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MINORITY COSMOPOLITANISM: AFRO-COSMOPOLITAN ENGAGEMENT DISPLAYED BY AFRICAN AUSTRALIANS IN MOOROOKA

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Abstract

Research on cosmopolitan practices and non-white refugee and migrant populations in Western nations often concentrates on how the mainstream ‘host’ culture practices openness and hospitality towards ‘new’ and minority populations. Reflecting the relationality at the heart of cosmopolitanism’s conceptual promise, this research reverses the gaze back by exploring how minority populations who are ‘locals’ in ethnic hubs or enclaves practice openness towards ‘non-locals’ who otherwise constitute a dominant group nationally. Our article focuses on the black African Australian (AA) community in the suburb of Moorooka, known as a ‘little Africa’. Moorooka’s main strip is lined with various AA owned shops and restaurants, and with AAs going about their everyday lives. The suburb attracts negative news stories and is stereotyped as an undesirable ethnic enclave marred by crime, social problems and unemployment. Yet, Moorooka is also becoming a cosmopolitan destination for visitors to shop, explore and dine. We thematically analyse qualitative interviews with AAs to understand how they interact with non-AAs and why. Our research sheds new light on forms of openness and hospitality we call ‘minority cosmopolitanism’ that arises from the AA experience. Accordingly, we also highlight forms of Afro-cosmopolitanism that assists with a deeper understanding of the African diaspora.

Keywords

Minority Cosmopolitanism, Cosmopolitanism, African Australians, Multiculturalism, Afro-Cosmopolitanism, Ethnicity.
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Introduction

Moorooka is an inner suburb of Brisbane and is about nine kilometres from this
capital city’s central business district in South East Queensland, Australia. Known as
‘little Africa’, it is the fastest growing metropolitan region in the state (Storey, Muhidin
and Westoby 2010). The main street or ‘strip’ takes barely ten minutes to walk down
but is where the action is. Due to its vibrancy in terms of encounters between regular
and occasional visitors, local residents and business owners, and between African
Australians (AAs) and non-African Australians, it offers a rich site for investigating
processes of cosmopolitanisation. The street is lined with food and grocery shops
displaying African imported goods from Ethiopian coffee to items from Sudan, Somalia
and some West African nations. There are hairdressers promoting African hair and
beauty products. There are multiple businesses with signs in various different national
languages from the continent. Many men, women and teenagers who are Black Africans
can be seen strolling, chatting, shopping, eating, working, or in transit. Some are
dressed in Western-style formal outfits, some dressed casually in American influenced
styles, some in traditional Muslim attire and others in clothes strongly reflecting
different African ethnicities. The sounds of people talking on the street include a
noticeable mix of various languages spoken in African nations, from Amharic, Arabic,
Swahili, and more.

The milieu in Moorooka just described above marks a stark contrast to nearby
areas, which display many of the traits typical to suburbs with predominantly Anglo-
Australian residents, and those with influences from Mediterranean and Asian migrants whose markers of multiculturalism are no longer remarkable but seen as an ‘everyday’ (Wise, Velayutham and Vogl 2010) and mundane part of the mainstream Australian life (Edensor 2007; Molz 2011; Authors D and C). As such, people from non-African and particularly Anglo-White backgrounds are the majority elsewhere, but become a minority upon entering the active, busy and bustling main strip in Moorooka. This is an important point of perspective for us as researchers of African, Asian and Anglo backgrounds. Rather than looking at Anglo-Australians as the ‘locals’ and ‘hosts’ who are called upon to accommodate the differences of African Australians our article turns the gaze around to ask questions of what negotiations, understandings, and practices are used by African Australians who are performing cosmopolitan openness to outsiders and those who are ‘different’ in the specific African ‘hub’ of Moorooka. In doing so, we believe our approach allows us to empirically explore cosmopolitanism as a contextualised, relational process (see Delanty, 2011): we study plurality, but more importantly we try to account for the multiple perspectives and understandings differently actors must apply in order to navigate socio-culturally diverse settings such as Moorooka.

Background

In terms of location and demographics, Moorooka is part of South East Queensland and according to the latest official statistics, it has a population of 10,368 (ABS 2016). Historically, until the 1990s, the residents of Moorooka were mainly ‘Australians of Anglo-Saxon background (Storey et al. 2010: 147). Since 1990s, Australians of white European backgrounds continued to be largely the residents of Moorooka. The latest official census data reveals that top five ancestral places of people
living in Moorooka are English, Australian, Irish, Scottish and German (ABS 2016).

Despite these statistics and historical facts, today, the business centre of Moorooka discernably paints a different picture. Research into urban planning and social inclusion noted the recent rapid social and demographic changes that are taking place in Moorooka (Storey et al. 2010). Noticeably, black African immigrants are establishing elementary businesses including ethnic stores, barbers and restaurants. Moorooka has undoubtedly become a ‘cosmopolitan space’ or an enlarged ‘canopy (Anderson, 2011; Rumford, 2008) where black African Australian immigrants run businesses, meet and socialise. The earliest presence of African Australians in Moorooka started in the form of temporary accommodation provided to African refugees by settlement services providers (Harte, Childs and Hastings 2009).

Historically, Australia has a long history of migration from different parts of the globe but groups from Africa constitute a comparatively recent group. Amongst the many immigrant groups that Australia has accepted over the years include ‘several waves of African migrations’ (Jakubowicz 2010: 4). The past two decades in particular saw an increase of the number of African refugees and humanitarian entrants resettling in Australia, (Fozdar and Hartley 2013; Jakubowicz 2010; Pittaway, Muli and Shteir, 2009). However, before 1976, most African migrants in Australia were white South Africans (Jakubowicz 2010). Here, we are deliberately using the black African Australian label as ‘nearly half of all Australians of African origin are white, skilled migrants from South Africa’ (Phillips 2011: 65)

It is important to avoid the common stereotype of imagined false homogeneity of Africans and acknowledge that African migrants in Australia (including participants of this study) hail are from diverse nationalities, ethnicities, languages, cultural and
religious backgrounds. The migration of African refugees into Australia has been controversial as sections of wider society claim their integration into Australia has been difficult. Fears include that immigrants from African conflict zones Sudan, Somalia, Sierra Leone and Liberia would increase local crime and be culturally too foreign to the dominant culture so as to threaten social cohesion.

Issues of discrimination and stereotyping can be significant in contributing to the marginalisation of African migrants and refugees (Mergia, 2005; Renzaho, Polonsky, McQuilten and Waters 2013). For instance, qualified black African nurses experience discrimination in certain workplaces (Mapedzahama, Rudge, West and Perron 2012). African refugees are also labelled negatively and stereotyped as being involved in gang and violence culture and increasing criminality in their localities (Horyniak, Lim and Higgs 2016). For example, the South Sudanese refugees in Australia were referred to as being ‘disproportionally violent and unable to settle in Australia’ (Phillips 2011: 48). The representation of Africans as a group involved in alleged gang-related activities certainly stigmatises them (Nunn 2010). These misrepresentations may have significant policy ramifications for African Australians as former federal government minister Kevin Andrews called for cutting African refugee intake, citing their lack of integration into Australia (Farouque, Petrie, and Miletic 2007). Similarly, the New South Wales regional city of Tamworth council refused to accept the resettlement of South Sudanese African refugees in Tamworth (Kwansah-Aidoo and Mapedzahama 2015).

The complex constructions of identity and belonging for AAs is also inseparable from Australia’s efforts of colonisation, assimilation and multiculturalism, which have been played out within a broader nation-building project that scholars such as Hage (2002) argue promotes and privileges white settler culture as the norm. This means
groups like African Australians are seen as ‘visitors’ and ‘outsiders’ to their own nation of Australia. Absent from scholarly literature and general public discussions are accounts of the contributions they make to their newly adopted country Australia. Most literature critically lacks any fleshing out of the variety of educational, occupational, artistic, community-organisational, and other demographic traits that counter negative ideas and feelings towards AAs. One noteworthy piece of research (Author D) attempts to reframe the debate and argues that pre-migration and settlement experience of AAs could be the stimulus for success and achievement of this group.

In an attempt to address apparent limitations in literature and a lack of sociological research into the everyday experiences and strategies of this group, this article aims to bring about fresh pathways of understanding of this comparatively overlooked population by focusing our research on their performance as ‘hosts’ to other Africans and the non-Africans in Moorooka and elsewhere. Unlike previous studies that mainly focused on how Africans adapt to the national space as ‘non-locals’ in Australia, this research reverses that approach and evaluates how African Australians are willing to perform the role of ‘hosts’ and practice openness to others who are different to them. As we shall demonstrate later in this paper, they can take up the role of ‘givers’ of openness and hospitality. This counters numerous stereotypes about AAs as deviant and culturally incommensurable to wider Australian society. Research shows that ‘further openness is achieved through a cosmopolitan ‘ethics of sharing’ rather than giving, which arises from cosmopolitan reflexivity’ (Authors B, D and C). But before we discuss the openness or its lack of it of AAs, we present in the next section a contextual outline of cosmopolitanism as it is related to AAs.

**Cosmopolitanism**
This paper draws on research from a larger project funded by an Australian Research Council grant titled: XXXX. The project used a framework for understanding cosmopolitanism not as an abstract ideal but as a sharper conceptual and theoretical tool for identifying the complexity of practices of openness see (Authors B, D and C; Authors D and C). Researchers from the project argue for an ethics of sharing, not just giving or merely tolerating, and surrender rather than control in relation to individual understandings of the social context of encounters with culturally different people and settings. The idea of surrender draws and extends on the work of Hannerz (1990) who argued that cosmopolitanism is otherwise superficial if one chooses to ‘exit’ when their sense of mastery of the situation is threatened. The encounter is not cosmopolitan if there is an effort to maintain control and there is only an act of ‘giving’ which is conditional. Sharing on the other hand, is a strategy that practically opens the possibility for reciprocal and respectful mutual exchange.

However, this conceptual framework has mostly been studied in social situations where it is the dominant population describing their encounters with diversity. More specifically, cosmopolitan encounters have mostly been studied through analysing how White individuals talk about encounters. In their paper, Authors B, C and D draw a line, arguing encounters cannot be cosmopolitan if they only take up the role as ‘hosts’ who give hospitality (thus maintaining a position of ownership and control). Instead, encounters where these individuals surrender the position of control, and where their comparative power is acknowledged as problematic, constitutes a reflexive process that can open up a willingness not just to be ‘open’ but rather the will, however painful or intimidating, to share.
Importantly, as discussed in the previous section, this article reverses the focus from how mainstream populations perform openness to minorities to explore the experiences and viewpoint of those who are seen as ‘perpetual foreigners’, othered as visible migrants or refugees in the context of particular suburbs and spaces where they are compelled to assume the role of hosts. Few other studies do this, with tourism studies of guides (Salazar 2005), black/white relations in working class settings (Lamont and Aksartova 2002) and migrants in working class settings abroad (Datta 2009) being examples. Salazar’s study reveals that the guides perform ambassatorial roles of cosmopolitanism without possessing a comparatively great degree of mobility. Although some of the motivations are orientated for profit and business, other motivations also include pride in being able to represent and act as hosts in their area. For foreign/global others they become cultural ambassadors and educators of the areas that they are locals in.

Lamont and Aksartova (2002) study highlights how cosmopolitanism can be a tool for combatting racism in blue-collar environments and argue is not just an idealistic project of identity for the middle-class and elite. Interestingly, they also found distinct differences between how Americans and French defined ‘openness’ and anti-racism. In the former, it was discourses of individualism and upward mobility (becoming president to owning expensive items) that were seen as equalisers, while for the latter anti-racist views were based on ideas of egalitarianism, fraternity and ‘brotherhood’ drawn from French socialist and nationalist discourses for instance.

The study by Datta (2009: 2) investigates the experiences of migrants in working-class occupations abroad, such as in construction, and argues that forms of cosmopolitanism can emerge from people who work together or find themselves in
situations requiring ‘a strategic engagement with others through coerced choices in order to survive in new environments’. Werbner (1999) similarly looked at highway workers who are migrants and argued that cosmopolitanism is an active process of getting along rather than just a matter of identity construction for middle-class elites. Datta (2009: 3) argues that: ‘cosmopolitanism is neither an ethico-political cultural project, nor just a survival strategy but a complex mixture of cultural, ordinary, banal, coerced, and ‘glocalised’ cosmopolitanisms that are enacted under different spatial circumstances of interaction, subjective positioning, and physical proximity’.

Cosmopolitanism also is processes that exists in uneven power relations globally and within the shadow of colonialism (see Mignolo, 2010).

**Methods and Case Study: African Australians (AAs) in Moorooka**

In our research of Moorooka, we examine how African Australians (AAs) perform openness to others and also in the diverse ethnic communities within the African diaspora. This approach is inspired by the assessments that cosmopolitanism and openness towards others is ‘produced from everyday practices in localised context’ (Datta 2009: 26). Our fieldwork in Moorooka, also known as ‘Little Africa’, was carried out by a multicultural team of researchers in Griffith university, led by a member from the African Australian community of Somalia born, a Vietnamese Australian female and a white Australian male. We focused our research on the diasporic hub of Moorooka, where AAs work, frequently visit and socialise. Importantly, we are interested in how AAs act as ‘locals’ who host visitors to the area yet they are othered in terms of being outside mainstream Australia. AAs are also visibly dominant within the area, which may be viewed as an ‘ethnic enclave’, but it is here that they also play the role of ‘hosts’. Hence, as residents in the area they negotiate multiple identity statuses
including that of minorities and mostly new comers from various cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds.

The study initially conducted an ethnographic research involving visits to shops, streets and businesses run by AAs. Ethnography is a ‘systematic approach to learning about the social and cultural life of communities, institutions and other settings’ (LeCompte and Schensul 2010: 1). Observations and interviews were conducted and this paper draws on narratives from interviews with the AA about their community and visitors within the hub of Moorooka. Between 2014 and 2015 four focus groups were then conducted with 26 black AAs in Moorooka, Brisbane. 31 people participated in four focus groups consisting of 20 men and 11 women aged over 18 years, with various occupational and educational backgrounds. The median group size was seven participants per focus group. According to Morgan (1996: 130), a focus group is, ‘A research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher’. The advantage of focus group methodology is to capture practices of inter-group negotiation, and to comparatively observe the reasoning strategies of participants as they provide confirming or contrasting viewpoints. Researchers observed a common rule of thumb for qualitative research which is to have between four and six participants in a focus group (Morgan 1996: 144). The data became saturated at the end of the fourth group discussion but we highlight other interesting themes for future research that fell outside the scope of this project in our conclusion. Saturation is a methodological principle for qualitative research and is defined by Morse (1995) as the ‘data adequacy’, meaning that data needs to be continually collected until no new information is obtained. In order to maximise group discussions and interactions, a schedule of questions was developed and photo elicitation exercise was used.
The researchers acknowledge that no generalisations could be made about the views of the small sample of African Australians. However, the diversity found in this small sample is illustrative of issues and themes relevant to African Australians in Queensland only and the focus group participants reflect the ethnic and nationality diversity that is apparent in this community. This small sample included African Australians who resided in Australia for several decades and newly arrived migrants including people who were special humanitarian visa entrants. Ethical considerations include that the participation was voluntary, information about the research was given using an information sheet and pre-talk before the interviews, which were then only conducted after signed consent forms were completed. The data has been anonymised as a further step. Recruitment, rapport during interviews and development the coding and themes from the data was assisted through insights by the lead author being part of the community under investigation. This includes distinguishing nuances in how cosmopolitanism is performed by minorities, for instance.

Thematic analysis is a qualitative analysis tool that helps the researcher to identify, analyse and report patterns or themes within data (Braun and Clarke 2006: 79). The analysis focused on the patterned responses participants provided to the focus group research questions. According to Braun and Clarke (2006: 82), ‘A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set’. Intercoder reliability was ensured through emerging codes and themes checked by the other authors and compared to relevant literature.
**Results and Discussion**

The main patterned responses the study looked for were what forms of cosmopolitan engagement exist within this group, referring to the encounters with culturally different people, places, and things that may have cosmopolitan consequences (Delanty 2011). The study reveals two main forms of cosmopolitan encounters that black African Australians displayed. These are what we call ‘minority cosmopolitanism’ and ‘ambassadorial/host’ cosmopolitanism. These insights draw on the three following main insights generated from the broader study we conducted on AAs. First, an ethical orientation and duty to humanity was apparent in all stages of the research where participants’ responded to photo elicitations. Looking at an image of a natural disaster, for instance, they generally reflected a connectedness to a global human society and they specifically showed willingness of sharing and caring towards fellow human beings depicted in the image. Second, there was a strategic orientation and willingness to show off their cultures in the interviews, which manifested in things such as performing cosmopolitan hospitality as part of how they do business with non-Africans in their local environment. As they are from diverse nationalities and ethnicities, African Australians equally performed playing hosts to each other and were generally positive about sharing their diverse cultures and openness within each other. While these types of cosmopolitanism are identified in other studies (Datta, 2009, Lamont and Askartova, 2002), it is important to note these specific background contexts of the AA community in Moorooka and nuances and modifications distinct to black AAs which we conceptualise as both ‘minority cosmopolitanism’ and ‘Afro-cosmopolitanism’.
Minorities as Cosmopolitans

Racism is something that exists. Unfortunately, it will exist for a long time to come. It has many faces…For example, when you’re qualified and you’re from an African background and you apply for a job. You are suited for that job — you have the skills — you don’t get that job. Not only that job, but you apply for 150 jobs within two months and you don’t get nothing — no response — while other people are getting the job. You feel isolated, you feel like you’re not valued. That is I think the hardest to — that most difficult racism. (AA6).

Two main themes emerge from the data analysed: first, minorities as marginalised cosmopolitans, referring to their status as sometimes being socially marginalised whilst also embodying aspects of the cosmopolitan ideal. Minority positionality in terms of cosmopolitan gestures, convivial acts and motivations is rarely considered or studied. Minorities are usually seen as recipients and not the givers or sharers. Secondly, as ambassadors of their cultural heritage and as hosts to the wider society in Australia. These themes are inter-related and cosmopolitanism in AAs cannot be understood without exploring their minority experience of marginalisation. This marginalisation is multilayered and complex and is partly informed by the historical problems of colonisation of Africa by the Western European countries known as the scramble of Africa (Pakenham 1992). It is also the marginalisation from mainstream Australian media outlets that stereotype and misrepresent them as a problem group (Han and Budarick 2018). They also include the prejudices they encounter in Australia as new migrants from certain politicians who link them with criminal gang activities (Ferguson 2018). Some of the comments below explain the prejudices and stereotypes they face in their new adopted homeland Australia.
A xenophobic message at that time … I think it say ‘African go back’ something like that, go back to your country. Yeah, so that is amazing message. It is very xenophobic and I think the council has responded quickly. Then I think on the same time we, he took on newspaper as well and he respond to quickly… (AA1 commenting on graffiti in Moorooka)

We are going to shop — close the shops around five o’clock. Obviously, building at the top someone wrote, [nigger] go home. (AA1 commenting on graffiti in Moorooka)

The AAs we interviewed were also concerned about how sometimes non-African members of society make assumptions about their employment status, assuming they are unemployed and not working hard. Another common misconception compounded by the first is that they are loitering rather than legitimately socialising in Moorooka’s public spaces. For instance, one participant reveals:

Yes, and then that goes back to cultural differences. Those people that you see standing there, it does not mean they are jobless. Most — some of them work night shifts and they come here about 1 pm to stay there for a few hours. Some of them drive taxis. Some of them are elderly who retired — are not required to work. But then again, you don’t get that feeling — or you don’t see that — somewhere else. So, I can understand someone from an Australian background — an Anglo-Sax background — when they’re passing by and they see this number of people sitting there having coffee together. They might — that question will cross their mind, definitely. But the picture doesn’t tell the story, it’s not like that. (AA 6)

Other participants we spoke to further elaborate on forms of cultural stereotyping and misconceptions below.

The only negative stereotype is that when you get there and you are from outside or different culture, the first impression that you will have is are the people crazy [and that], the way they talk, they happy, they talk loudly which is very different than Australian culture. They talk and stay as groups rather than individuals, they cross the
lights as groups. So, it’s about the way that they present themselves which is naturally
cultural rather than bad thing that people could see as a negative. (AA 7)

If you are from outside African community or if you’re from white Australian and you
came in Moorooka, you might feel that you’re alone, you’re being surrounded by all of
these tall African people. (AA 7)

You know how there are, some of them instead of coming into the shop, or stay in the
shop get the service, and then go where they have to go. But they hang around on the
street. I think that’s really, I don’t like that… they sit down. That’s the part I don’t like.
I think even for my experience, for my clients. Even having, you know how the
pavement is just for walking, so for other customers it’s really annoying as well. (AA
10).

Our ethnographic observations and conversations with local AAs reveal that
many of the male adults congregating in parks and the streets of Moorooka work shifts,
drive taxis at night, and eat, drink and socialise until their next taxi shift starts at late
afternoon. There were no incidents of public mishap or crime, and especially none
started by AAs with non-AAs. People were, apparently, just going about their day. In
other words, what we observed supports the participants’ quotes above about being
stereotyped based on misunderstandings or assumptions. Our data also supports other
research that argues minorities such as AAs in Australia are subject to stereotypes as
being under-skilled and contributing to unemployment (Abdelkerim and Grace, 2012).
The feelings of discrimination reported by the participants above also confirm theories
about broader societal racism operating in suburban spaces like Moorooka, where non-
Whites are othered as perpetual foreigners and as possibly ‘sinister’ or deviant (Baas
2015; Hage 2002; Lobo 2016). Both structural and ‘on the ground’ encounters of
discrimination clearly situates AAs as minorities in the broader society.
However, we argue that this marginal positioning or liminality shapes AAs in particular ways that include a sense of cosmopolitan empathy. While this research can only shed light on AAs in a ‘little Africa’ type hub in a small suburb in Australia, we were still able explore strategies they used to suspend and transcend ‘local’ specific loyalties and biases over to ‘universal’ ones and cosmopolitan forms of sharing the space and cultural experiences, even towards those who marginalise them. For example, participants admire the richness of Australian society’s cultural diversity. At the same time, AAs we spoke to felt many Anglo Australians can be uncosmopolitan.

However, some participants also expressed they felt this was due to their lack of offshore contact with people and cultures who are different to them, and from lack of experience being a minority. The comments below highlight a common view amongst interviewees that overseas travel is important, and how that may help White Australians in particular develop more openness and acceptance of others.

I think the fear within Australia, stems because they have never been exposed to other cultures, [unclear] different … background, different lifestyle. Australians don’t travel that much, they just go to Malaysia, Indonesia…Bali. So never been exposed to darker skin other than indigenous and their experience with indigenous is different with politics. (AA 2).

Below is another quote illustrating AAs attempt at empathy as a course of action or strategy in response to non-AAs bias or prejudice against them.

Because you can just conclude for yourself, this person is not good. I hate what she is doing. Maybe she is doing something according to their culture. Like me, I dress according to my culture. I do this according to my culture. But if you understand my way, you will not hate my culture, you will see that that is my culture and you abide by
[that one]. But if you don’t understand me, you will feel that what I am doing is not a
right thing and to me I am doing the right thing. So, if we respect one another, then at
least you will be able to understand what the person is trying to do but if we can’t
respect one another then [unclear] people will not be understanding what we are doing.

(AA 3)

The quotes above emphasise how AAs see a need for non-AAs to develop what
we describe as ‘cosmopolitan dispositions’ of empathy (Authors C and D). This is
different from ethnocentric discourses of difference (for example, us versus them), and
conflict between ‘oppressed’ and ‘oppressor’. The AAs also appear to have a sense that
for some non-AAs, their ‘toolbox’ is less sensitised and equipped to deal with
encounters with diversity (Appiah 1997). Therefore combined, our participants are
practising a process we describe as ‘minority cosmopolitanism’. This builds on the idea
of cosmopolitanism as an everyday practice and outlook of openness able to emerge in
all actors, not just elites or the majority population. [Indi check cosmopolitanism from
below]

AAs as Ambassadors and Hosts

In this section, we argue AAs act as agents of change through performing the
symbolic role of ‘ambassadors’ to non-AA visitors and local others in Moorooka. In
our conversations and interviews, AAs viewed themselves as being seen as
representative of, and to some capacity, also able to actively represent aspects of AA
identity in three main ways. First, as ambassadors of the continent of Africa, second, as
representative of their respective countries of origin (for example, Somalia, Ethiopia,
South Africa and so on), and lastly, as Africans who are Australians (AAs). Sometimes
these ambassadorial roles were reified or rejected by non-AAs, for instance seeing
‘Africa’ the continent as a country or seeing being ‘African’ as mutually exclusive from being Australian. This caused frustration. AAs were keen to explain the importance of adjustment whilst still retaining their African heritage. Their understanding is in line with that of Shadid (1991: 362) who defined integration as ‘the participation of ethnic and religious minorities, individually and as groups, in the social structure of the host society while having possibilities to retain the distinctive aspects of their culture and identity’. AAs conceptualisation of integration is linked not only their willingness to participate in the social and economic fabric of society but how much the wider society accepts and willingness to participate.

Further confusion in the scholarly literature is the difference in what ‘integration’ means from one group to another (Author A). Furthermore, Mogahed and Nyiri (2007: 2) in their article Reinventing Integration proposed redefining integration as less about cultural conformity, and more about having shared goals and commitment.

You can get experience from them (white shoppers) because [unclear] we come from Africa, we don’t know about white people so if we mix with them then we can learn how they’re doing. (AA 5).

AAs expressed being eager to share their culture with everyone who interacted with Moorooka and their community. They unanimously expressed a sense of pride in sharing their culture with wider society.

I feel good about myself when I talk about my culture. I tell people where we’re from, … the cultures that we have. Sometimes I tell them about our history. (AA 6)

Every time I am working, I am sharing my culture. Every time that I am talking to someone, I am sharing my culture. Every time that someone comes to my office —
okay — without disrespecting who they are or their beliefs and everything, I’m sharing my culture. I’m a walking example of my culture. (AA 6)

Impression of Moorooka to outsiders and non-visitors is that they see as a small village of Africa, a place if you drive your car through Moorooka on Beaudesert Road, a place that most of the people that you can see are from Africa. So, the impression is that it become a small African town, a small African village, that’s the impression from outsiders and people who do not usually come quite frequently in Moorooka. They see as an African shop, village. (AA 7).

I feel whenever there is an opportunity as a person [to share their culture]. I feel I’m not talking for myself here, I’m talking for the wider community. Whenever there’s an opportunity presented, people are in Moorooka here — the African people — are more than willing to participate whenever the opportunity is presented. (AA 6).

The comments above reflect the cosmopolitanism seen in locals taking on the role of hosts seen in tourist studies such as Salazar’s (2005) and also as part of the conviviality diverse populations show towards each other in everyday encounters (Wise, Velayutham and Vogl, G., 2010). However, it is also important to consider how AAs may engage in self-censorship and try to avoid falling into stereotypes about Africa African people as minorities. In our observations and conversations, most in their informal ‘ambassadorial’ roles appeared to incorporate an exemplary or ‘normative’ behaviour to fit in and be thought of in positive ways. As such, the cosmopolitanism we observe with its ambassadorial aspects is from a vantage point of countering marginalization as well as from any dispositions of openness.

While the cultural work we observe might be strategic only in terms of self-interest and self-image, nuances we observed lead us to think more is at play. For instance, there was an attempt to modify their behaviour to make others feel welcome.
for reasons of business but also for the well-being and a sense of joy in sharing for all involved, which we will discuss in depth below. As the comments show, some acts are about reducing social awkwardness while others are about educating visitors and having a sense of agency in the process.

As the business owner to showcase my culture and to my customers I say that’s the way we eat, and we use our finger and the injera bread and you have to wash your hand. (AA 10).

I think the wider society could be more exposed to the different cultures — like African cultures — and if there’s an information brochure, if there’s a study is conducted like this, which will go a long way to eradicate some problems and issues. (AA 6)

So, in some ways, Moorooka’s very centralising and you have a feeling of belonging and you can feel like you’re showcasing your culture and you’re shop owners. (AA 9)

Like if they come to my restaurant, I tell them the food or sometimes if I make a new menu [unclear] I stop here and then tell I’ve got a new menu, come and try. Like that, yeah. (AA 5).

Such insights assist with not only supporting but also elaborating on tourism studies such as in Salazar (2005: 57) who describes how individuals such as tourism guides can perform ‘cosmopolitan enhancing experiences’. Positionality is important, as our study examines how a marginalised minority in Australia performs cosmopolitanism from the AA perspective. AAs in Moorooka reported that there have been efforts by the business owners to make:

‘Little Africa’ a friendly communal space for all and not only for Africans.

This is one of the things that the owners when they have a meeting, things that they talk about and said how we can attract the wider community to come and feel happy and safe in Moorooka. So one of the things that came up is to have every few months a late
night where all the shops are open and wider societies are informed to come in to talk to
the people, to see their food, to see their culture, to see their — and feel free to ask any
questions, anything that they want to know and cruise around Moorooka and feel that
they belong and it’s a place that they can come and shop. (AA 7).

Other participants also talk about how AAs openness to others can have positive
impacts on others, while also doing the double-work of reducing fear against them and
also lifting their status as minorities:

We had a night, festival night, where we send the pamphlets to neighbouring residents,
people that live in around Moorooka and ask them to come. There was a music festival
even on that night, African music. The restaurants were open so that they can come and
test the food. The shops were open. People who came from the wider societies and
participated, that showed they’re positive of what they have seen and what they have
realised and that, in the long term will create an interaction and then feeling happy and
safe to come to Moorooka for the shopping or for the food or for staying and hanging
around. (AA 7).

There’s a different culture and because there’s too many Africans in there, too many
people walking around. They might feel unsafe for them to come and interact. Second
is that their own food, I think that they usually know, it’s not in these shops. So it’s not
appealing to them but what possibly could be appealing to them is if we explain
different cultural food is — to introduce the different food is that they might like
different restaurants, Ethiopian, Somali and Sudan, Eritrea. Different foods that might
attract to them to come if they feel happy and safe to interact. (AA 7).

There was a ‘tour in Moorooka’ event. That was really good opportunity for us and for
Australian [unclear] to come and mix with us. Some of them are, this is on the business
perspective, and the tour was organised by Multicultural Development Association
(MDA) and the City Council. So, they go Sudanese restaurant, to our restaurant and to
Somalian restaurant and few of clothes shop, hairdressing salons. It’s like a tour, with a
tour guide. (AA 10)
In Salazar’s (2005: 57) study of tourism guides in Indonesia and Tanzania he also draws attention to how ‘the ambassadorial role is based on the assumption that there exists a genius loci, a static and unchanging ‘spirit’ emanating from a place or from the people living there’. Salazar (2005: 57) adds ‘The qualifier “local” does not necessarily imply that tour guides are natives of the place where they operate (although they are habitually perceived as such by foreign tourists)’. We are not saying Moorooka is a tourist attraction; rather we are drawing insights from the concept of ‘ambassadors’. Moorooka too is not just representative of just one monolithic culture and it is also a suburb that is continuously open to transforming its image and atmosphere. Furthermore, as the following comments explain, African Australians who work and socialise in the area may not even live there, further disrupting the idea of places being ‘static’ and having an ‘authentic’ world of differences for outsiders to discover, or conversely, fear due to negative stereotypes.

Many of them mainly elderly [non-AAs] used to live there. Even though they still live in there, it looks like there is a barrier of not coming and shopping in Moorooka. Many reasons. Number one, the Africans have got their own culture of walking in groups and talking in groups, talking loud voice, very loudly talking, that discourage white Australians to interact. The second thing is that no one explains to them the different cultures and different foods that’s available in Moorooka. So, no one gave them an education about the food, about different foods, different cultures, so that they can come and taste and see that something good to try. (AA 7).

We find that AAs displayed cosmopolitan intentions to play hosts to members of wider society. They felt that sharing a cultural experience such as food might create
opportunities for them to encourage wider society to interact with them and see
Moorooka centre a safe place to visit and shop.

Conclusion

Whilst facing this discrimination and marginalisation AAs still display and perform a form of cosmopolitanism which is unique to their social and cultural context. One that is informed by their experience as mostly individuals and families that experienced civil conflict and economic and social dislocation back home, and then as targets of discrimination and stereotyping upon migrating to a predominantly white, Western nation built on British colonialism. The examination of cosmopolitan engagement of AA business owners and visitors in Moorooka is important as it sheds a light the identity of black African Australians within a dominant white Australian culture. Given the increasing presence and establishment of black AAs in Australia and across the non-African world, it is crucial not just to understand how such populations are ‘received’ and ‘settled’ but also how they actually take up the role of ‘hosts’ and locals themselves in certain contexts. Our article relied on interviews and observations with AA who are Moorooka locals comprising regular visitors and business owners. We explored the questions: How do AAs in Moorooka perform openness towards non-Africans who visit or live in the area? And, what types of openness must the AA community also perform amongst this diaspora given the multiple ethnic and cultural diversity within this community? And, in what ways might these forms of openness be understood as types of cosmopolitanism?

We believe that our findings shed light on distinct forms of what we call ‘minority cosmopolitanism’ and ‘Afro-cosmopolitanism’ which they perform in the role
of ambassadors and hosts to non-AAs. We argued that cosmopolitanism should not be seen as a one-way street or ‘gift’ bestowed from the mainstream to those on the margins, newcomers or other. Rather, we build on insights from studies of ordinary, everyday and working-class cosmopolitanism and tourist studies that push open conceptualisations of cosmopolitanism and identify and examine forms of cosmopolitan openness in overlooked places, spaces and populations.

Limitations

Whilst the extent to which members of wider society positively responded to AA hospitality and felt welcomed to Moorooka was beyond the scope of this paper. The paper also acknowledges that there were themes that were to be explored in depth in this paper including those of fraternity, diasporic and homology. Direction for future studies may include more of the heterogeneity of Africa as a continent and the rich diversity of African people. Despite these limitations, we feel future directions for research could include exploring if AAs in Moorooka may have developed a transnational form of identity in which researchers termed as ‘Afro-politanism’ (Balakrishnan 2017; Ede 2016; Fasselt 2015; Gehrmann 2016; Toivanen 2017). In its simplest definition, Afropolitan is ‘cosmopolitanism with African roots’ (Gehrmann 2016: 61).

At a broader, community level, the strong presence of AAs who engage as hosts to non-Africans, and especially White Australians, deserves attention from relevant social agencies (social workers, policy makers, government, and so on.) including from those working with Africans in Moorooka and similar communities across Australia and where migrants from Africa settle abroad in countries with traditionally non-African
cultural heritages. Indeed, a national research project with a larger sample of African
refugees and migrants might show if the findings of this small-scale study will hold.

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Minority cosmopolitanism: Afro-cosmopolitan engagement displayed by African Australians in Moorooka

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Abstract

Research on cosmopolitan practices and non-white refugee and migrant populations in Western nations often concentrates on how the mainstream ‘host’ culture practices openness and hospitality towards ‘new’ and minority populations. Reflecting the relationality at the heart of cosmopolitanism’s conceptual promise, this research reverses the gaze back by exploring how minority populations who are ‘locals’ in ethnic hubs or enclaves practice openness towards ‘non-locals’ who otherwise constitute a dominant group nationally. Our article focuses on the black African Australian (AA) community in the suburb of Moorooka, known as a ‘little Africa’. Moorooka’s main strip is lined with various AA owned shops and restaurants, and with AAs going about their everyday lives. The suburb attracts negative news stories and is stereotyped as an undesirable ethnic enclave marred by crime, social problems and unemployment. Yet, Moorooka is also becoming a cosmopolitan destination for visitors to shop, explore and dine. We thematically analyse qualitative interviews with AAs to understand how they interact with non-AAs and why. Our research sheds new light on forms of openness and hospitality we call ‘minority cosmopolitanism’ that arises from the AA experience. Accordingly, we also highlight forms of Afro-cosmopolitanism that assists with a deeper understanding of the African diaspora.

Keywords

Minority Cosmopolitanism, Cosmopolitanism, African Australians, Multiculturalism, Afro-Cosmopolitanism, Ethnicity.
Minority cosmopolitanism: Afro-cosmopolitan engagement displayed by African Australians in Moorooka

Introduction

Moorooka is an inner suburb of Brisbane and is about nine kilometres from this capital city’s central business district in South East Queensland, Australia. Known as ‘little Africa’, it is the fastest growing metropolitan region in the state (Storey, Muhidin and Westoby 2010). The main street or ‘strip’ takes barely ten minutes to walk down but is where the action is. Due to its vibrancy in terms of encounters between regular and occasional visitors, local residents and business owners, and between African Australians (AAs) and non-African Australians, it offers a rich site for investigating processes of cosmopolitanisation. The street is lined with food and grocery shops displaying African imported goods from Ethiopian coffee to items from Sudan, Somalia and some West African nations. There are hairdressers promoting African hair and beauty products. There are multiple businesses with signs in various different national languages from the continent. Many men, women and teenagers who are Black Africans can be seen strolling, chatting, shopping, eating, working, or in transit. Some are dressed in Western-style formal outfits, some dressed casually in American influenced styles, some in traditional Muslim attire and others in clothes strongly reflecting different African ethnicities. The sounds of people talking on the street include a noticeable mix of various languages spoken in African nations, from Amharic, Arabic, Swahili, and more.

The milieu in Moorooka just described above marks a stark contrast to nearby areas, which display many of the traits typical to suburbs with predominantly Anglo-
Australian residents, and those with influences from Mediterranean and Asian migrants whose markers of multiculturalism are no longer remarkable but seen as an ‘everyday’ (Wise, Velayutham and Vogl 2010) and mundane part of the mainstream Australian life (Edensor 2007; Molz 2011; Skrbis, Kendall and Woodward 2004). As such, people from non-African and particularly Anglo-White backgrounds are the majority elsewhere, but become a minority upon entering the active, busy and bustling main strip in Moorooka. This is an important point of perspective for us as researchers of African, Asian and Anglo backgrounds. Rather than looking at Anglo-Australians as the ‘locals’ and ‘hosts’ who are called upon to accommodate the differences of African Australians our article turns the gaze around to ask questions of what negotiations, understandings, and practices are used by African Australians who are performing cosmopolitan openness to outsiders and those who are ‘different’ in the specific African ‘hub’ of Moorooka. In doing so, we believe our approach allows us to empirically explore cosmopolitanism as a contextualised, relational process (see Delanty, 2011): we study plurality, but more importantly we try to account for the multiple perspectives and understandings differently actors must apply in order to navigate socio-culturally diverse settings such as Moorooka.

Background

In terms of location and demographics, Moorooka is part of South East Queensland and according to the latest official statistics, it has a population of 10,368 (ABS 2016). Historically, until the 1990s, the residents of Moorooka were mainly ‘Australians of Anglo-Saxon background (Storey et al. 2010: 147). Since 1990s, Australians of white European backgrounds continued to be largely the residents of Moorooka. The latest official census data reveals that top five ancestral places of people
living in Moorooka are English, Australian, Irish, Scottish and German (ABS 2016).

Despite these statistics and historical facts, today, the business centre of Moorooka discernably paints a different picture. Research into urban planning and social inclusion noted the recent rapid social and demographic changes that are taking place in Moorooka (Storey et al. 2010). Noticeably, black African immigrants are establishing elementary businesses including ethnic stores, barbers and restaurants. Moorooka has undoubtedly become a ‘cosmopolitan space’ or an enlarged ‘canopy (Anderson, 2011; Rumford, 2008) where black African Australian immigrants run businesses, meet and socialise. The earliest presence of African Australians in Moorooka started in the form of temporary accommodation provided to African refugees by settlement services providers (Harte, Childs and Hastings 2009).

Historically, Australia has a long history of migration from different parts of the globe but groups from Africa constitute a comparatively recent group. Amongst the many immigrant groups that Australia has accepted over the years include ‘several waves of African migrations’ (Jakubowicz 2010: 4). The past two decades in particular saw an increase of the number of African refugees and humanitarian entrants resettling in Australia, (Fozdar and Hartley 2013; Jakubowicz 2010; Pittaway, Muli and Shteir, 2009). However, before 1976, most African migrants in Australia were white South Africans (Jakubowicz 2010). Here, we are deliberately using the black African Australian label as ‘nearly half of all Australians of African origin are white, skilled migrants from South Africa’ (Phillips 2011: 65)

It is important to avoid the common stereotype of imagined false homogeneity of Africans and acknowledge that African migrants in Australia (including participants of this study) hail are from diverse nationalities, ethnicities, languages, cultural and
religious backgrounds. The migration of African refugees into Australia has been controversial as sections of wider society claim their integration into Australia has been difficult. Fears include that immigrants from African conflict zones Sudan, Somalia, Sierra Leone and Liberia would increase local crime and be culturally too foreign to the dominant culture so as to threaten social cohesion.

Issues of discrimination and stereotyping can be significant in contributing to the marginalisation of African migrants and refugees (Mergia, 2005; Renzaho, Polonsky, McQuilten and Waters 2013). For instance, qualified black African nurses experience discrimination in certain workplaces (Mapedzahama, Rudge, West and Perron 2012). African refugees are also labelled negatively and stereotyped as being involved in gang and violence culture and increasing criminality in their localities (Horyniak, Lim and Higgs 2016). For example, the South Sudanese refugees in Australia were referred to as being ‘disproportionally violent and unable to settle in Australia’ (Phillips 2011: 48). The representation of Africans as a group involved in alleged gang-related activities certainly stigmatises them (Nunn 2010). These misrepresentations may have significant policy ramifications for African Australians as former federal government minister Kevin Andrews called for cutting African refugee intake, citing their lack of integration into Australia (Farouque, Petrie, and Miletic 2007). Similarly, the New South Wales regional city of Tamworth council refused to accept the resettlement of South Sudanese African refugees in Tamworth (Kwansah-Aidoo and Mapedzahama 2015).

The complex constructions of identity and belonging for AAs is also inseparable from Australia’s efforts of colonisation, assimilation and multiculturalism, which have been played out within a broader nation-building project that scholars such as Hage (2002) argue promotes and privileges white settler culture as the norm. This means
groups like African Australians are seen as ‘visitors’ and ‘outsiders’ to their own nation of Australia. Absent from scholarly literature and general public discussions are accounts of the contributions they make to their newly adopted country Australia. Most literature critically lacks any fleshing out of the variety of educational, occupational, artistic, community-organisational, and other demographic traits that counter negative ideas and feelings towards AAs. One noteworthy piece of research (Skrbiš and Chiment 2011) attempts to refocus the debate and argues that pre-migration and settlement experience of AAs could be the stimulus for success and achievement of this group.

In an attempt to address apparent limitations in literature and a lack of sociological research into the everyday experiences and strategies of this group, this article aims to bring about fresh pathways of understanding of this comparatively overlooked population by focusing our research on their performance as ‘hosts’ to other Africans and the non-Africans in Moorooka and elsewhere. Unlike previous studies that mainly focused on how Africans adapt to the national space as ‘non-locals’ in Australia, this research reverses that approach and evaluates how African Australians are willing to perform the role of ‘hosts’ and practice openness to others who are different to them. As we shall demonstrate later in this paper, they can take up the role of ‘givers’ of openness and hospitality. This counters numerous stereotypes about AAs as deviant and culturally incommensurable to wider Australian society. Research shows that ‘further openness is achieved through a cosmopolitan ‘ethics of sharing’ rather than giving, which arises from cosmopolitan reflexivity’ (Plage, Willing, Skrbiš and Woodward 2017b: 17). But before we discuss the openness or its lack of it of AAs, we present in the next section a contextual outline of cosmopolitanism as it is related to AAs.

**Cosmopolitanism**
This paper draws on research from a larger project funded by an Australian Research Council grant titled: XXXX. The project used a framework for understanding cosmopolitanism not as an abstract ideal but as a sharper conceptual and theoretical tool for identifying the complexity of practices of openness see (Plage, Willing, Skrbiš, et al. 2017a; Skrbiš and Woodward 2013). Researchers from the project argue for an ethics of sharing, not just giving or merely tolerating, and surrender rather than control in relation to individual understandings of the social context of encounters with culturally different people and settings. The idea of surrender draws and extends on the work of Hannerz (1990) who argued that cosmopolitanism is otherwise superficial if one chooses to ‘exit’ when their sense of mastery of the situation is threatened. The encounter is not cosmopolitan if there is an effort to maintain control and there is only an act of ‘giving’ which is conditional. Sharing on the other hand, is a strategy that practically opens the possibility for reciprocal and respectful mutual exchange.

However, this conceptual framework has mostly been studied in social situations where it is the dominant population describing their encounters with diversity. More specifically, cosmopolitan encounters have mostly been studied through analysing how White individuals talk about encounters. In their paper, Plage, Willing, Woodward, and Skrbiš (2017b) draw a line, arguing encounters cannot be cosmopolitan if they only take up the role as ‘hosts’ who give hospitality (thus maintaining a position of ownership and control). Instead, encounters where these individuals surrender the position of control, and where their comparative power is acknowledged as problematic, constitutes a reflexive process that can open up a willingness not just to be ‘open’ but rather the will, however painful or intimidating, to share.
Importantly, as discussed in the previous section, this article reverses the focus from how mainstream populations perform openness to minorities to explore the experiences and viewpoint of those who are seen as ‘perpetual foreigners’, othered as visible migrants or refugees in the context of particular suburbs and spaces where they are compelled to assume the role of hosts. Few other studies do this, with tourism studies of guides (Salazar 2005), black/white relations in working class settings (Lamont and Aksartova 2002) and migrants in working class settings abroad (Datta 2009) being examples. Salazar’s study reveals that the guides perform ambassadorial roles of cosmopolitanism without possessing a comparatively great degree of mobility. Although some of the motivations are orientated for profit and business, other motivations also include pride in being able to represent and act as hosts in their area. For foreign/global others they become cultural ambassadors and educators of the areas that they are locals in.

Lamont and Aksartova (2002) study highlights how cosmopolitanism can be a tool for combating racism in blue-collar environments and argue is not just an idealistic project of identity for the middle-class and elite. Interestingly, they also found distinct differences between how Americans and French defined ‘openness’ and anti-racism. In the former, it was discourses of individualism and upward mobility (becoming president to owning expensive items) that were seen as equalisers, while for the latter anti-racist views were based on ideas of egalitarianism, fraternity and ‘brotherhood’ drawn from French socialist and nationalist discourses for instance.

The study by Datta (2009: 2) investigates the experiences of migrants in working-class occupations abroad, such as in construction, and argues that forms of cosmopolitanism can emerge from people who work together or find themselves in
situations requiring ‘a strategic engagement with others through coerced choices in order to survive in new environments’. Werbner (1999) similarly looked at highway workers who are migrants and argued that cosmopolitanism is an active process of getting along rather than just a matter of identity construction for middle-class elites.

Datta (2009: 3) argues that: ‘cosmopolitanism is neither an ethico-political cultural project, nor just a survival strategy but a complex mixture of cultural, ordinary, banal, coerced, and ‘glocalised’ cosmopolitanisms that are enacted under different spatial circumstances of interaction, subjective positioning, and physical proximity’.

Cosmopolitanism also is processes that exists in uneven power relations globally and within the shadow of colonialism (see Mignolo, 2010).

**Methods and Case Study: African Australians (AAs) in Moorooka**

In our research of Moorooka, we examine how African Australians (AAs) perform openness to others and also in the diverse ethnic communities within the African diaspora. This approach is inspired by the assessments that cosmopolitanism and openness towards others is ‘produced from everyday practices in localised context’ (Datta 2009: 26). Our fieldwork in Moorooka, also known as ‘Little Africa’, was carried out by a multicultural team of researchers in Griffith university, led by a member from the African Australian community of Somalia born, a Vietnamese Australian female and a white Australian male. We focused our research on the diasporic hub of Moorooka, where AAs work, frequently visit and socialise. Importantly, we are interested in how AAs act as ‘locals’ who host visitors to the area yet they are othered in terms of being outside mainstream Australia. AAs are also visibly dominant within the area, which may be viewed as an ‘ethnic enclave’, but it is here that they also play the role of ‘hosts’. Hence, as residents in the area they negotiate multiple identity statuses.
including that of minorities and mostly new comers from various cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds.

The study initially conducted an ethnographic research involving visits to shops, streets and businesses run by AAs. Ethnography is a ‘systematic approach to learning about the social and cultural life of communities, institutions and other settings’ (LeCompte and Schensul 2010: 1). Observations and interviews were conducted and this paper draws on narratives from interviews with the AA about their community and visitors within the hub of Moorooka. Between 2014 and 2015 four focus groups were then conducted with 26 black AAs in Moorooka, Brisbane. 31 people participated in four focus groups consisting of 20 men and 11 women aged over 18 years, with various occupational and educational backgrounds. The median group size was seven participants per focus group. According to Morgan (1996: 130), a focus group is, ‘A research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher’. The advantage of focus group methodology is to capture practices of inter-group negotiation, and to comparatively observe the reasoning strategies of participants as they provide confirming or contrasting viewpoints. Researchers observed a common rule of thumb for qualitative research which is to have between four and six participants in a focus group (Morgan 1996: 144). The data became saturated at the end of the fourth group discussion but we highlight other interesting themes for future research that fell outside the scope of this project in our conclusion. Saturation is a methodological principle for qualitative research and is defined by Morse (1995) as the ‘data adequacy’, meaning that data needs to be continually collected until no new information is obtained. In order to maximise group discussions and interactions, a schedule of questions was developed and photo elicitation exercise was used.
The researchers acknowledge that no generalisations could be made about the views of the small sample of African Australians. However, the diversity found in this small sample is illustrative of issues and themes relevant to African Australians in Queensland only and the focus group participants reflect the ethnic and nationality diversity that is apparent in this community. This small sample included African Australians who resided in Australia for several decades and newly arrived migrants including people who were special humanitarian visa entrants. Ethical considerations include that the participation was voluntary, information about the research was given using an information sheet and pre-talk before the interviews, which were then only conducted after signed consent forms were completed. The data has been anonymised as a further step. Recruitment, rapport during interviews and development the coding and themes from the data was assisted through insights by the lead author being part of the community under investigation. This includes distinguishing nuances in how cosmopolitanism is performed by minorities, for instance.

Thematic analysis is a qualitative analysis tool that helps the researcher to identify, analyse and report patterns or themes within data (Braun and Clarke 2006: 79). The analysis focused on the patterned responses participants provided to the focus group research questions. According to Braun and Clarke (2006: 82), ‘A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set’. Intercoder reliability was ensured through emerging codes and themes checked by the other authors and compared to relevant literature.
Results and Discussion

The main patterned responses the study looked for were what forms of cosmopolitan engagement exist within this group, referring to the encounters with culturally different people, places, and things that may have cosmopolitan consequences (Delanty 2011). The study reveals two main forms of cosmopolitan encounters that black African Australians displayed. These are what we call ‘minority cosmopolitanism’ and ‘ambassadorial/host’ cosmopolitanism. These insights draw on the three following main insights generated from the broader study we conducted on AAs. First, an ethical orientation and duty to humanity was apparent in all stages of the research where participants’ responded to photo elicitations. Looking at an image of a natural disaster, for instance, they generally reflected a connectedness to a global human society and they specifically showed willingness of sharing and caring towards fellow human beings depicted in the image. Second, there was a strategic orientation and willingness to show off their cultures in the interviews, which manifested in things such as performing cosmopolitan hospitality as part of how they do business with non-Africans in their local environment. As they are from diverse nationalities and ethnicities, African Australians equally performed playing hosts to each other and were generally positive about sharing their diverse cultures and openness within each other. While these types of cosmopolitanism are identified in other studies (Datta, 2009, Lamont and Askartova, 2002), it is important to note these specific background contexts of the AA community in Moorooka and nuances and modifications distinct to black AAs which we conceptualise as both ‘minority cosmopolitanism’ and ‘Afro-cosmopolitanism’.
Minorities as Cosmopolitans

Racism is something that exists. Unfortunately, it will exist for a long time to come. It has many faces…For example, when you’re qualified and you’re from an African background and you apply for a job. You are suited for that job — you have the skills — you don’t get that job. Not only that job, but you apply for 150 jobs within two months and you don’t get nothing — no response — while other people are getting the job. You feel isolated, you feel like you’re not valued. That is I think the hardest to — that most difficult racism. (AA6).

Two main themes emerge from the data analysed: first, minorities as marginalised cosmopolitans, referring to their status as sometimes being socially marginalised whilst also embodying aspects of the cosmopolitan ideal. Minority positionality in terms of cosmopolitan gestures, convivial acts and motivations is rarely considered or studied. Minorities are usually seen as recipients and not the givers or sharers. Secondly, as ambassadors of their cultural heritage and as hosts to the wider society in Australia. These themes are inter-related and cosmopolitanism in AAs cannot be understood without exploring their minority experience of marginalisation. This marginalisation is multilayered and complex and is partly informed by the historical problems of colonisation of Africa by the Western European countries known as the scramble of Africa (Pakenham 1992). It is also the marginalisation from mainstream Australian media outlets that stereotype and misrepresent them as a problem group (Han and Budarick 2018). They also include the prejudices they encounter in Australia as new migrants from certain politicians who link them with criminal gang activities (Ferguson 2018). Some of the comments below explain the prejudices and stereotypes they face in their new adopted homeland Australia.
A xenophobic message at that time … I think it say ‘African go back’ something like that, go back to your country. Yeah, so that is amazing message. It is very xenophobic and I think the council has responded quickly. Then I think on the same time we, he took on newspaper as well and he respond to quickly… (AA1 commenting on graffiti in Moorooka)

We are going to shop — close the shops around five o’clock. Obviously, building at the top someone wrote, [nigger] go home. (AA1 commenting on graffiti in Moorooka)

The AAs we interviewed were also concerned about how sometimes non-African members of society make assumptions about their employment status, assuming they are unemployed and not working hard. Another common misconception compounded by the first is that they are loitering rather than legitimately socialising in Moorooka’s public spaces. For instance, one participant reveals:

Yes, and then that goes back to cultural differences. Those people that you see standing there, it does not mean they are jobless. Most — some of them work night shifts and they come here about 1 pm to stay there for a few hours. Some of them drive taxis. Some of them are elderly who retired — are not required to work. But then again, you don’t get that feeling — or you don’t see that — somewhere else. So, I can understand someone from an Australian background — an Anglo-Sax background — when they’re passing by and they see this number of people sitting there having coffee together. They might — that question will cross their mind, definitely. But the picture doesn’t tell the story, it’s not like that. (AA 6)

Other participants we spoke to further elaborate on forms of cultural stereotyping and misconceptions below.

The only negative stereotype is that when you get there and you are from outside or different culture, the first impression that you will have is are the people crazy [and that], the way they talk, they happy, they talk loudly which is very different than Australian culture. They talk and stay as groups rather than individuals, they cross the
lights as groups. So, it’s about the way that they present themselves which is naturally
cultural rather than bad thing that people could see as a negative. (AA 7)

If you are from outside African community or if you’re from white Australian and you
came in Moorooka, you might feel that you’re alone, you’re being surrounded by all of
these tall African people. (AA 7)

You know how there are, some of them instead of coming into the shop, or stay in the
shop get the service, and then go where they have to go. But they hang around on the
street. I think that’s really, I don’t like that… they sit down. That’s the part I don’t like.
I think even for my experience, for my clients. Even having, you know how the
pavement is just for walking, so for other customers it’s really annoying as well. (AA
10).

Our ethnographic observations and conversations with local AAs reveal that
many of the male adults congregating in parks and the streets of Moorooka work shifts,
drive taxis at night, and eat, drink and socialise until their next taxi shift starts at late
afternoon. There were no incidents of public mishap or crime, and especially none
started by AAs with non-AAs. People were, apparently, just going about their day. In
other words, what we observed supports the participants’ quotes above about being
stereotyped based on misunderstandings or assumptions. Our data also supports other
research that argues minorities such as AAs in Australia are subject to stereotypes as
being under-skilled and contributing to unemployment (Abdelkerim and Grace, 2012).
The feelings of discrimination reported by the participants above also confirm theories
about broader societal racism operating in suburban spaces like Moorooka, where non-
Whites are othered as perpetual foreigners and as possibly ‘sinister’ or deviant (Baas
2015; Hage 2002; Lobo 2016). Both structural and ‘on the ground’ encounters of
discrimination clearly situates AAs as minorities in the broader society.
However, we argue that this marginal positioning or liminality shapes AAs in particular ways that include a sense of cosmopolitan empathy. While this research can only shed light on AAs in a ‘little Africa’ type hub in a small suburb in Australia, we were still able explore strategies they used to suspend and transcend ‘local’ specific loyalties and biases over to ‘universal’ ones and cosmopolitan forms of sharing the space and cultural experiences, even towards those who marginalise them. For example, participants admire the richness of Australian society’s cultural diversity. At the same time, AAs we spoke to felt many Anglo Australians can be uncospolitan.

However, some participants also expressed they felt this was due to their lack of offshore contact with people and cultures who are different to them, and from lack of experience being a minority. The comments below highlight a common view amongst interviewees that overseas travel is important, and how that may help White Australians in particular develop more openness and acceptence of others.

I think the fear within Australia, stems because they have never been exposed to other cultures, [unclear] different … background, different lifestyle. Australians don’t travel that much, they just go to Malaysia, Indonesia…Bali. So never been exposed to darker skin other than indigenous and their experience with indigenous is different with politics. (AA 2).

Below is another quote illustrating AAs attempt at empathy as a course of action or strategy in response to non-AAs bias or prejudice against them.

Because you can just conclude for yourself, this person is not good. I hate what she is doing. Maybe she is doing something according to their culture. Like me, I dress according to my culture. I do this according to my culture. But if you understand my way, you will not hate my culture, you will see that that is my culture and you abide by
[that one]. But if you don’t understand me, you will feel that what I am doing is not a right thing and to me I am doing the right thing. So, if we respect one another, then at least you will be able to understand what the person is trying to do but if we can’t respect one another then [unclear] people will not be understanding what we are doing.

(AA 3)

The quotes above emphasise how AAs see a need for non-AAs to develop what we describe as ‘cosmopolitan dispositions’ of empathy (Skrbiš, Woodward and Bean 2014). This is different from ethnocentric discourses of difference (for example, us versus them), and conflict between ‘oppressed’ and ‘oppressor’. The AAs also appear to have a sense that for some non-AAs, their ‘toolbox’ is less sensitised and equipped to deal with encounters with diversity (Appiah 1997). Therefore combined, our participants are practising a process we describe as ‘minority cosmopolitanism’. This builds on the idea of cosmopolitanism as an everyday practice and outlook of openness able to emerge in all actors, not just elites or the majority population. [Indi check cosmopolitanism from below]

**AAs as Ambassadors and Hosts**

In this section, we argue AAs act as agents of change through performing the symbolic role of ‘ambassadors’ to non-AA visitors and local others in Moorooka. In our conversations and interviews, AAs viewed themselves as being seen as representative of, and to some capacity, also able to actively represent aspects of AA identity in three main ways. First, as ambassadors of the continent of Africa, second, as representative of their respective countries of origin (for example, Somalia, Ethiopia, South Africa and so on), and lastly, as Africans who are Australians (AAs). Sometimes these ambassadorial roles were reified or rejected by non-AAs, for instance seeing
‘Africa’ the continent as a country or seeing being ‘African’ as mutually exclusive from being Australian. This caused frustration. AAs were keen to explain the importance of adjustment whilst still retaining their African heritage. Their understanding is in line with that of Shadid (1991: 362) who defined integration as ‘the participation of ethnic and religious minorities, individually and as groups, in the social structure of the host society while having possibilities to retain the distinctive aspects of their culture and identity’. AAs conceptualisation of integration is linked not only their willingness to participate in the social and economic fabric of society but how much the wider society accepts and willingness to participate.

Further confusion in the scholarly literature is the difference in what ‘integration’ means from one group to another (Hersi, 2018). Furthermore, Mogahed and Nyiri (2007: 2) in their article *Reinventing Integration* proposed redefining integration as less about cultural conformity, and more about having shared goals and commitment.

You can get experience from them (white shoppers) because [unclear] we come from Africa, we don’t know about white people so if we mix with them then we can learn how they’re doing. (AA 5).

AAs expressed being eager to share their culture with everyone who interacted with Moorooka and their community. They unanimously expressed a sense of pride in sharing their culture with wider society.

I feel good about myself when I talk about my culture. I tell people where we’re from, … the cultures that we have. Sometimes I tell them about our history. (AA 6)

Every time I am working, I am sharing my culture. Every time that I am talking to someone, I am sharing my culture. Every time that someone comes to my office —
okay — without disrespecting who they are or their beliefs and everything, I’m sharing my culture. I’m a walking example of my culture. (AA 6)

Impression of Moorooka to outsiders and non-visitors is that they see as a small village of Africa, a place if you drive your car through Moorooka on Beaudesert Road, a place that most of the people that you can see are from Africa. So, the impression is that it become a small African town, a small African village, that’s the impression from outsiders and people who do not usually come quite frequently in Moorooka. They see as an African shop, village. (AA 7).

I feel whenever there is an opportunity as a person [to share their culture]. I feel I’m not talking for myself here, I’m talking for the wider community. Whenever there’s an opportunity presented, people are in Moorooka here — the African people — are more than willing to participate whenever the opportunity is presented. (AA 6).

The comments above reflect the cosmopolitanism seen in locals taking on the role of hosts seen in tourist studies such as Salazar’s (2005) and also as part of the conviviality diverse populations show towards each other in everyday encounters (Wise, Velayutham and Vogl, G., 2010). However, it is also important to consider how AAs may engage in self-censorship and try to avoid falling into stereotypes about Africa African people as minorities. In our observations and conversations, most in their informal ‘ambassadorial’ roles appeared to incorporate an exemplary or ‘normative’ behaviour to fit in and be thought of in positive ways. As such, the cosmopolitanism we observe with its ambassadorial aspects is from a vantage point of countering marginalization as well as from any dispositions of openness.

While the cultural work we observe might be strategic only in terms of self-interest and self-image, nuances we observed lead us to think more is at play. For instance, there was an attempt to modify their behaviour to make others feel welcome
for reasons of business but also for the well-being and a sense of joy in sharing for all involved, which we will discuss in depth below. As the comments show, some acts are about reducing social awkwardness while others are about educating visitors and having a sense of agency in the process.

As the business owner to showcase my culture and to my customers I say that’s the way we eat, and we use our finger and the injera bread and you have to wash your hand. (AA 10).

I think the wider society could be more exposed to the different cultures — like African cultures — and if there’s an information brochure, if there’s a study is conducted like this, which will go a long way to eradicate some problems and issues. (AA 6)

So, in some ways, Moorooka’s very centralising and you have a feeling of belonging and you can feel like you’re showcasing your culture and you’re shop owners. (AA 9)

Like if they come to my restaurant, I tell them the food or sometimes if I make a new menu [unclear] I stop here and then tell I’ve got a new menu, come and try. Like that, yeah. (AA 5).

Such insights assist with not only supporting but also elaborating on tourism studies such as in Salazar (2005: 57) who describes how individuals such as tourism guides can perform ‘cosmopolitan enhancing experiences’. Positionality is important, as our study examines how a marginalised minority in Australia performs cosmopolitanism from the AA perspective. AAs in Moorooka reported that there have been efforts by the business owners to make:

‘Little Africa’ a friendly communal space for all and not only for Africans.

This is one of the things that the owners when they have a meeting, things that they talk about and said how we can attract the wider community to come and feel happy and safe in Moorooka. So one of the things that came up is to have every few months a late
night where all the shops are open and wider societies are informed to come in to talk to
the people, to see their food, to see their culture, to see their — and feel free to ask any
questions, anything that they want to know and cruise around Moorooka and feel that
they belong and it’s a place that they can come and shop. (AA 7).

Other participants also talk about how AAs openness to others can have positive impacts on others, while also doing the double-work of reducing fear against them and also lifting their status as minorities:

We had a night, festival night, where we send the pamphlets to neighbouring residents,
people that live in around Moorooka and ask them to come. There was a music festival
even on that night, African music. The restaurants were open so that they can come and
test the food. The shops were open. People who came from the wider societies and
participated, that showed they’re positive of what they have seen and what they have
realised and that, in the long term will create an interaction and then feeling happy and
safe to come to Moorooka for the shopping or for the food or for staying and hanging
around. (AA 7).

There’s a different culture and because there’s too many Africans in there, too many
people walking around. They might feel unsafe for them to come and interact. Second
is that their own food, I think that they usually know, it’s not in these shops. So it’s not
appealing to them but what possibly could be appealing to them is if we explain
different cultural food is — to introduce the different food is that they might like
different restaurants, Ethiopian, Somali and Sudan, Eritrea. Different foods that might
attract to them to come if they feel happy and safe to interact. (AA 7).

There was a ‘tour in Moorooka’ event. That was really good opportunity for us and for
Australian [unclear] to come and mix with us. Some of them are, this is on the business
perspective, and the tour was organised by Multicultural Development Association
(MDA) and the City Council. So, they go Sudanese restaurant, to our restaurant and to
Somalian restaurant and few of clothes shop, hairdressing salons. It’s like a tour, with a
tour guide. (AA 10)
In Salazar’s (2005: 57) study of tourism guides in Indonesia and Tanzania he also draws attention to how ‘the ambassadorial role is based on the assumption that there exists a genius loci, a static and unchanging ‘spirit’ emanating from a place or from the people living there’. Salazar (2005: 57) adds ‘The qualifier “local” does not necessarily imply that tour guides are natives of the place where they operate (although they are habitually perceived as such by foreign tourists)’. We are not saying Moorooka is a tourist attraction; rather we are drawing insights from the concept of ‘ambassadors’. Moorooka too is not just representative of just one monolithic culture and it is also a suburb that is continuously open to transforming its image and atmosphere. Furthermore, as the following comments explain, African Australians who work and socialise in the area may not even live there, further disrupting the idea of places being ‘static’ and having an ‘authentic’ world of differences for outsiders to discover, or conversely, fear due to negative stereotypes.

Many of them mainly elderly [non-AAs] used to live there. Even though they still live in there, it looks like there is a barrier of not coming and shopping in Moorooka. Many reasons. Number one, the Africans have got their own culture of walking in groups and talking in groups, talking loud voice, very loudly talking, that discourage white Australians to interact. The second thing is that no one explains to them the different cultures and different foods that’s available in Moorooka. So, no one gave them an education about the food, about different foods, different cultures, so that they can come and taste and see that something good to try. (AA 7).

We find that AAs displayed cosmopolitan intentions to play hosts to members of wider society. They felt that sharing a cultural experience such as food might create
opportunities for them to encourage wider society to interact with them and see Moorooka centre a safe place to visit and shop.

Conclusion

Whilst facing this discrimination and marginalisation AAs still display and perform a form of cosmopolitanism which is unique to their social and cultural context. One that is informed by their experience as mostly individuals and families that experienced civil conflict and economic and social dislocation back home, and then as targets of discrimination and stereotyping upon migrating to a predominantly white, Western nation built on British colonialism. The examination of cosmopolitan engagement of AA business owners and visitors in Moorooka is important as it sheds a light the identity of black African Australians within a dominant white Australian culture. Given the increasing presence and establishment of black AAs in Australia and across the non-African world, it is crucial not just to understand how such populations are ‘received’ and ‘settled’ but also how they actually take up the role of ‘hosts’ and locals themselves in certain contexts. Our article relied on interviews and observations with AA who are Moorooka locals comprising regular visitors and business owners. We explored the questions: How do AAs in Moorooka perform openness towards non-Africans who visit or live in the area? And, what types of openness must the AA community also perform amongst this diaspora given the multiple ethnic and cultural diversity within this community? And, in what ways might these forms of openness be understood as types of cosmopolitanism?

We believe that our findings shed light on distinct forms of what we call ‘minority cosmopolitanism’ and ‘Afro-cosmopolitanism’ which they perform in the role
of ambassadors and hosts to non-AAs. We argued that cosmopolitanism should not be seen as a one-way street or ‘gift’ bestowed from the mainstream to those on the margins, newcomers or other. Rather, we build on insights from studies of ordinary, everyday and working-class cosmopolitanism and tourist studies that push open conceptualisations of cosmopolitanism and identify and examine forms of cosmopolitan openness in overlooked places, spaces and populations.

Limitations

Whilst the extent to which members of wider society positively responded to AA hospitality and felt welcomed to Moorooka was beyond the scope of this paper. The paper also acknowledges that there were themes that were to be explored in depth in this paper including those of fraternity, diasporic and homology. Direction for future studies may include more of the heterogeneity of Africa as a continent and the rich diversity of African people. Despite these limitations, we feel future directions for research could include exploring if AAs in Moorooka may have developed a transnational form of identity in which researchers termed as ‘Afro-politanism’ (Balakrishnan 2017; Ede 2016; Fasselt 2015; Gehrmann 2016; Toivanen 2017). In its simplest definition, Afropolitan is ‘cosmopolitanism with African roots’ (Gehrmann 2016: 61).

At a broader, community level, the strong presence of AAs who engage as hosts to non-Africans, and especially White Australians, deserves attention from relevant social agencies (social workers, policy makers, government, and so on.) including from those working with Africans in Moorooka and similar communities across Australia and where migrants from Africa settle abroad in countries with traditionally non-African
cultural heritages. Indeed, a national research project with a larger sample of African refugees and migrants might show if the findings of this small-scale study will hold.

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