Empathy and Othering: Framing Syria's Refugee Crisis in the British Press

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Since 2011, an increasingly protracted civil war has ravaged Syria, resulting in a large-scale refugee crisis. Under threat from the Assad regime, Islamic State militants and coalition airstrikes, thousands of refugees and migrants prefer to risk the tumultuous seas of the Mediterranean in order to seek refuge on Europe's borders, generating the largest mass movement of people in recent history (European Commission 2015, 1). In 2015, the number of 'sea arrivals' to Europe totalled 1,004,356, almost five times the figure for 2014 (International Organisation for Migration (IOM) 2016). For many of those travelling by boat to seek sanctuary in the European Union (EU), the journey is a perilous one. The boats used are often small, overcrowded or unseaworthy, and many have perished in the Mediterranean Sea. The IOM estimates the number of fatalities in the Mediterranean at 3,771 in 2015 (IOM 2016).

Desperate images of overcrowded boats and a mountain of discarded lifejackets on the Greek island of Lesbos have appeared in the media over the preceding months (see BBC 2015c; CNN 2016). However, none pricks the consciousness like the image of a small boy face-down in the lap of the waves. On 2 September 2015, Turkish photojournalist Nilüfer Demir immortalised the tragedy of the refugee crisis by tweeting a photo of Aylan Kurdi, a Syrian toddler who drowned crossing the Mediterranean to Turkey alongside the hashtag #KiyiyaVuranInsanlik (English translation 'humanity washed ashore' (Demir 2015). British print media remediated this harrowing image and presented it to us as the epitome of human vulnerability and Western shame (see Burrows 2015; Dubuis 2015; Hartley-Brewer 2015; Rayner and Dominiczak 2015; Smith and Goddard 2015). A cosmopolitan outlook was created as we imagined Aylan Kurdi, in his shorts and t-shirt, as our son and brother. The converse framing saw the Western media talking of the dangers of the refugee crisis. Calais was a 'war zone' or 'gauntlet', and 'swarms' of people were trying to 'storm' the UK (Bland 2015; Fricker 2015; Ingham 2015; Saunders 2015; Whitehead 2015), or risk their children's lives in precarious border crossings, or to unknown traffickers.

This chapter considers the ways in which we imagine such large-scale movements of people by considering the British press reporting of the crisis. In doing so, the chapter highlights ways in which the Syrian refugee crisis is constructed and presented, contributing to our understanding of this humanitarian emergency. The first is a 'threat' framing of the crisis which considers those in flight as threatening to the UK through criminality, immorality, fraud and divergent identities. The vulnerability of those in flight is perpetuated through dehumanisation, indifference and 'othering' as we elevate the perception of threats to the UK above the individual suffering of those who are displaced. The second framing draws the crisis near to us in proximity, perception and empathy, instilling a cosmopolitan conception of this as the moral responsibility of humanity. This chapter discusses the discursive construction of the crisis within the British media, considering how such understandings may shape our perceptions, affecting our compassion for those suffering from forms of violence and insecurity, and our support for policy-making that seeks to manage such crises. Scott Blinder has examined such latent perceptions of immigrants in British public opinion, and while not establishing causality, highlights the capacity of media coverage to indirectly influence attitudes on immigration (Blinder 2015, 96). Similarly, a study by Duffy and Frere-Smith for the Social Research Institute Ipsos MORI highlights that 'cause and effect' runs in all directions between the public, politicians and the media on the

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issue of immigration. The study finds that there is sufficient evidence 'to suggest that the media have an independent effect on views of immigration and therefore that the accuracy and balance of their coverage needs careful scrutiny' (Duffy and Frere-Smith 2014).

Media Framing: Power and Perception

The media are the primary channel through which domestic and foreign politics are disseminated to the public (McCombs and Shaw 1972). The press therefore plays an extremely significant role in shaping our understandings of issues such as migration (Allen 2016; Blinder and Allen 2015) and may do this through the notion of media framing. A frame is a 'central organizing idea' (Gamson and Modigliani 1987, 143), or way of viewing the world that may lead to the promotion of particular understandings (Lawlor 2015, 329). This is achieved through the use of select information, language constructions and linguistic tools. Within the field of political communication, interest lies in how frames may shape political understandings and influence policy decision-making. The media form a significant site within which 'various social groups, institutions, and ideologies struggle over the definition and construction of social reality' (Gurevitch and Levy 1985, 19), and as such frames are not value-neutral. Media texts utilise language and image to present information and events through particular frameworks. As such, they play a constitutive role (Lamont 2015, 92) and also perpetuate latent power;

We walk around with media-generated images of the world, using them to construct meaning about political and social issues. The lens through which we receive these images is not neutral but evinces the power and point of view of the political and economic elites who operate and focus it. And the special genius of this system is to make the whole process seem so normal and natural that the very art of social construction is invisible (Gamson et al. 1992, 374).

Frames often operate through the use of cultural resonance or magnitude (Entman 2004, 6). Cultural resonance involves discursive constructs that appear culturally familiar to the audience, or which 'strike a responsive chord' (Snow and Benford 1988, 207). This may be through the use of language that is 'noticeable, understandable, memorable, and emotionally charged' (Entman 2004, 6). Magnitude, refers to the weight or strength of the frame, and may involve the repetition of words or themes to stimulate effect or metaphor, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions and visual images (Gamson and Modigliani 1989, 3–4). A frame is successful to the extent that it is unconsciously accepted by its recipient audience. The ramification of this is that we are insentiently influenced by what we see and hear through the media, and thus the promotion of certain understandings and policy reactions appear naturalised.

Forced Migration and Discursive Representation

The extant migration literature base has focussed upon empirical experiences, the normative and legal basis for migration and the role of institutions like the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) (Loescher 2001), or political and security implications (Loescher et al. 2008). However, a developing field addresses the discursive construction of forced displacement. Much of this literature has considered migrants and refugees entering Australia, which has pursued a notoriously strict border policy towards non-nationals entering the country in recent years through the 'Pacific Solution' (2001–2007)[1]. Such stringent policies have stimulated research into the attitudinal factors surrounding migration. There have been a variety of studies focussing upon the perceptions of those entering Australia (Lueck et al. 2015; McKay et al. 2011). Others discuss how these perceptions are generally negative and involve marginalisation through specific identity constructions such as 'illegal immigrant' or 'boat people' (O'Doherty and Lecouteur 2007), or dehumanisation through the establishment of a culture of fear around refugee-hood and displacement (Bleiker et al. 2013; Esses et al. 2013). British media narratives on migration have addressed similar topics, such as the construction of asylum seekers as a 'threat' and legitimisation of subsequent restrictive policies towards immigration (Innes 2010) and the difference in attitudes between British public and experts working closely on asylum issues (Pearce and Stockdale 2009). Lawlor (2015) looks specifically at the media framing of immigration in Canadian and British newsprint. Balch and Balabanova (2016) have considered the communitarian and cosmopolitan framing of immigration within the British media with regard to the free movement of Romanians and Bulgarians from 2006–2013. Their study highlights the prevalence of communitarian framings of immigration within the British press, to the almost exclusion of cosmopolitan ideals.

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Studies are emerging that examine the forced migration towards Europe that has been occurring since 2014; considering Mediterranean border policies (Lendaro 2016), discursive representations within Germany (Holmes and Castañeda 2016), or of Syrian refugees within social media (Rettberg and Gajjala 2016). Stuart Allan has looked specifically at the stereotypes surrounding the Syrian refugee crisis, focussing upon the visual images of the Syrian child, Aylan Kurdi, who drowned in an attempt to cross from Turkey to Greece in September 2015 (Allan 2016). Furthermore, a key development has been a contemporary report prepared for the UNHCR, and also in conjunction with Cardiff University, which examines the press coverage of the EU refugee and migrant crisis through a content analysis of the newsprint in five European Countries, including the UK (Berry et al. 2015). This significant study arose from the evident mixed reportage of the migration, leading the UNHCR to commission a report examining the drivers of such coverage. The findings of the study suggested there were significant differences between the five countries' coverage of the crisis, from the sources used and language employed, to the problematising of the crisis, as well as the dominant themes presented. The report suggests that out of the five countries under analysis (Spain, Italy, Germany, UK, Sweden), UK coverage had the most negative and polarised coverage of the crisis, often presenting the issue as a social or cultural threat. This chapter develops upon these existing works, considering the discursive framing of the Syrian refugee crisis within the British press and the consequences of such ways of viewing the world.

'Threat Framing' and 'Othering' within British Newsprint

The presence of negative framings were clearly evident within the British press in 2015 during the height of refugee migration towards the EU. The dominant negative construction involved the attachment of some kind of 'threat' to those displaced. This threat framing was constructed from a variety of negative portrayals, racial stereotypes (Allan 2016), fallacious attachments to acts of criminality or terrorism, and a questioning of refugees' authenticity. These negativities were projected through the use of selective terminology and misleading information, the use of metaphorical statements and the evocation of past experiences of mass migration, such as during the Rwandan Genocide and World War II. The creation and projection of a threat frame played to domestic audiences already experiencing social anxiety due to financial austerity, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, terror incidents in the UK and Europe and increasing Islamophobia and racial tensions. Such anxieties led to an ingroup-outgroup mentality (Holmes and Castañeda 2016, 13) as well as increased support for right-wing political parties in the UK and Europe, such as the UK Independence Party (UKIP) who utilised the immigration debate to further their cause (Berry 2015, 1).

During the EU Referendum campaign, immigration formed the central foundation of the 'Leave campaign', supported by UKIP. A consequence was the stoking of social fears through the promulgation of an 'immigration as threat' framing, which was repeated through the press. This was particularly stark within traditionally right partisan press, but also evident throughout more liberal media in perhaps less pejorative ways (see Balch and Balabanova 2017). At the height of the campaign, UKIP produced a billboard poster showing a throng of 'migrants' making the journey to the Croatia-Slovenia border. The people in the poster appear to be Arab and predominantly male, and it carries the tagline 'Breaking Point'. The poster was internationally criticised within the media (Bilefsy 2016; Hopkins 2016; Safdar 2016; Stewart and Mason 2016), however despite condemnation the poster and the ensuing discussion reinforced already evident social constructions. Firstly, that this was a 'crisis' – a situation at 'breaking point'. Secondly, that those making the journey towards the refugee camp are young males – usually outside of the social constructs of victimhood (Bleiker et al. 2013, 408). Such imagery immediately leads to questions of authenticity. If this was a genuine humanitarian situation, where are the women, children and elderly – those assumed 'most vulnerable' in society? Instead, the poster shows primarily males under 65, providing the implication that they are seeking socioeconomic opportunities rather than fleeing persecution and violence, and establishing those in flight as 'cowardly' (Rettberg and Gajjala 2016, 180). Thirdly, the photo is hauntingly reminiscent of Nazi propaganda of Jewish refugees during World War II. These links were highlighted on *Twitter* and within some of the British press where UKIP leader Nigel Farage was widely berated for his insensitive 'gutter politics' (Stewart and Mason 2016).

The British press referred frequently to the refugee movement as a 'crisis'. By describing the situation in this way, the event is instantly magnified as something critical and uncontrolled. Such speech acts take the issue out of the normal political process, placing it on the security agenda as something threatening; portraying 'enemies at the gate' (Esses et al. 2013, 519). Similarly, the situation was often referred to using metaphorical language or statements. These

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frequently were of an ecological nature, such as describing a 'flood', 'deluge', 'tide' or 'swamp' (Holmes and Castañeda 2016, 18; Parker 2015, 7), or using descriptors such as 'swarm'. In the following statement, published in *The Independent*, Fergusson describes the situation as a 'storm', highlighting the scale of its 'force', and suggests a lack of situational control. 'This is not a passing storm. We are in the grip of forces that have already accelerated beyond our control' (Fergusson 2015).

The ecological nature of the language used suggests a natural power that is overwhelming or uncontrollable. Such terms reduce the event to an anonymous mass movement without consideration of the individual human element contained within. Terms such as 'swarm' suggest an individual element as part of a large collectivity, but degrades that individual element to the level of an insect or pest. We rarely use the word 'swarm' outside of descriptors about insects. Prime Minister David Cameron was criticised for his description of a 'swarm of people' entering the UK. While he defended this as an attempt to convey the scale of the situation, such terms reduce the displaced to numbers rather than people, which leads to a 'denial of humanity' (Esses et al. 2013, 519) and promotes the idea of people as dirty or diseased – associations we commonly make with pests. Nigel Farage and *The Independent* utilised theological metaphors to illustrate the scale of the refugee movement, suggesting this was something of magnitude and out of human control.

[E]xodus of biblical proportions (Farage, in *Mail Online* 2015).

The figures already sound biblical (Fergusson 2015).

Both uses of metaphorical language dehumanise the vulnerable people affected. It is such dehumanisation that distances us from those experiencing such displacement, and leads us to consider them apart from ourselves. Instead of part of global humanity, they are the distant 'other', the 'huddled masses' (The Daily Telegraph 2015) or 'irregular' (Fergusson 2015). Furthermore, terms such as 'swarm' that conjure imagery of refugees as insects are disturbingly redolent of the hate language utilised to incite militias during the Rwandan genocide (1994) in their denunciation of the Tutsi as cockroaches (Melvern 2000, 227), or the Nazi regime descriptions of Jews as parasites (Kenez 2013, 91). The statements below are illustrative of this dehumanisation. The first is made by Katie Hopkins, a former columnist for *The Sun* who is recognised for rather vitriolic opinion pieces. In it, she makes explicit, distasteful references to cockroaches and the Ethiopian famine during the early 1980s. The second statement from an article published by *The Express* uses the water metaphor of a 'torrent'. This statement also describes those in flight as 'migrant stowaways'. This has the consequence of implying that these are economic migrants and that they are partaking in illegal activity – 'stowing away to get into Europe'.

Make no mistake, these migrants are like cockroaches. They might look a bit "Bob Geldof's Ethiopia circa 1984", but they are built to survive a nuclear bomb (Hopkins 2015).

MIGRANTS SWARM TO BRITAIN: Torrent of stowaway migrants on a typical day in borderless UK [emphasis in original] (Chapman 2015).

The identity constructions of the refugees within the media also shape our perception of the forced migration. The UK media overwhelmingly referred to this as a 'migrant' crisis rather than utilising any other term for those displaced. The use of the term 'migrant' does not acknowledge the reasons for flight in the first instance. Rather, it suggests a level of agency in the decision-making process that for many is illusory. While there is always a choice to be made on an individual level to take particular action, the use of the term 'migrant' trivialises the complexities of this decision. It also associates those taking flight in the most precarious and dangerous of situations with economic migrants, emigrating for socioeconomic opportunities. The extracts below suggest an animal or gang-like group of 'migrants' and asks us to question how many people can realistically be resettled in the UK and Europe. The last extract suggests 'migrants' are 'invading' the UK. Such rhetoric appeals to nationalistic sentiments and notions of strengthening sovereignty and border controls.

MIGRANTS: HOW MANY MORE CAN WE TAKE? [emphasis in original] (Doughty et al. 2015).

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[R]oaming packs of migrants (Gutteridge 2015).

New migrant 'invasion' of Britain bigger than the Vikings, Romans and Norman Conquest (Barnett 2016).

The normative categorisations of displacement are not made cogent within the press reports of the issue. The interchangeable use of the terms migrant/asylum-seeker/refugee is damaging, leading to the undermining of public support for refugees and the denial of legal protection at the most vulnerable times (UNHCR 2016). While it is evident that some of those making the hazardous crossing to Europe are doing so for socioeconomic reasons, it is unwise to refer to this as a 'migrant' crisis when so many of those people are forcibly displaced by conflict and persecution. Moreover, the reasons for flight are at best trivialised, and at worst denied through a confusion between the push of conflict and insecurity and the draw of improved socioeconomic circumstances.

This delegitimisation is further compounded by overt claims to the sincerity and lawfulness of those in flight. The British press frequently made claims to the authenticity of those crossing to Europe, suggesting these were economic migrants, or suggesting they were fraudulent claims for asylum in order to 'get into the country', or that they should not be allowed into the UK as it was not the entry EU Member State under the Dublin Regulation[2].

[The BBC] carried an interview with a *remarkably healthy* looking Syrian refugee *claiming not to have eaten* for 16 days and who said he was going to be a European table tennis champion [emphasis added] (Clark 2015).

[W]e have been too quick to listen to the sob stories of terrorists disguised as asylum seekers and too quick to ask whether there might be a good reason that their home countries were out to arrest them (Clark 2015).

Frequently the press made references to 'migrants' receiving welfare in the UK being privileged above UK nationals (Berry et al. 2015, 253). Such reports, more prevalent within the British tabloid press demarcate those entering the UK as receiving preferential treatment, exacerbating social tensions and overall perceptions of refugees and migrants as untrustworthy (Parker 2015, 8), unlawful (Lueck et al. 2015, 619), 'cheating the British system' (Esses et al. 2013, 523) or causing injustices to British citizens and values.

As well as questions over the genuineness of those seeking asylum, the British press often made explicit links between those in flight and criminality, trafficking gangs or terrorists. Such accusations, often spurious, serve to cognitively link those vulnerable and in need of assistance with criminality (Lendaro 2016, 153; Lueck et al. 2015, 617; Parker 2015, 6), reinforcing the negative threat framing through which the forced migration is constructed.

What we can't do is allow people to break into our country (Cameron, in Chapman 2015).

Armed gangs smuggling migrants to UK for £2,000 (Sheldrick 2015).

Britain at risk of Mediterranean migrant crisis after second boat reaches UK in two weeks (Barnett and Sykes 2016).

In the statements above, *The Express Online* perpetuate the construction of refugees and migrants as criminals. They reproduce a comment from Cameron suggesting that people are 'breaking in' to the UK. The second extract illustrates the trafficking of refugees and migrants, suggesting gangs are violent and hold links to the UK. That the passport of a Syrian refugee was found near the body of one of the suicide bombers responsible for the Paris terror attacks in November 2015 solidified claims that terrorists were entering Europe under the pretence of refugee-hood (Lendaro 2016, 150). Links to people smugglers (often the only way for many to commence the arduous journey over land or sea)(UNHCR 2017, 1), constructs the desire for safety and asylum as a shady or 'deviant' activity (McKay et al. 2011, 117, 124) pursued by those without a genuine need for assistance; human desperation is not sufficient cause.

These discursive devices combine to construct those journeying to the EU in search of sanctuary in a negative and threatening way, where those experiencing insecurity are constructed as perpetuating insecurity (Innes 2010, 462). In framing refugees in this way, we protract the geographical and cultural distance between the observer 'us' and the

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suffering 'them'. The British press were complicit in promoting an ingroup-outgroup perception of the refugee emergency. This was a terrible situation, but these people were constructed as culturally dissimilar, economic migrants, criminals, fraudsters, terrorists or immoral.

'Cosmopolitan Framing' and the Death of Aylan Kurdi

In contrast to the negative 'threat' frame construction of those experiencing displacement, the British press also promoted a 'cosmopolitan' frame which emphasised a shared understanding of morality and the universality of humanity. Rather than perceiving those displaced as threatening, this frame identified with their vulnerabilities and may also provoke calls for some form of official assistance or aid in the drive to alleviate the suffering of others. In recognising the universality of human experience, it draws the event closer in our consciousness so that we are viewing from a position of morality, empathy and solidarity rather than distance and apathy. Those experiencing displacement are constructed as part of global humanity by reporting that highlights personal experience, tragedy or 'human-interest'. This point is illustrated in the statement below by Zena Agha in *The Independent*, who describes the fate of her cousin who died crossing the Mediterranean.

Just because he was a migrant doesn't mean his life was worthless – geography was the only difference between us and him (Agha 2015).

Agha also highlights the fickleness of the media, whereby certain human interest stories become the hooks upon which an article is hung, while many more people suffer without voice or media attention. Her point was valid and came two days before the death of three-year old Aylan Kurdi, who has been credited with a change in UK public interest and attitudes towards the emergency (BBC 2015b; Gunter 2015; Kingsley and Timur 2015). However, a cosmopolitan framing was evident prior to this tragedy and is illustrated by the first two extracts below which emphasise the UK's moral position in the world and the universality of humanity. The third statement illustrates the converse, suggesting that the UK cannot help all of the people all of the time and thus we should expect individual tragedies like Agha's cousin and Aylan.

Europe has to help – just as we did in generations past. We cannot carry like this. It's immoral, it's cowardly and it's not the British way (Wintour 2015).

Those of us lucky enough to live in stability must understand that the problems of those less fortunate are, in a sense both practical and moral, our problems, too (The Times 2015).

[C]ommon sense says that Britain cannot save the world (The Express Online 2015).

The cosmopolitan framing of this movement of people towards the EU apexes with the death of Aylan Kurdi, alongside his mother Rehana and brother Galip as they crossed from Turkey to Greece. The image of Aylan lying face down on the sandy shoreline was picked up globally by the media and the British press were no exception. With Aylan's death was felt a shift in the media framing of the refugee movement (BBC 2015b; Gunter 2015; Kingsley and Timur 2015). Rather than a threat, the image of Aylan was one of innocence and tragedy. The little boy was portrayed as a victim of a tragic situation rather than a criminal. Aylan was not a terrorist. This image of death and innocence was a profound and shocking one, resonating with audiences, encouraging us to view Aylan as our child or little brother (Nicole Itano, in Gunter 2015; Bouckaert, in Laurent 2015). This was, in part, easy to do. Aylan looked like any toddler in shorts and t-shirt, his clothing no doubt aided this imagining for those in the West. While many images of death and violence shown in the media are grisly and bloody, this photo was shocking for its calmness – 'he could have been sleeping except for the context' (Itano, in Gunter 2015). What goes comparatively unnoticed is that Aylan's mother and brother both perished alongside him. It is, however, the visual power of Aylan that is symbolic and resonates in our consciousness. The visual element of the frame provides evidence of his suffering and experience that is more emotionally affecting than any statistic (Bleiker et al. 2013, 399, 408). We are led to question with outrage how this little boy came to end up face down in the sand. What would drive this terrible situation? And what can be done about it?

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Despite this sorrowing event, some of the British tabloid press still questioned the authenticity of the family's refugee status, with *The Express Online* suggesting the family had been safe in Turkey and were 'not in deadly peril' (Lee 2015). This illustrates how some elements of the British press continued to construct this event through a 'threat frame', seeking to disparage the validity of the Kurdi family's vulnerability and experience, thereby suggesting less legitimate reasons for their displacement and encouraging us to doubt and distrust. This may of course reflect the partisanship of *The Daily Express*, a traditionally right-wing paper showing support to UKIP (Mason 2015) who utilised the immigration debate to underpin their campaign for the UK to rescind its EU membership in the 2016 referendum.

The consequence of this potent symbolism was to bolster a cosmopolitan framing of the refugee movement, encouraging us to look beyond the negative imagery of 'swarms' of 'migrants' and recognise a responsibility to humanity. We are reminded that these people are human too. That in order for families to be making this perilous crossing of the Mediterranean, the situation at home must be more insecure, and that for Aylan and his family this was a journey of necessity not choice. This cosmopolitan framing encourages us to consider the refugee movement in a more proximate way, encouraging empathy and assistance rather than fear and 'othering'.

These two ways of perceiving the refugee crisis were conflictual and produced a competing narrative. This contestation was more evident after the death of the toddler Aylan Kurdi which seemed to alter, albeit temporarily, the discursive vista towards a more cosmopolitan moral frame. While these diverse ways of constructing reality may provide an equilibrium of sorts – what Entman has termed 'frame parity' (2010, 418), the reality is more like a swinging pendulum, where one frame tends to dominate with some contestation from a counterframe. Furthermore, such frame contestation may in part reflect the partisan nature of British newsprint. It is regarded that the British press have traditionally held political leanings and we could therefore anticipate that those standpoints may in part be reflected in the media framing of a highly politicised issue such as immigration.

Conclusion

Why is it that some refugees are considered legitimate, innocent and worthy of assistance and others are criminals, illegitimate and not worthy of assistance? How the media frames such events has the ability to shape our understandings and perceptions. By framing the refugee movement as a threat, we cognitively distance it and shift the social responsibility for assistance away from ourselves. The threat frame allows us to perceive this as the suffering of a distant 'other'. The proximity of the event is distanced geographically and cognitively, and any cultural resonance is minimised. We are permitted to voyeur from afar or turn away from the suffering 'other'. Subsequently, empathy is diminished alongside compassion and forms of moral responsibility, permitting us to legitimise certain policy responses. The projection of a threat resonates to cognitive schema already primed by financial, social and racial tensions, the visibility of atrocities committed by terrorists such as ISIS, and stoked in some cases by nationalist politics. Cultural stereotyping creates social and racial boundaries, whereby refugees belong to the same geographical region or religion as those we see as committing heinous terror attacks like in Paris (2015) or Brussels (2016). We form false collectivities and perpetuate the persecution of those suffering through simplistic stereotypes and indifference, which leads to 'revictimisation' (Bleiker et al. 2013, 411). We fail to recognise that many of those seeking asylum in Europe are fleeing civil war, external intervention and the terror of ISIS as well.

A cosmopolitan framing helps us to perceive this as an issue for global humanity that we are all responsible for, and compels us to assist in the mitigation of suffering. The image of Aylan Kurdi cognitively resonates as we think of him as our own child or brother. The symbolism of his image forces us to reconsider this morally as a humanitarian issue requiring social responsibility and assistance. In encouraging us to view through a cosmopolitan frame, the media may go some way to alleviate the hostility around issues such as immigration, strengthening human bonds and moral responses, and mitigating against a dereliction of the suffering of 'others' or the perpetuation of difference and indifference that contributes to a 'threat' construction and fear response. However, the longevity of such a framing is in question, and we must wonder how many Aylan's are required for such ways of perceiving the world to resound – 'It shouldn't take a viral image to make us care about other people' (Agha 2015). At the time of writing the British media have a new symbol in Omran Daqneesh, a five-year-old rescued from the carnage of an airstrike in Syria. He sits shocked and bloodied in the back of an ambulance as the world press captured his photograph and the

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headlines resound once again with 'global outrage' (Coghlan and Philp 2016).

Notes

[1] The 'Pacific Solution' refers to the Howard Government's 2001 policy to intercept asylum seekers on 'unauthorised' or 'irregular maritime arrival' (IMA) vessels in Australian waters and transfer them to processing centres on the Pacific islands of Nauru or Manus. The policy was contentious and received a great deal of criticism due to the conditions and length of stay within the offshore processing centres (Phillips 2012).

[2] Under the Dublin Regulation, asylum claims should be made within the first state entered (Lendaro 2016, 151).

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