have negative implications through tight and rigid local power structures that reinforce oppressive practices.[21] Further, highly dense bonding capital without bridging dynamics can create situations of greater isolation from the broader society, which again returns to a separation/segregation orientation within Berry's model. In response to this potentially isolating effect, the Sudanese community often stresses that it does not just want bonding capital (this also points to a desire for inter-cultural contact).

Whilst the 'sociological superglue' characterised by bonding capital remains an important part of the Sudanese community's social existence, participants also expressed a keen interest in bridging dynamics. Often, the power of 'weak ties' that are characterised by bridging capital can introduce people to new opportunities and resources because it involves meeting with people who are from different backgrounds and provides a platform for broader social networking.

It is helpful to me because when other persons is near me, it let me know much about that person. Persons even that I have never

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[21]Alejandro Portes and P. Landholdt, "The Downside of Social Capital," *The American Prospect* 26 (1996): 18-22.

seen before, so it is like bringing people together to be friends. So in time of difficulties, you meet somebody from [the wider Australian] community to tell you more about that community. How those people live, what do those people of that community doesn't like. So, also, I think because Australia is a multicultural society, people here learn through [other] cultures. (Participant 4)

The Sudanese community, however, often has limited opportunities to realise this form of capital. It highlights that the settlement experience often places culturally and linguistically diverse communities at a disadvantage, as they do not possess the social, cultural and economic capital that many native-born Australians take for granted. Alongside the challenges of adapting to new social realities in resettlement contexts, the recently published report by the Human Rights Commission details that successful settlement is not just about African Australians simply deciding to integrate as there are numerous concerns of racism and discrimination within educational, employment and other social contexts.[22] These experiences can have isolating effects where those outside the Sudanese community may be reluctant or wary to interact with the wider society.

Because in the Western World, there is this practice which I call getting the certificate in order to be accepted. I call it diploma disease. When they [employers] say, "But where is your diploma?" Even if you are able to do the job properly. (Participant 21)

Having known that the standard of living in the Western world is very high, I said that I have to go there, but that too was very challenging and to an extent, very traumatising. I was just dropped into Australia and it was really just very strange. You go to a place where there are no parents, you don't know where you are going to stay, you don't know nothing. You've got no money. And the education you come with is not so promising, it is not sufficient enough. Because even if I come to this country well educated, [employers] will say no. (Participant 21)

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[22] Australian Human Rights Commission, "In our own words – African Australians: A Review of Human Rights and Social Inclusion Issues", 2010, , www.humanrights.gov.au/africanaus/review/ (accessed 1 May 2011).

This participant's comment alongside the Australian Human Rights Commission Report are further reinforced by the Australian Census 2006. This data establishes that Sudanese-born Australians have an unemployment rate six times higher and earn less than half the weekly income of the average Australian.[23] These stark discrepancies suggest the need to think not only about Sudanese acculturation strategies but also the realities imposed upon them through discriminatory practices.

The difficulty of realising bridging capital opportunities was also impressed on me through personal experiences when conducting this research. A number of Sudanese people listed me as a referee when they were seeking employment or access to services, largely because I am white, and hence a socially constructed, reliable reference. There have been times that people from the Sudanese community have not been able to access services related to housing or assistance for their children in schools. I was able to organise appointments *on their behalf*, usually on my first attempt. When potential employers called, these reference checks were done before applicants had been interviewed as a way of short-listing through screening. Some of the questions employers asked were of a racist and discriminatory nature, tailored to risk, or, more specifically, what the employers themselves constructed as qualities that created risk. These employers asked questions such as:

- "Does this person come from Africa?"
- "Do you know if this person was a refugee?"
- "What do you know of their experience in Africa?"

These questions had little to do with a person's capacity to do the unskilled jobs for which they had applied. Employers were trying to ascertain *what* these applicants were (refugee, African, traumatised) rather than *how* they could successfully carry out the job role. Much of this questioning illustrates a predominate focus on traumatised refugees and employer concerns of hiring people on such generalised misconceptions.[24] Of the multiple calls these employers made, not one resulted in an interview. It is further worth noting that only four of the 24 participants in this study had permanent job postings (remaining mindful that they are some of the most fluent and best-educated members of their community).

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[23] DIAC, "Community Information Survey" Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing, 2009, http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/comm-summ/_pdf/sudan.pdf (accessed 3 November 2009).
[24] Jay Marlowe, "Conceptualising Refugee Resettlement in Contested Landscapes," *Australasian Review of African Studies,* 30:2 (2009): 128-151.

We understand that Australia is a multi-cultural country. But to us, it is different. It is not a multi-cultural country to us. Because there are certain people who dominate Australia, but that one [multi-culturalism] is just a propaganda you know – 'It is a multi-cultural country'. But I can't really see it. (Participant 17)

Since I came here, I have been working and studying and in all this time I have experienced racism in this country. It is not a good place to be if I am being honest. Australia is not a good place to be. (Participant 18)

These observations and participant statements demonstrate that bridging capital relates to a larger game whereby the Sudanese community are not always on an equal playing field as some players enjoy greater power and privilege than others. It highlights again the value of a contrapuntal analysis where it is possible to examine multiple players in the resettlement process.

Discussion: Strategies of Acculturation
Resettlement is far from an apolitical process as evidenced by negative political statements, sensationalised media claims about the 'refugee experience' and the current debate about Australia accepting people's claims for asylum. Within these contexts, participants emphasise the importance, but difficulty, of developing inter-community-based relationships. Numerous members of the Sudanese community reiterate that they do not want to remain a community on the periphery and would like to have stronger ties with the broader Australian society. At the same time, participants also speak passionately about the important cultural and social histories that they carry with them. The often tacit, authoritative knowledge many Australians take for granted represents a complex array of symbols, gestures and forms of interacting that require an ability to step outside one's own frame of reference to incorporate these new rules in a new, coherent dialogue with their past. The different constructions around time, family, relationships with neighbours and the distribution of resources creates an environment where tacit Australian meanings, relations and responsibilities often remain obscure for outsiders to decipher.

The question of who does the integrating and under whose terms is relevant. It requires an examination of the opportunities for cultural maintenance and intercultural contact within the contexts of realising these strategies on broader community, societal and structural levels. The

participants' desires for inter-cultural contact are echoed in their settlement experiences where bridging interactions with people outside the Sudanese community can help provide new information and potential opportunities. At the same time, the multiple challenges and negotiations associated with resettlement demonstrate that realising new opportunities to participate in society may take time – both for the Sudanese community to incorporate and the broader Australian public to embrace. These dynamics highlight the importance of cultural maintenance to avoid an *assimilationist* strategy (which all participants conveyed as an unacceptable option) so that one's past does not become completely subsumed by the present. At the same time, participants also express that they do not want to adopt a *separationist* strategy where there is little or no contact with the wider Australian society. This analysis, therefore, also requires a broader examination as it becomes clear that not everyone experiences Australia as an inclusive society.

Several recent studies highlight how opportunities for meaningful work and receiving an education have been pathways for rekindling hope in resettlement contexts.[25] These pathways, however, are potentially blocked by exclusionary practices, exemplified through sensationalised media presentations, polarising political commentary and unfounded racist claims. These powerful voices can create exclusionary spaces, thereby diminishing opportunities for Sudanese people to participate as peers in society.[26]

Experiences of racism, discrimination and exclusion were a common theme expressed throughout the multiple interactions of this study. What makes resettlement different from forced migration contexts, to a degree, is that many Sudanese people have opened themselves up to (and even embraced) the hope that their lives will be markedly better. Within refugee camps and urban displacement centres such as Cairo, Australia and other resettlement countries can be presented as a utopian construct of golden opportunities where everyone can find jobs and enjoy resources

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[25] DIAC, 2009; Val Colic-Peisker and Farida Tilbury, "'Active' and 'Passive' Resettlement: The Influence of Support Services and Refugees' Own Resources on Resettlement Style," *International Migration,* 41:5 (2003): 61-91; "Employment Niches for Recent Refugees: Segmented Labour Market in Twenty-First Century Australia," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 19:2 (2006): 203-229; Vandra Harris and Jay Marlowe, "Hard Yards High Hopes: The Educational Challenges of African Refugee Students in Australia," *International Journal of Teaching Learning and Higher Education* 23:2 (2011): 186-196.

[26] Jay Marlowe, "Beyond the Discourse of Trauma: Shifting the Focus on Sudanese Refugees," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 23:2 (2010): 183-198.

almost beyond imagination. Such beliefs are supported in American and Australian popular culture, evident in rap videos that embody rampant materialism, the 'pull yourself up by your own bootstraps' folklore of capitalist enterprise, and the Western promise of the market's unbiased hand. Such presentations fail to acknowledge the lack of employment opportunities, experiences of discrimination and the educational obstacles that Southern Sudanese refugees experience in Australia. Honig argues that politics (and the ensuing discourses) can never be reconciled to pure consensus or contestation and states:

> To affirm the perpetuity of the contest is not to celebrate a world without points of stabilization; it is to affirm the reality of perpetual contest, even within an ordered setting, and to identify the affirmative dimension of contestation.[27]

Shifting the focus to the affirmative dimension of contestation highlights how the constructed identity of the 'stranger' can go beyond an antagonistic endeavour for purity (as defined by reified culture or through jingoistic and xenophobic ideology).[28] This perspective further highlights the potential affirmative outcomes associated with transnational movement, living together and appreciating different points of view. It is also necessary, however, to recognise antagonism within contestation as not all struggles can be seen within an affirmative dimension. Within Berry's acculturation model, the former immigration minister Kevin Andrews and Andrew Fraser's antagonistic comments reinforce an *assimilationist* perspective, where they addressed Sudanese culture and its incompatibility with 'Australian values'. Such commentaries can easily create polarities between different groups that suggest a *segregated* or societal outcome if one does not assimilate.

The concept of contrapuntality has salience in resettlement contexts as it is possible to explore the perspectives of various stakeholders and the inevitable ensuing interplay. However, Chowdhry cautions that contrapuntality is not about valorising plurality (where no voices are privileged and all are heard).[29] Rather, it is about 'worlding' texts and actions through historicising them and recognising the power dynamics embedded within. The Sudanese narratives, therefore, provide a

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[27] Bonnie Honig, *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 15.

[28] Nikos Papastergiadis, *The Turbulence of Migration: Globalization, Deterritorialization and Hybridity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), 163.

[29] Geeta Chowdhry, "Edward Said and Contrapuntal Reading: Implications for Critical Interventions in International Relations," *Millennium – Journal of International Studies,* 36:1 (2007): 101-116.

counterpoint to political commentary and media presentations about their community through numerous stories of difference and acts of resistance to such understandings. Stories of agency, contributing to Australian society, maintaining hope, following parental teachings and adapting to new social realities provide striking examples of how the Sudanese community is negotiating the strategies of inter-cultural contact and cultural maintenance. Their narratives provide an important reminder that the resettlement experience is far from a straightforward 'melody' or an apolitical process.

This discussion again highlights the complexities of competing for the listener's ear which requires considering both narrator and audience (whether it is a politician, employer, social service provider, a local community leader or the general public). Taken together, these multiple perspectives provide a 'worlding' to examine the Sudanese community within a historic and power-conscious focus that highlights the perpetual interactions between actors, communities, institutions and the broader society when thinking about what might be involved in the resettlement process beyond a simple decision to integrate.

Conclusion
Acculturation strategies need to be considered beyond individual- or community-level initiatives as the integration process is at times a chosen strategy, and at others, an imposed ultimatum. Social capital theory further illustrates this dynamic through bonding and bridging interactions across the entire society. It is about a two-way exchange where both the Sudanese community and those outside it can view each other as peers in civil society thereby enabling bridging capital to provide greater means for true participation and reciprocity. Such an exchange also means turning the mirror on ourselves (as practitioners, researchers, policy makers or fellow community members) to confront possible manifestations of racism, power and privilege at both explicit and tacit levels.

The current Australian debates around refugees and asylum seekers and the ensuing firestorm around border protection, welfare burdens, queue jumpers and 'tidal waves' of boat people highlights the difficulties of integrating in a new host society. If refugees and asylum seekers are presented in such ways, it is hardly surprising that bridging capital resources and broader settlement opportunities for social cohesion and solidarity – Putnam's so called 'sociological lubricant' – are often in scarce supply.

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