


Disciplining subjectivity in Australian migrant deterrence campaigns

Helena Zeweri ^{1,*}

¹Department of Anthropology, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z1, Canada

*Corresponding author. Department of Anthropology, University of British Columbia, 6303 NW Marine Drive, Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z1, Canada. E-mail: helena.zeweri@ubc.ca

Abstract

This article examines public information campaigns designed to deter asylum seekers from entering Australia via boat. Through analysing the institutional context and content of a graphic novel that was circulated within Afghan Hazara communities in 2014, I show that certain Australian public information campaigns mobilize an ethos of cultural sensitivity rooted in ethnographic data-gathering projects that reinscribe migrants as ignorant and socially deviant subjects. Such campaigns both situate Australia as an impossible destination and render migration a dangerous, futile act that will bring further misfortune to migrants' families. The Australian case shows that in contexts where cultural sensitivity and externalized border control simultaneously guide migration policy, cultural knowledge becomes weaponized not only to keep migrants immobile but also to discipline migrant subjectivity and ultimately exclude them from pathways to refuge.

Keywords: deterrence, campaigns, Australia, subjectivity, irregular migration

Introduction

In 2013, the Australian government, under Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, announced that anyone who arrived in Australia by boat with no visa would be refused resettlement in the Australian mainland; instead, they would either be turned back or placed in offshore detention centres in Manus Island or Nauru while their asylum claims were being reviewed. Such a policy disproportionately affected asylum seekers fleeing war, poverty, and persecution from the Middle East and South Asia who made the journey undocumented via boat in the absence of easy access to work or humanitarian visas. A key strategy for deterring 'irregular maritime arrivals' from Australia's shores included public information campaigns (PICs) targeted to source and transit countries, which emphasized the misfortunes that would befall boat arrivals upon reaching Australia's maritime border. Throughout the mid-2010s, billboards, videos, and graphic novels were circulated throughout transit countries like Pakistan, Malaysia, and Indonesia and source countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, and Sri Lanka. Translated into local languages, the campaigns warned prospective migrants of the dangers of crossing the Pacific Ocean and the consequences

Received: July 4, 2023. Revised: March 28, 2024.

© The Author(s) 2024. Published by Oxford University Press. All rights reserved.

For permissions, please email: journals.permissions@oup.com

of prolonged detention including mental distress, social isolation, cultural disconnection, humiliation, and family separation.

While extensive research has analysed the global scope of Australia's migrant deterrence PICs (Cappi and Musarò 2023; Fleay et al. 2016; Hirsh and Doig 2018; Nethery et al. 2023; Richardson 2010; Schloenhardt and Philipson 2013) there stands to be further analysis on how such campaigns instrumentalize cultural knowledge with the aim of disciplining prospective migrants' decision-making processes. In Australia, cultural sensitivity is a pillar of social and public services. Cultural sensitivity refers to an ethos that considers how the cultural background of a given group of individuals shapes their engagement with social services. In recent years, cultural sensitivity has come to refer not only to language, customs, dress, and rituals but also to the less explicitly visible domain of people's worldviews. For example, the government of New South Wales, Australia defines culture as an iceberg: 'A small part is visible above the water, but the majority sits below the waterline, unseen', in the sense that 'cultural values and beliefs are not immediately visible or obvious but they can affect behaviour' ("Multicultural NSW" 2022). Since the early 2000s, ethnographic research has become key to developing culturally sensitive approaches in social services, which increasingly deploy such research methods to understand the lives of what is known in Australian social welfare as Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities. The goal of culturally appropriate services is to encourage people to seek the care they need without fear of judgment and exclusion (Zeweri 2024). However, research on culture as a set of worldviews has been increasingly valued in domains beyond social welfare, including within migrant deterrence campaigns. Deterrence campaigns aim to persuade prospective migrants to avoid migrating to Australia. They do so by communicating that the journey to Australia is not worth the physical, financial, and emotional distress involved, and thus, in the vein of public service announcements, brand themselves as acts of care. Increasingly, such campaigns seek to tap into the cultural worldviews of prospective migrants to get their messages across. However, the processes through which cultural knowledge is (1) generated during the research phase of such campaigns and (2) mobilized through visual scripts and cues within campaigns have been given little attention in the scholarly literature on PICs.

This article analyses how cultural knowledge about prospective Hazara Afghan asylum seekers gets generated within an Australian state-sponsored ethnographic research project and gets reinscribed within a graphic novel messaging campaign. I examine both the infamous 2014 graphic novel aimed at deterring prospective asylum seekers from migrating to Australia and the ethnographic research initiative that preceded its creation. It is important to note that while the research initiative I analyse was not solely created for the 2014 campaign, its conclusions about prospective migrants' cultural worlds—their social relations and subjectivities—get both reinscribed and reimagined within certain visual cues within the graphic novel. I argue that such research initiatives aim to deploy a logic of cultural sensitivity through mobilizing ethnographic methods and data to understand the decision-making processes of migrants. However, such initiatives perpetuate homogenized analyses and visual representations of prospective migrants as both ignorant of Australia's border policies and as culpable for jeopardizing their families' material well-being. In making this argument, I add another dimension to dominant understandings of migrant deterrence campaigns—namely, how culturally sensitive messaging becomes a vehicle through which deterrence gets normalized as an act of care and compassion that rescues prospective migrants from their own ignorance and from sabotaging their family relations and lives.

I focus on the creation of a campaign specifically targeted to prospective Hazara Afghan migrants because it is one of a few examples in which Australian Customs and Border Protection Services (ACBPS) has explicitly recruited in-depth, on-the-ground research with local communities as a basis for its deterrence messaging. I look at the 2014 graphic novel because, compared to other publicly available PICs, it focuses not only on the individual migrant's journey, which constitutes the focus of other deterrence media, but also on the consequences of this journey for the migrant's family members. This focus lends the novel a distinct kind of psychological

orientation towards prospective migrants' subjectivities—their positionalities within a web of social relations—rather than simply their individual decision-making rationales. Through focusing on people's social worlds and relations, the graphic novel targets the realm of the emotional and the affective. And yet, as I will show, far from being culturally appropriate, such campaigns are based on cultural misrecognitions and the strategic mobilization of certain kinds of ethnographic data to perpetuate a very specific narrative about migrants.

I focus on campaigns targeted to prospective Hazara Afghan migrants for two reasons. The first is that this group has constituted a significant number of boat arrivals to Australia since 2000. From 2000 to 2009, of the 9490 boat arrivals to Australia, 4199 came from Afghanistan and most were of an Hazara ethno-racial background. Since 2008, the majority of asylum seekers who have taken the boat journey to Australia are from Afghanistan, followed by Sri Lanka and Iraq (Phillips 2010). While deterrence campaigns have targeted prospective migrants from throughout the Middle East and South Asia including Sri Lanka and Iraq, Afghanistan has been a prime target country for such campaigns given that it is a significant source country for boat arrivals. Migration from Afghanistan has intensified since 2001 in the wake of the political turmoil that coincided with the US/NATO military intervention. The second reason I focus on Afghan asylum seekers is that, according to publicly available sources, Afghanistan is one of the only countries in which ethnographic, on-the-ground research was commissioned by ACBPS for the purposes of deterrence messaging.

While Australia's PICs were in full circulation by 2014 and 2015—almost 10 years ago—Australian models of deterrence have recently been revisited by Western nation-states. In April 2022, the UK government passed the Nationality and Borders Act which aimed to deter 'illegal entry' into the UK. Through the Illegal Migration Act of 2023, the government has proposed policies that threaten to push back boats in the English Channel and reroute asylum seekers to 'safe third countries', like Rwanda. The government has also begun its own series of deterrence campaigns warning removal and detention of boat arrivals, akin to Australia's 'Stop the Boats' policy. In the United States, in 2017, former President Donald Trump infamously noted in a phone call with former Prime Minister of Australia Malcolm Turnbull, that the US would do well to borrow from Australia's offshore detention model to deter migration from Mexico and Central America (Miller et al. 2017). Over the last twenty years, nation-states have increasingly adopted externalized border control strategies, through outsourcing boat interception and detention to global South countries (Albahari 2018; Mountz 2011; Weber and McCulloch 2018), which often depend on detention industries to power their economies. This is notably seen in the case of the island of Nauru, whose economy has relied on Australia's offshore refugee processing regime for several years (Morris 2023). Strategies for executing externalized border violence have also become increasingly globalized (Hathaway and Gammeltoft-Hansen 2015; Zeweri 2020), in the sense that Western countries are borrowing strategies, technologies, and principles of deterrence from each other.

As nation-states externalize their borders in the wake of ongoing mass displacement as a result of the enduring fallout of the Global War on Terror, climate change, and civil conflict, PICs will continue to be used to control migrant mobilities and reroute migrants to 'black sites' and remote locales. It is imperative, then, to understand how deterrence policies not only target migrants' physical entry into the nation-state but also their decision-making processes and worldviews. While much attention has been given to how border walls and other material infrastructures and surveillance technologies enact violence on migrant bodies (De León 2015; Holmes 2014; Jacobsen 2015; Jusionyte 2016), less examined has been the epistemic violence of deterrence strategies that presume to know how prospective migrants' decisions will affect their communities. Australia's PICs, in their transnational scope and ethnographic orientation, are unique and will most certainly be looked to in future PICs that aim to target migrant decision-making processes by focusing on migrant worldviews. Thus, Australia's PICs from the mid-2010s require deeper analysis in a world where cultural knowledge is weaponized within enduring structures of migrant exclusion.

I begin by providing an overview of the article's methods, including why the graphic novel is a particularly illustrative genre for tapping into policy logics. I then examine how cultural sensitivity undergirds emerging infrastructures of migrant deterrence in Australia. This is followed by an analysis of a report by WISE Strategic Communications, a consulting firm contracted by ACBPS to conduct research on Hazara Afghans' views on maritime migration to Australia. This is followed by an overview of literature that offers alternative understandings of prospective migrants' decision-making processes. A broader overview of the recent global PIC landscape is then presented. This sets the context for the state's preoccupation with migrant subjectivity which becomes the key focus of a 2014 graphic novel, whose origins and content I go on to analyse.

Methods

In this article, I first analyse the contents of a report by a consulting firm that conducted an ethnographic study for ACBPS on prospective Hazara Afghan migrants' views on migration via boat to Australia. I then analyse an 18-page graphic novel that targeted Afghan asylum seekers which was released in 2014. This graphic novel is one of several examples of Australia's approach to deterrence during the mid-2010s. This period saw the distribution of television, radio, and print-campaigns in Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan. The study I examine was commissioned under the Rudd administration in 2010. The graphic novel I analyse was released in Afghanistan shortly before being released online in 2014 (Humphrey 2018), which marked the peak of Operation Sovereign Borders, a policy implemented under former Prime Minister Tony Abbott.

The 2014 graphic novel is particularly striking because it was distributed across Afghanistan and was preceded by a multi-pronged on-the-ground effort that aimed to convince local residents to avoid taking the boat journey. According to journalist Peter Farrell, interviews and seminars were held around the same time in Kabul and other provinces warning people about the dangers of the boat journey and the challenges of detention. These awareness-raising workshops were framed not as migrant deterrence but as part of Australia's efforts to stop people smuggling (Farrell 2017). The novel was developed by Statt Consulting, a private communications firm that specializes in culturally salient messaging. The graphic novel then, reflects the culmination of a transnational collaboration between a migration source country (Afghanistan), the Australian government, the Afghan diaspora, and a private consulting firm, exemplifying the kind of output generated by contemporary infrastructures of culturally attuned migrant deterrence.

I also focus on the genre of the graphic novel because, unlike other deterrence literature, it is less overtly prescriptive and takes a more subtle approach to disciplining migrant behaviour by focusing on lived experience as opposed to making explicitly prescriptive statements. Studies in comics literature have shown that the use of comics in PICs aims to change consumer, patient, and ordinary peoples' decisions and behaviour. Public health campaigns have used graphic novels for consumer health education (Rakower and Hallyburton 2022), educating underserved communities about diabetes management (Dobbins 2016), and raising awareness about HIV/AIDS prevention (Norton et al. 2019). Comics have also been used to influence election outcomes. This was the case in the 2010 Viennese mayoral election in Austria, in which comics were circulated by both political parties which disparaged the other side's immigration and crime policies (Brantner and Lobinger 2014). Dobbins writes that comics are useful communication tools because they value the reader as a non-expert. Furthermore, they can convey narratives of lived experience (Dobbins 2016), which tend to resonate more than prescriptive visual material that explicitly tells the audience to avoid a particular set of actions or behaviours. As Ian Gordon has written in his analysis of comic strips and consumer culture, comic strips entail an implied agreement between the reader and the author that the text will somehow resonate with readers' everyday lives (Gordon 2020: 15).

Graphic novels in particular offer more flexibility to extend the message of a comic by incorporating the reader into the novel as a character, thus offering a less conceptual and more

intimate experience. As Aaron Humphrey has written, silent comics leave room for the reader's own interpretation. Humphrey notes in his analysis of the 2014 graphic novel that while it is a silent comic, it tries to convey a more 'neutral' and 'realistic' diegetic style in an attempt to "depict the plight of the fictional characters as objective truth" (Humphrey 2018: 470). While the absence of verbal dialogue in the novel allows the audience to determine what the illustrated events could mean for their own social worlds, my reading of the graphic novel sees it neither as wholly open to interpretation nor as an objective and neutral truth about the migration journey. Rather, when contextualized within the broader infrastructure of PICs and its turn to ethnographic data, the novel can be read as a disciplinary tool that draws upon select details that, while partially reflecting asylum seeker social worlds, still homogenizes and obfuscates their nuanced realities.

Cultural knowledge as a tool of deterrence

Since the early 2000s, cultural sensitivity has been a key pillar of social services throughout Australia. From a social work perspective, cultural knowledge "necessitates acquiring knowledge of substantial ethnographic cultural characteristics of diverse ethnic or cultural groups ... it details cultural characteristics of varying cultural groups and imparts culturally specific techniques ..." (Kee et al. 2014: 12). Ethnographic approaches, which emphasize people's lived experiences and how they make sense of them, are key to producing cultural knowledge within social and welfare services.

Ethnographic methods encompass a range of tools designed to understand people's social worlds. These include participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups which aim to "study, describe, represent, and theorize (with a certain degree of particularity) a culture or social world" (Harrison 2018: 5). Ethnographic methods historically have been associated with colonial projects that treat culture as a static entity composed of a set of static rituals, customs, behaviours, and traditions that function to create a Self/Other binary between the anthropologist and the research subject (Abu-Lughod 1991). However, in the wake of anthropology's reflexive turn (Clifford 1986) and critical engagement with colonial structures that condition knowledge production about traditional research subjects (Asad 1973), ethnographic methods are now deployed less to create static images of a remote and distant Other, and more to understand how people navigate their social worlds, their positionalities within a set of social and power relations, and how they conceive of themselves within this set of power relations (Bourdieu 1992; Jackson 1998).

Literature has examined how PICs use traditional aspects of culture such as language and rituals to convey deterrence messaging in origin and transit countries (Musarò 2019; Paynter and Riva 2023). However, less examined have been the ways in which ethnographic methods are used to create deterrence messaging that instrumentalizes knowledge of people's subjectivities. I posit that examining the processes underlying deterrence messaging campaigns reveals how culturally sensitive messaging is increasingly situating migrants' relationships with their communities and the worldviews that inhere in such relationships as objects of knowledge that if known 'better', can produce more effective deterrence. Such messaging is particularly insidious in how it targets the inner life of the prospective migrant to weaponize their worldviews against them.

Commonly accepted ethnographic approaches in the social sciences centre an empirically-driven approach in which data gathered from interviews, observation, and focus groups is used to understand the varied dimensions of a community's social world (Bernard 2017; Harrison 2018; Miles and Huberman 1994). By contrast, the report I analyse, while deploying ethnographic methods, makes a variegated set of ethnographic data fit within the goals of pre-determined policy directives. In the context of deterrence PICs, policy directives aim to increase the effectiveness of deterrence. Data about migrant social worlds in the research report I analyse gets homogenized to convey that migrants make decisions that are ignorant of the treacherous oceanscape and of people smugglers. In the graphic novel, this ignorance is shown to produce

decisions that jeopardize family relations, thus casting migrants as deviant family members. While PICs are branded by the state as acts of care designed to inform migrants about the dangers of the maritime journey, such campaigns and the research that precedes them come to paint migrants as both ignorant and deviant, and selectively ignore the complicated realities of migrant decision-making. Far from acts of benevolence, such messaging, in focusing on community worldviews and social relations, aims to function as technologies of self-governance and discipline.

It is important to note that a whole infrastructure of cultural sensitivity in the form of consulting agencies and local ethnographic research authorizes such representations of migrants. Kate Coddington calls “the relationships, technologies, actors, and policies that together facilitate enforcement of Australia’s borders and produce campaigns” as an “enforcement infrastructure” (Coddington 2024: 1). As an analytic, ‘enforcement infrastructure’ turns attention to the hidden efforts that “move across and beyond the international border walls, visa checkpoints, and national policy-makers who are often depicted as key within enforcement efforts” (Coddington 2024: 2). Coddington’s framework is useful to describe the broader landscape within which ethnographically oriented PIC research emerges. How, precisely, ethnographic data is generated and visually reinscribed to discipline migrant subjectivity can be considered another layer of this enforcement infrastructure.

Afghan-targeted PICs and the mobilization of ethnographic data

Cultural sensitivity was a guiding ethos in how PICs targeted towards Afghan asylum seekers were developed. Cultural sensitivity in the development of PICs came in the form of a complex infrastructure that involved members of the diaspora, ACBPS, and research teams composed of diasporic, external, and local residents. For example, the ‘No to People Smuggling’ awareness campaign was launched in 2010 and targeted migrant communities in Australia, in the hopes that the diaspora would convey Australia’s policies back to family members in Afghanistan. The key slogan of this campaign was ‘No Advantage’, noting that migrants would gain no advantage from using people smugglers (Schloenhardt and Philipson 2013: 17).

An executive summary prepared for ACBPS by WISE Strategic Communications in October 2010, illuminates the ethnographic approach taken to understand local Afghan Hazara communities’ decision-making processes and rationales around migration to Australia by boat. WISE conducted a survey among the male Hazara population, ages 15–50, consisting of 50 interviews and ten focus groups within four provinces of Afghanistan in order to determine the level of knowledge Hazara people had about migration to Australia via boat and people smugglers (WISE 2010: 3). WISE was asked to conduct this study for the purposes of determining the various ‘communication channels and spheres of influence’ that shaped how Afghans make decisions around migrating to Australia via clandestine methods (2010: 54). Policy advisors working on the project emphasized the importance of a grassroots communications approach that valued qualitative over quantitative research. They employed four research teams who were sent to various provinces over the course of 10 days. The teams took a fieldwork-based approach and included journalists, graduate students of the social sciences from Kabul University, and external researchers.

One of the stated findings of the study is that while the vast majority of interviewees were aware of the risks of migration via maritime routes, “only a few Hazaras realize[d] that migrants also face a risk of repatriation and detention by the Australian authority” (2010: 3). However, findings from the focus groups suggest a more complicated picture. For example, in Daykundi Province interviews, a male farmer from Hiti District is quoted as saying “I usually hear about the dangers of illegal migration from people in wedding halls, from people who are still in Indonesia, from people who have been deported from Australia” (2010: 46), suggesting that information is coming back from people who have been repatriated and that people are aware of repatriation as a possible outcome of their journeys. Another farmer from Shahrastan district

notes that he heard from friends in Kabul and Iran that those who migrated to Australia confronted “prison and getting shot by the border police” (2010: 47). Such anecdotes put into question the claim that people are not aware of Australia’s repatriation and detention policies.

The interviews quoted in the report illustrate significant differences in how residents of different provinces perceived the risks of migrating to Australia. However, in the report’s synthesis of findings, these differences are downplayed in favour of giving the impression that overall, Hazara people are not aware of Australia’s detention policies: “Although a few people have already learned of the risks of repatriation by the Australian government, the majority of Hazara people may not be aware of the possibility of asylum rejection even if immigrants reach to the country after treacherous journey” (2010: 51). The differences in Hazara peoples’ level of awareness of the risks of immigration via boat to Australia are worded as ‘slight’ (2010: 51).

Other focus groups revealed different perspectives on whether or not the benefits of clandestine migration to Australia outweighed the risks. For example, the Kabul focus groups largely felt they did not (2010: 42), whereas a focus group in Daykundi Province did feel the benefits were worth the risks (2010: 25). Interviewees in Daykundi pointed out that they knew migrants could end up in detention centres or prisons in Australia or Indonesia and could face considerable physical and psychological harm (2010: 26). One interviewee noted, “There is 80% chance of dying during the journey and not reaching Australian territory. But my first choice remains going to Australia (a focus-group participant from Shahrstan district)” (2010: 26). In the Bamiyan focus groups, interviewees noted that while they did not have a high chance of finding employment, good housing, and a better quality of life in Australia, they still thought the journey was worth it (2010: 31). The report notes findings from the Ghazni province focus groups which note that “migration to Australia is considered an acceptable option for Hazaras faced with heightened security and economic concerns in Ghazni ... Overwhelmingly, focus group participants believe that the cost-benefit analysis clearly favors clandestine migration, with many individuals not seeing the benefit of staying in Afghanistan when confronted with unemployment, Taliban persecutions, and little hope that the security situation will improve in the future” (2010: 17).

Despite the fact that interviewee responses reflected a range of views as to why migration to Australia was worth the risks, the report’s conclusions did not reflect this as notable. Rather, the conclusions focused on the fact that most interviewees did not bring up the issues of detention and repatriation (although some did). Such a conclusion shaped the report’s recommendation that the ‘risks about illegal immigration need to be made clearer ... The message to the target audience must include not only the risks related to people smugglers and dangerous journeys but also the potential of repatriation and detention by the Australian authority’ (2010: 53). Another recommendation was that outreach be undertaken throughout the community, including by religious leaders, school teachers, and elders at schools, mosques, and universities (2010: 53). This is particularly significant since such figures of authority are deemed important sources of information and advice across all provinces and demographics, as noted in multiple sections of the report. Thus, when there is a meaningful trend or pattern that warrants some kind of generalization, it gets brought up insofar as it could help serve as a vehicle for deterrence messaging. Another notable recommendation is that “Any communication campaign should adopt a recognizable brand or theme which people can easily link to the plight of illegal immigration in Afghanistan. Otherwise, such campaign efforts would be mistaken or confused with other ongoing public education drives among the target audience. Campaign branding would be essential to signify uniqueness and message highlights in Afghanistan” (2010: 53). This recommendation focuses on the importance attached to developing locally specific messaging and branding that would resonate with an Hazara Afghan audience.

The recommendations that WISE proposes following these conclusions thus depict Hazara opinions with broad brush strokes despite interview data that suggests more nuanced takes around the risks, benefits, and reasons for migration across different provinces. The disparities between the qualitative data and the report’s conclusions and recommendations show that when the objective of ethnographic research is to manage migrant behaviour, such research gets

read in terms of how it fits within pre-determined policy objectives—in this case, the Australian state's plan to deter undesirable migrants. The data, for example, is not read in terms of what it reveals about local people's daily struggles and how that shapes their understanding of risk, precarity, and what it means to create a better future.

Appropriating migrant agency

Public information deterrence campaigns have been described as particularly problematic in the way they appropriate migrant agency, through assuming they know what is good for migrants, what choices make rational sense, and what risks are not worth taking. The premise of PICs is often that migrants do not have reliable information about the vulnerabilities that await them and that deterrence campaigns provide a service that will save migrants from such dangers, thus attempting to 'discipline migrant aspirations' (Pagogna and Sakkapopolrak 2021: 2). However, as Koser notes, in practice, such campaigns do not always deter people who are fleeing for their lives (2010) and often work with distorted understandings of how migrants make decisions. As Anke Fiedler has noted, "awareness-raising measures must 'compete' against various other feedback mechanisms—in particular, feedback emanating from personal networks, which is pivotal in decision-making processes at the level of individual migratory agency" (Fiedler 2019: 372). Ceri Oeppen has shown that rather than diminishing desires to flee, such campaigns function to shift the blame for migrant deaths at sea from the state to migrants themselves (Oeppen 2016). Campaigns mobilize a particular conception of agency in which migrant choices are structured not by systematic persecution and poverty and state policies that limit visa pathways, but by confusion, a lack of information about the struggles of migration, and a false sense that everything will fall into place.

Fleay and Hartley (2016) have shown that Australian PICs in particular are based on reductionist conceptions of migrant behaviour and thinking, in that they assume that migrants are hardly ever aware of the dangers of the journey (van Bommel 2020). However, as Fleay and Hartley demonstrate in their study, migrant knowledge of the short- and long-term effects of their decisions to migrate by boat have been quite varied. While some people were aware of Australia's offshore detention policies (See Far 2016), others believed that while they might be detained, they would eventually be resettled (Fleay et al. 2016). Some did not care how long they would be in detention, while others did not expect detention to be so prolonged (2016: 66). Interestingly, others had experienced detention in Indonesia and felt that detention in Australia would not be as violent (2016: 66), while some interviewees were not at all persuaded to change their plans after being informed about Australia's offshore detention programme.

Roslyn Richardson (2010) has shown that deterrence messages are not interpreted in the same way by all prospective migrants. Richardson's study, which included interviews with 27 refugees, showed a variety of perspectives. Some did not even know their destination country was Australia prior to their arrival (2010: 10). However, others were aware of the risks of the boat journey and decided to pursue it anyway (2010: 10–12). The figure of the ignorant migrant is particularly emphasized in Australian PICs which emphasize the state's role as a benevolent protective actor that aims to save migrants from making decisions based on lack of information. Ethnographic research is one of many tools that the state has used to refine its deterrence messaging and to claim that it has taken an empirically rigorous and 'human-centred' approach to addressing migration.

PICs as disciplining migrant subjectivity

In recent years, PICs have used a range of rhetorical strategies to justify deterrence. The European Union spent \$23 million between 2015 and 2019 on 104 informational campaigns (EMN 2019). Such campaigns cite the need to save asylum seekers from catastrophic humanitarian

disasters. In Norwegian campaigns, social media has been a key frontier for warning asylum seekers not to take the journey (Brekke and Thorbjørnsrud 2020). Additionally, the US government has collaborated extensively with the Mexican government to employ culturally salient communication strategies to deter asylum seekers. For example, the Mexican government received \$US100 million from the US Department of State as part of the Mérida Initiative (Seelke and Finklea 2015), and \$US86 million as part of the Programa Frontera Sur to use visual media and songs to deter prospective migrants. The government circulated folk songs about the dangers of the journey through the desert (Kosnick 2014; Williams 2020) as well as signs with warnings like ‘No Vale la Pena’ (It’s not worth the pain) within the Sonoran desert itself (De León 2015). Other campaigns targeted migrants’ intimate lives, such as the ‘Rajarse’ poster campaign, which drew upon notions of Mexican masculinity and *machismo* to persuade migrants to avoid the trek through the desert. For example, one poster notes: ‘Backing out is a manly thing. Before you cross to the other side remember: The cemeteries are full of the brave and macho’ (Williams 2020: 1208). Jill Williams has shown that such campaigns seek to reshape migrant choices and senses of self in their everyday lives (2020: 1203) at the level of affect, emotion, and aspirations, and thus function as ‘instruments of governance’ (2020: 1204). Such campaigns seek to activate feelings of guilt, grief, shame, and responsibility among migrants through emphasizing that their actions will activate a process of family disunification, thus making them ‘bad family members’ (Coddington and Williams 2022).

More recent research on PICs has shown how such campaigns have increasingly recruited nationals from migrant communities to participate in deterrence messaging (Kosnick 2014; Musarò 2019). Musarò’s study showed how the International Organization for Migration worked with cultural consultants to put together an informational campaign called ‘Aware Migrants’ for the Italian government targeted towards Ghanaian asylum seekers. The campaign featured a Ghanaian musician singing a song to the melody ‘No Place Like Home’ but replacing it with the words ‘No to Irregular Migration’ (Musarò 2019). The German government has also circulated billboard campaigns in Afghanistan in Farsi which stated, ‘Leaving Afghanistan? Are you sure? Afghans, stay and build the country with us’. Such a billboard plays upon the guilt that many Afghan nationals already feel about leaving their country and their family members in the midst of ongoing war and political turmoil. The German campaigns were particularly invested in culturally resonant messaging that played upon the aspirations, feelings of guilt, and desires for progress borne out of Afghanistan’s multi-generational history of war, conflict, and accompanying cycles of destruction and reconstruction. The billboard also plays upon the logic of empowerment which the United States and NATO countries mobilized to persuade locals to participate in development and reconstruction efforts. I argue that Australian PICs, similar to the aforementioned PICs, not only represent migrants as violating border entry laws but also as potentially violating their own communities’ expectations and futures, thus targeting migrant subjectivities within a set of worldviews, moral economies, and structures of power. These examples are part of a growing trend of deterrence campaigns that target local residents and actors to convey culturally and locally salient messaging that targets the emotional and affective dimensions of prospective migrants’ lifeworlds.

Reinscribing cultural knowledge within the graphic novel

In 2013, Statt Consulting was given a contract of A\$15 million from 15 February 2013 to 31 December 2015 to produce ad campaigns for dissemination throughout the Middle East (Farrell 2017, Contract Notice View—CN3285468), which included the 18-page graphic novel. Statt Consulting is a Hong Kong-based communications firm that specializes in migration PICs. It frames its role as part of a broader humanitarian approach to prevent “illegal migration; people smuggling; human trafficking; and internal displacement” and “a deep understanding of cultural and social nuance with community engagement from start to finish” (Statt Consulting-Capabilities 2024). Statt Consulting is particularly adept at working with members of migrant

diasporas to support government campaigns to prevent 'irregular migration.' The firm frames the diaspora as a critical nodal point between prospective migrants and people smugglers. Diasporic migrants are trusted sources of information for prospective migrants, but they have also, according to Statt, inadvertently served as success stories that attract prospective migrants to destination countries like Australia. Diasporas are also depicted as easy targets for people smugglers to find prospective migrants ('[Statt Consulting-Diasporas as Facilitators 2024](#)'). Statt Consulting, thus, views local residents in source countries and diasporas in destination countries as key to changing misconceptions around irregular migration.

A striking aspect of Statt's partnership with ACBPS is that Afghanistan is currently the only stated global South country with whom Statt Consulting has partnered around migration information campaigns. Its other partners are Australia, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. While the exact reasons for this are not clear from Statt's publicly available literature, the suggestion is that Afghan nationals were not only seen as a key target audience for migration deterrence campaigns, but local communities were also seen as viable partners for the development and distribution of messaging. Through mobilizing the diaspora and developing local distribution and research methods in source countries, Statt Consulting exemplifies the turn to culturally sensitive deterrence messaging that deploys ethnographic data-gathering approaches.

Statt eventually received the contract for creating and distributing the graphic novel as part of their Neutrino Programme. While the contract began under the Rudd administration which reactivated boat turnbacks and offshore detention, part of the contract also coincided with the commencement of Operation Sovereign Borders on 19 July 2013. What is particularly striking about Statt's collaboration with the Australian government is that it entailed both the transnational distribution of media through online platforms as well as local distribution in villages, schools, and community meetings run by local residents. For example, according to a report by *The Australian*, Statt consultants were contracted to work with local Hazara community leaders, tribal elders, and school principals in Bamiyan and Ghazni provinces to convince prospective migrants to avoid the dangers of people smuggling. Such workshops also took place in Kabul and Jalalabad ([Dusevic 2013](#)) and were rooted in an ethics of cross-cultural communication, education, and training services that aimed 'to empower local communities' ('[Statt Consulting-About Us 2024](#)').

Documents released by the Department of Home Affairs through a 2016 FOIA request detail the government's contract with Statt. The documents note that Statt paid subcontractors to deliver 20,000 100-page notebooks in Afghanistan with deterrence messaging across universities and high schools ([Farrell 2017](#)). Statt's contract with Australia began in 2011 and entailed undertaking research surveys in Pakistan and Afghanistan based on consultations with community leaders in Afghanistan and members of the diaspora in Australia in an effort to develop targeted and culturally appropriate communications ([Farrell 2017](#)). In the procurement proposal summed up by reporter Peter Farrell of *The Guardian*, local and diasporic knowledge was key to the creation of campaigns that were distinctly designed to target prospective maritime arrivals.

Visualizing the 'futile' migration journey

Michel Foucault defines subjectivity as "the way in which the subject experiences himself in a game of truth where he relates to himself" (2000: 461). Thus, how one sees oneself in relation to the norms and relations of power that exist within one's social environment is a key element of subjectivity. By illustrating how migrants would be perceived by their community members after failing to reach Australia, such campaigns not only tell migrants to avoid Australia but also shame them by representing them as disappointments to their community and as deviant social actors. In contrast to studies that examine how nation-states depict 'irregular migrants' as figures who violate the rules of national sovereignty ([Chambers 2018](#); [De Genova 2002](#); [Scheel](#)

2017a, 2017b), the graphic novel reveals that nation-states also depict migrants as subjects who violate the social norms of their own communities.

The graphic novel I analyse chronicles the journey of a young adult man who is visibly of the Hazara community. The son and his parents are depicted as struggling to make ends meet as they run a car repair shop. The novel begins by showing thought bubbles emanating from the protagonist's father indicating that he dreams of his son studying in a well-manicured college campus in Australia, which visually is contrasted with the dusty and rubble-like features of his current home, though we are not told what province he lives in. Here, it is implied that prospective migrants are motivated purely by economic reasons to take the dangerous boat journey to Australia, rather than reasons having to do with safety. Nor does the novel entertain how poverty often means a lack of safety in contexts where paying off local warlords is sometimes necessary to secure the safety of one's family. The centring of economic precarity as the motivation for migration also sits in contrast to the evidence presented in the WISE report which noted that migrants in more rural provinces face discrimination, persecution, and insecurity as a result of Taliban insurgents and that such issues intersect with economic insecurity. A finding from the report itself reveals the intersectional nature of economic and political insecurity. One section notes that for some people in Bamyan province, there was a desire for the Afghan government to play a larger role in providing economic and social services to Hazara communities because it could create a more physically secure environment (2010: 31–32). While in the novel, everyday experiences of physical insecurity are dismissed, it is the protagonist's journey to Australia that is portrayed as treacherous. As Williams has noted in the context of US deterrence campaigns in the US-Mexico borderlands, home is depicted as 'safe and stable' whereas 'unauthorized migration is dangerous, financially irresponsible, and going to fail' (Williams 2020: 1202). A similar dynamic is set up in the introductory vignettes of the graphic novel.

Returning to the novel, certain culturally resonant details are meant to draw in the intended audience so that they might imagine themselves in the protagonist's shoes. The young man is shown having a conversation with his mother and father who are wearing traditional clothing, the man a *pirahan-tomban* (loose-fitting pant and shirt), and the mother a long *chadar* (headscarf), which would reflect, to some extent, the dress of residents with their implied socioeconomic status. The father is once again shown thinking about Australia's tall skyscrapers, indicating that it is the family's desires that push the protagonist to take the migration journey. This both abides by the WISE report's findings that family members retain a great deal of authority and respect, but contradicts another report finding that family members often persuade people not to take the journey. In the novel, while the family is seen as encouraging their son to take the journey, they are later depicted as the victims of their son's decisions.

The young man is next shown in a bus headed for Pakistan. The colours and designs on the bus and landscape reflect the rich colours and imagery of local transportation in Karachi. The protagonist makes his way through the city, looking for the airport to begin the next leg of his journey. He arrives at Ali Jinnah International Airport, where he then boards a PIA flight to Indonesia. Upon arriving in Indonesia, the young man calls his parents from a pay phone, clearly distraught and scared, perhaps to let them know he has arrived at his next destination. He wanders the town, asking people how he can find the boats to Australia, pointing to vague images of boats heading there. The next few graphics show the protagonist boarding a small boat with several other migrants. They confront a harrowing journey with large, intimidating waves. Here, the campaign mobilizes elements that are both unique to but also not entirely reflective of the migration journeys of Afghan migrants. On the one hand, undocumented migrants headed to Australia depart from Indonesia and their attempts to reach Australia consist of multiple steps involving various intermediaries and sometimes prolonged waiting periods for the next available boat. On the other hand, the campaign portrays the protagonist as deeply confused and ill-prepared as he attempts to find a pathway to the next boat to Australia, indicating that he has done little in the way of planning for this complicated journey. He is shown to have no conception of the journey's physical and psychological risks and no plan for how to navigate its various



Graphic novel campaign illustrating asylum seekers taking the boat journey to Australia 2014, Australian Customs, Creative Commons attribution 3.0 Australia licence.

stages. As other interview-based studies have shown, this is far from the case as many intending migrants do create thoughtful, structured plans for their journeys based on ongoing communication with refugees currently waiting in Indonesia and diasporic contacts and other detained refugees in Australia (Fleay et al. 2016; Richardson 2010).

As the journey proceeds, this sense of confusion culminates in migrants fighting for their lives as their boat is overwhelmed by the treacherous ocean. The boat is about to capsize when they see an Australian navy ship. The migrants are then taken aboard the ship and eventually wait in long lines to register their names and identities with Australian border officials. The novel shows the man sitting on the floor with other men seemingly listening to a lecture by a Customs and Border Protection officer. A close-up is shown of the man's face in tears, next to an image of him being taken on another bus headed to a detention centre. The group he is in boards a plane to Manus Island. Upon arrival, the young man, alongside other young men, are now stuck behind detention centre fences, battling relentless mosquitos and hot weather, and suffering through depressive episodes where they remember their lives back home. Migrants, being victims of the oceanscape and detention centre, are also rendered responsible for their own deaths (Watkins 2017: 170). At the same time, the state depicts itself as rescuing migrants from death by the ocean, despite the fact that it has now subjected them to prolonged confinement.

The novel goes on to show what the young man confronts when he is confined in detention for a prolonged period of time. Here, the young man is shown remembering dancing the *attan* (the national dance of Afghanistan) with his friends who are all wearing traditional clothing and gathered around the dancers. The novel shows images of the young man recalling happier times with his family. The dress of the men dancing and the way their movements are illustrated are particularly striking. The men are shown wearing turbans and *pirahan-tomban* and one man is shown waving a handkerchief in the air as he dances. However, as Humphrey has pointed out,



Graphic novel campaign showing the conditions asylum seekers will confront upon attempting to reach Australia 2014, Australian Customs Creative Commons attribution 3.0 Australia licence.

the *attan* represents a tradition that may not resonate across all Hazara communities (Humphrey 2018), thus suggesting the partial representation of Hazara life even when the novel attempts to depict culturally salient memories of home.

Close-ups of the protagonist's face are juxtaposed against close-ups of his mother and father who have aged considerably as they sit against the wall, ultimately disappointed that their son's journey yielded no productive outcome. The passage of time has yielded little financial security for the parents or professional mobility for their son, which has worn on their own hopes significantly. The protagonist is shown sitting in the detention centre with his head in his hands, seemingly regretting his decision. Here, the state makes clear that detention will function as a form of 'slow violence'. Through juxtaposing the devastation of the protagonist's parents with the protagonist's own gestures of regret, the novel portrays the migrant as in violation of community expectations and social norms around economic productivity and security. Migrants are humiliated as individuals in that they have rendered their family members' aspirations for a better life in Afghanistan as futile.

The novel ends with a message in Farsi noting, 'If you come to Australia without a visa by boat, you will not be resettled' ("Australian Customs" 2014). As Coddington and Williams note in their analysis of *migracorridos* (Central American songs that chronicle the tragedies and aspirations of migration) used by the US and Mexico as tools for deterrence, such songs portray the family as burdened by debt because of migrant actions (Coddington and Williams 2022: 595), once again reducing migration to an economic choice that has reverberating social consequences. A similar message is implied at the end of this novel—the migrant is shown as having brought further misfortune upon his family through an unplanned and ill-thought-out decision. As Niamatullah Ibrahim has written, the Hazara community has historically confronted social and economic exclusion, dispossession of land, and internal and external displacement at the

hands of the Afghan state in uneven ways since the mid-18th century (2017). Anthropologist Alessandro Monsutti has added that in this context of ongoing marginalization, many Hazara migrants have developed transnational networks of trust, resources, and care that constitute both relations of reciprocity and solidarity (2004: 221). However, the ability to navigate such trusted networks is also a skill that has developed out of prolonged periods of persecution, as is the ability to imagine new kinds of futures, something the novel does not emphasize. This long history of dispossession and displacement has created a social world in which reciprocity and accountability to one's family is an important value that shapes the calculus around migration. The situation of one's family members has shaped feelings of guilt and loss among migrants experiencing prolonged detention and liminal legal status. By rendering Australia an impossible destination, the graphic novel shows that migrants will inherently make injurious decisions towards their family members. This visual campaign reminds migrants of what they will lose in their journeys which go well beyond their lives, and include their relationships with their family members, their cultural identities, and their families' economic stability.

The graphic novel functions as a disciplinary technology of power (Foucault 1977) that attempts to target migrants' senses of self in relation to their communities. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault writes that in contrast to previous regimes of governance, modern biopolitical regimes of life and death rely less on overt forms of punishment to condition desirable behaviour and more on the perpetuation of norms and by extension, the shaming of those who do not subscribe to them. In biopolitical regimes, the power of norms exceeds the power of direct punishment. Thus, social subjects will internalize such norms, creating self-governing subjects who themselves make the decision to abide by that which has been deemed the rule (Foucault 1977). This particular graphic novel enacts a similar logic of discipline that mobilizes culturally salient imagery that reminds migrants that they risk becoming seen as deviant subjects who, in their decision to migrate, will violate community norms and bring suffering and shame to their families. Such campaigns aim to discipline through weaponizing prospective migrants' worldviews against them. Thus, the migrant is not only violating Australian law; they are also violating the internal norms of their own social milieus.

Conclusion: social relations as objects of bordering practices

The aforementioned analysis, while focused on a campaign targeted to Hazara Afghan asylum seekers, has resonances with other campaigns carried out during the same period of time. Deterrence campaigns targeting Sri Lankan asylum seekers also drew upon worldviews around futurity. For example, the government released an online 'wheel of fortune' game that asylum seekers could play to see what their futures would be if they migrated via boat. The government also released a list of horoscopes that predicted outcomes of migrant journeys depending on their zodiac sign. These were all culturally salient techniques given the extent to which astrologers are important figures in Sri Lankan society when determining pivotal decisions around work, life, and marriage (Butler 2021).

The graphic novel shows that Australia is deeply concerned with whether or not migrants view it as a possible destination. The novel portrays the migration journey as putting migrants into untenable situations in which they would violate their own values and senses of self. PICs morally judge prospective migrants' calculus of risk in an effort to evoke feelings of uncertainty about their choices and how they make them, thus enacting epistemic violence. Through the turn to ethnographic research and cultural sensitivity, the state is able to say that migrant ignorance and deviance is an empirically supported fact that can be unlearned. The state can then claim that it is protecting migrants from deviating from their own worldviews, thus saving them from physical death and social death, ensuring they remain alive and maintain their status as good cultural subjects. Ultimately, the implication that migrants are deviant family or community members assumes that migrant journeys happen without the presence, encouragement, and support of family members who remain back home. This implication also downplays the

hope that family members who remain back home provide migrants during and after the journey to destination countries. While disappointment and disillusionment are certainly realities for many families, family members can also be sources of encouragement, positivity, and patience. The implication of social deviance also denies the extent to which migration via treacherous routes is for many, a collective and thoughtful (though undoubtedly painful) decision. By examining how PICs aim to reshape migrant decision-making processes in ways that are branded as more humane, we can more seriously consider the broader border regimes within which cultural knowledge becomes deployed as a tool of power.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Lin Zeng and Asya Savelyeva at the University of British Columbia for their support in identifying supplementary source material. I would also like to thank the anonymous Reviewers and the Editors for their valuable feedback on earlier drafts of this paper. This paper also benefited from feedback at the 2023 Australian Anthropological Society Conference.

References

- Abu-Lughod, L.** (1991) 'Writing against Culture'. In Fox, R. G. (ed.) *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*. Santa Fe: School of Advanced Research Press, pp.137–162.
- Albahari, M.** (2018) 'From Right to Permission: Asylum, Mediterranean Migrations, and Europe's War on Smuggling'. *Journal on Migration and Human Security* 6(2): 121–130.
- Asad, T.** (1973) 'Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter'. In Huizer, G., Manheim, B. (eds.) *The Politics of Anthropology: From Colonialism and Sexism toward a View from Below*. The Hague: Mouton Publishers, pp.85–96.
- Australian Customs.** (2014) Storyboard Afghanistan. <http://www.customs.gov.au/webdata/resources/files/Storyboard-Afghanistan.pdf>. Date accessed 25 May 2023.
- Bernard, H. R.** (2017) *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Bourdieu, P.** (1992) *The Logic of Practice*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
- Brantner, C. and Lobinger, K.** (2014) 'Campaign Comics: The Use of Comic Books for Strategic Political Communication'. *International Journal of Communication* 8: 27.
- Brekke, J.-P. and Thorbjørnsrud, K.** (2020) 'Communicating Borders: Governments Deterring Asylum Seekers through Social Media Campaigns'. *Migration Studies* 8(1): 43–65.
- Butler, G.** (2021) 'Critics Slam Australia's Appalling Campaign to Deter Asylum Seekers.' *Vice*. <https://www.vice.com/en/article/m7vb4q/australian-campaign-asylum-seekers-online-games>. Date accessed 11 December 2023.
- Cappi, V. and Musarò, P.** (2023) 'Awareness Campaigns to Deter Migrants: A Neoliberal Industry for Symbolic Bordering'. In Nethery, A., Hirsch, A. and Dastyari, A. (eds.) *Refugee Externalisation Policies: Responsibility, Legitimacy and Accountability*. London: Routledge, pp. 171–188.
- Chambers, P.** (2018) *Border Security: Shores of Politics, Horizons of Justice*. Routledge: New York.
- Clifford, J.** (1986) 'Introduction: Partial Truths'. In Clifford, J. and Marcus, G. (eds.) *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp.1–26.
- Coddington, K.** (2024) 'The Enforcement Infrastructure of Public Information Campaigns: Australia's No Way Campaign, Colonial Logics, and the Production of Value'. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02637758241230178>.
- Coddington, K. and Williams, J. M.** (2022) 'Relational Enforcement: The Family and the Expanding Scope of Border Enforcement'. *Progress in Human Geography* 46(2): 590–604.
- De Genova, N.** (2002) 'Migrant 'Illegality' and Deportability in Everyday Life'. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31(1): 419–447.
- De León, J.** (2015) *The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Dobbins, S.** (2016) 'Comics in Public Health: The Sociocultural and Cognitive Influence of Narrative on Health Behaviours'. *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* 7(1): 35–52.
- EMN (European Migration Network).** (2019) "Migration and communication: Information and Awareness-raising Campaigns in Countries of Origin and Transit." *Briefing Paper of the Austrian National EMN Conference 2019*. Vienna, December 3. https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/emn_conference.pdf. Date accessed 25 May 2023.
- Dusevic, T.** (2013) 'Customs Losing Propaganda Battle as \$4.6m message falls on deaf ears in Afghanistan.' *The Australian*, 22 July. <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/%2Fnation%2Fimmigration%2Fcustoms-losing-propaganda-battle-as-46m-message-falls-on-deaf-ears-in-afghanistan%2Fnews-story%2F5027c16ec5b8cb602fdc4bbb613cdaea&memtype=anonymous&mode=premium&v21=GROUPA-Segment-1-NOSCORE&V21spcbehaviour=append>. Date accessed 11 December 2023.
- Farrell, P.** (2017) 'Revealed. How Australia 'dumped so much f**ing money' on asylum-seeker ad campaign.' *The Guardian*, 31 July. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/aug/01/revealed-how-australia-dumped-so-much-fucking-money-on-asylum-seeker-ad-campaign>. Date accessed 25 May 2023.
- Fiedler, A.** (2019) 'From Being Aware to Going There: On the Awareness and Decision-Making of (Prospective) Migrants'. *Mass Communication and Society* 23(3): 356–377.
- Fleay, C., Cokley, J., Dodd, A., Briskman, L. and Schwartz, L.** (2016) 'Missing the Boat: Australia and Asylum Seeker Deterrence Messaging'. *International Migration* 54(4): 60–73.
- Fleay, C. and Hartley, L.** (2016) 'I Feel like a Beggar': Asylum Seekers Living in the Australian Community without the Right to Work'. *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 17(4): 1031–1048.
- Foucault, M.** (1977) *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Foucault, M.** (2000) 'Preface to the History of Sexuality, Volume Two'. In Rabinow, P. (ed.) *Michel Foucault, Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth: Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*, vol. 1. London: Penguin. 199–205.
- Gordon, I.** (2020) 'Comic Strips'. In Hatfield, C. and Beaty, B. (eds.) *Comic Studies: A Guidebook*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, pp. 13–24.
- Harrison, K. A.** (2018) *Ethnography: Understanding Qualitative Research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hathaway, J. C. and Gammeltoft-Hansen, T.** (2015) 'Columbia Journal of Transnational Law'. 'Non-Refolement in a World of Cooperative Deterrence.' 53(2): 235–284.
- Hirsch, A. L. and Doig, C.** (2018) 'Outsourcing Control: The International Organization for Migration in Indonesia'. *The International Journal of Human Rights* 22(5): 681–708.
- Holmes, S.** (2014) *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Humphrey, A.** (2018) 'Emotion and Secrecy in Australian Asylum-Seeker Comics: The Politics of Visual Style'. *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 21(5): 457–485.
- Ibrahimi, N.** (2017) *The Hazaras and the Afghan State: Rebellion, Exclusion and the Struggle for Recognition*. London: Hurst Publishers.
- Jackson, M.** (1998) *Minima Ethnographica: Intersubjectivity and the Anthropological Project*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Jacobsen, K. L.** (2015) 'Experimentation in Humanitarian Locations: UNHCR and Biometric Registration of Afghan Refugees'. *Security Dialogue* 46(2): 144–164.
- Jusonyte, I.** (2016) *Threshold: Emergency Responders on the US-Mexico Border*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kee, L. H., Martin, J. and Ow, R.** (2014) *Cross-Cultural Social Work: Local and Global*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kosnick, K.** (2014) 'Mediating Migration: New Roles for (Mass) Media'. *InMedia* (5): 1–20. <https://journals.openedition.org/inmedia/761>.
- Miles, M. B. and Michael Huberman, A.** (1994) *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*. London: Sage.

- Miller, G., Vitkovskaya, J., and Fischer-Braun, R. (2017) "'This deal will make me look terrible': Full transcripts of Trump's call with Mexico and Australia." *The Washington Post*, 3 August. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2017/politics/australia-mexico-transcripts/>. Date accessed 25 May 2023.
- Monsutti, A. (2004) 'Cooperation, Remittances, and Kinship among the Hazaras'. *Iranian Studies* 37 (2): 219–240.
- Morris, J. (2023) *Asylum and Extraction in the Republic of Nauru*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Mountz, A. (2011) 'The Enforcement Archipelago: Detention, Haunting, and Asylum on Islands'. *Political Geography* 30(3): 118–128.
- Musarò, P. (2019) 'Aware Migrants: The Role of Information Campaigns in the Management of Migration'. *European Journal of Communication* 34(6): 629–640.
- Multicultural NSW. (2022) New South Wales Government. <https://multicultural.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/P3-GUIDE-What-is-CALD.pdf>. Date accessed 23 March 2024.
- Nethery, A., Dastyari, A. and Hirsch, A. (2023) 'Examining Refugee Externalisation Policies: A Comparative Study of Europe and Australia'. In Nethery, A., Dastyari, A., and Hirsch, A. (eds.) *Refugee Externalisation Policies: Responsibility, Legitimacy and Accountability*. London: Routledge, pp. 1–24.
- Norton, H. F., Ansell, M. E., Pomputius, A., Edwards, M. E., Daley, M. and Harnett, S. (2019) 'HIV/AIDS Information Promotion at the Library: Creative Campaigns for Young Adults'. *Journal of the Medical Library Association: JMLA* 107(2): 222–231.
- Oeppen, C. (2016) 'Leaving Afghanistan! Are You Sure?' European Efforts to Deter Potential Migrants through Information Campaigns'. *Human Geography* 9(2): 57–68.
- Pagogna, R. and Sakdapolrak, P. (2021) 'Disciplining Migration Aspirations through Migration Information Campaigns: A Systematic Review of the Literature'. *Geography Compass* 15(7): e12585.
- Paynter, E. and Riva, S. (2023) 'Performing Border Externalisation: Media Deterrence Campaigns and Neoliberal Belonging'. *Geopolitics* 1–25, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2023.2234826>.
- Phillips, J. (2010) "Seeking asylum from Afghanistan." *Flagpost*, 19 October. https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/FlagPost/2010/October/Seeking_asylum_from_Afghanistan. Date accessed 25 May 2023.
- Rakower, J. and Hallyburton, A. (2022) 'Disease Information through Comics: A Graphic Option for Health Education'. *The Journal of Medical Humanities* 43(3): 475–492.
- Richardson, R. (2010) 'Sending a Message? Refugees and Australia's Deterrence Campaign'. *Media International Australia* 135(1): 7–18.
- Scheel, S. (2017a) 'Appropriating Mobility and Bordering Europe through Romantic Love: Unearthing the Intricate Intertwinement of Border Regimes and Migratory Practices'. *Migration Studies* 5 (3): 389–408.
- Scheel, S. (2017b) 'The Secret is to Look Good on Paper': Appropriating Mobility within and against a Machine of Illegalization'. In De Genova, N. (ed.) *The Borders of Europe: Autonomy of Migration, Tactics of Bordering*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 37–63.
- Schloenhardt, A. and Philipson, E. (2013) 'No to People Smuggling': A Review of Australia's Anti-Migrant Smuggling Awareness Campaigns.' *The University of Queensland: Migrant Smuggling Working Group*. <https://law.uq.edu.au/files/6729/Schloenhardt-Philipson-SoM-Awareness-Campaigns-2013.pdf>. Date accessed 11 December 2023.
- See Far (2016) Who Dare Wins: Understanding the Decision-making of Irregular Migrants from Iran. <https://seefar.org/wp-content/uploads/Seefar-Who-Dares-Wins-Iranian-Refugees-Irregular-Migration-to-EU.pdf>. Date accessed 11 December 2023.
- Seelke, C. R., Finklea, F., and Kristen M. (2015) 'US-Mexican Security Cooperation: The Mérida Initiative and Beyond.' *Congressional Research Service*. <https://www.wola.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/765713-1.pdf>. Date accessed 25 May 2023.
- Statt Consulting-About Us. (2024) About Us. <https://statt.net/about-us/>. Date accessed 11 December 2023.

- Statt Consulting-Capabilities.** (2024). 'Capabilities'. <https://statt.net/capabilities/>. Date accessed 11 December 2023.
- Statt Consulting-Diasporas as Facilitators.** (2024) 'Diaspora Communities as Facilitators of Migration'. <https://statt.net/insights/diaspora-communities-as-facilitators-of-migration/>. Date accessed 11 December 2023.
- Van Bommel, S.** (2020) 'The Perception of Risk among Unauthorized Migrants in Ghana'. *Journal of Risk Research* **23**(1): 47–61.
- Watkins, J.** (2017) 'Australia's Irregular Migration Information Campaigns: Border Externalization, Spatial Imaginaries, and Extraterritorial Subjugation'. *Territory, Politics, Governance* **5**(3): 282–303.
- Weber, L. and McCulloch, J.** (2018) 'Penal Power and Border Control: Which Thesis? Sovereignty, Governmentality, or the Pre-Emptive State?'. *Punishment & Society* **21**(4): 496–514.
- Williams, J. M.** (2020) 'Affecting Migration: Public Information Campaigns and the Intimate Spatialities of Border Enforcement.' EPC. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space* **38** (7-8): 1198–1215.
- WISE Strategic Communication.** (2010) 'Afghanistan Counter People Smuggling Scoping Study: Final Report.' *Freedom of Information Act Request Released 2 May 2011. Department of Home Affairs*, October. <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/access-and-accountability/freedom-of-information/disclosure-logs/2011-14-acbps>. Date accessed 11 December 2023.
- Zeweri, H.** (2020) 'Managing Refugee Mobilities: Global Flows of Migration Deterrence Technologies.' *Platypus: The Committee for the Anthropology of Science, Technology, and Computing*, 17 June. <https://blog.castac.org/2020/06/managing-refugee-mobilities-global-flows-of-migration-deterrence-technologies/>. Date accessed 24 March 2024.
- Zeweri, H.** (2024) *Between Care and Criminality: Marriage, Citizenship, and Family in Australian Social Welfare*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.